

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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M.DCC.LXXX.

NUMEROUS as the publications on husbandry have become in almost every part of Europe, few of them let us in on its actual state in any country. Authors seem to have disdained recording the practice, so much have they been employed in prescribing alterations. Several reasons may be assigned for this omission : to describe the agriculture of a province, it is necessary to travel into it, and among the writers who have been most voluminous upon this subject, the greater number have been confined to their own farms,—perhaps to their fire-sides. It was impossible for them to have given detailed descriptions of what they had never seen.

There is also a greater temptation to the production of such didactic works as are most usual in agriculture, than to the less entertaining minutiae of common management. The man

who composes a piece for instructing others how to conduct their lands, generally includes all sorts of soils, situations, and circumstances; his views are great, his work comprehensive, round, and complete, and every reader finds something that suits him. The success which has attended the *complete bodies*, *general treatises*, and *dictionaries* of the subject, though compiled by men as much acquainted with astronomy, as with agriculture, must have been owing to these circumstances: as the good reception of well written, though erroneous theories is, to *the agreeable* bearing away the palm due to the useful alone. But a reader who would wish to receive real information, should readily give up the pleasure of being amused for the use of being instructed ; the number of such, however, will always be comparatively small, and the writer who aims limply at utility, must expect his productions to give place to those of a more amusing turn. When a long course of years has proved the importance of the facts he has collected, his labours will probably have their due estimation.

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The details of common management are dry and unentertaining ; nor is it easy to render them interesting by ornaments of style. The tillage with which the peasant prepares the ground ; the manure with which he fertilizes it ; the quantities of the feed of the several species of grain which he commits to it ; and the products that repay his industry, necessarily in the recital run into chains of repetition, which tire the ear, and fatigue the imagination. Great however is the structure raised on this foundation : it may be dry, but it is important, for these are the circumstances upon which depend the wealth, prosperity, and power of nations. The minutiae of the farmer's management, low, and seemingly inconsiderable as he is, are so many links of a chain which connect him with the State. Kings ought not to forget that the splendour of majesty is derived from the sweat of industrious, and too often oppressed peasants. The rapacious conqueror who destroys, and the great statesman who protects humanity, are equally indebted for their power to the care with which the farmer cultivates his fields. The monarch of these realms must know, that when he is sitting on his throne at Westminster, surrounded by nothing but state and magnificence, that the poorest, the most oppressed, the most unhappy peasant, in the remotest corner of Ireland, contributes his share to the support of the gaiety that enlivens, and the splendour that adorns the scene.

If such is the importance of these little movements in the great machine of the State, to know and to understand them, surely deserves the attention of men, who are willing to sacrifice their amusement to their information. This is in other words saying, that the state of common husbandry, in all its variations and connections ought to be well understood. Of little consequence must precepts, maxims, and directions for a better conduct appear, unless we really know the evils that are to be remedied, and the practices that are to be condemned. Without this necessary knowledge, the recommendations of the most ingenious speculative author, must be almost useless ; and the labours of the experimentalist, want much of the application which is to render his fads important. The object of every writer in rural economics is to make husbandry better. But before they attempt that, should they not know what it is ? This idea has often made me, in reading books of agriculture, lament that the first chapter of every practical work, was not a plain detailed account of the common management in the parish or neighbourhood, where the author lived and wrote.

To render this sort of knowledge general and complete, it is necessary that every gentleman residing in the country, and practising agriculture, should write and publish an account of so much as falls within the sphere of his observation : The experience of centuries has shewn us how much this may be expected. Were it done, such journies as I have registered and published, would have been perfectly unnecessary. A man who has attended some years to husbandry in one place, would have it in his power to gain a far better and more particular account of every circumstance than it is possible a traveller should procure.

These accounts however having no exigence, such as I have more than once offered to the public, may have their use : what should chiefly induce the reader to think so, is their being taken on the spot, from the mouths of gentlemen or farmers who reside in the districts, they describe—that the accounts are however perfect, cannot be expected—they are proportionally so to the sagacity, information, and experience of the person who speaks. When my intelligence was received from a company of gentlemen, I always waited for their settling among themselves any difference of opinion before I entered the minute ; and if they did not agree, took the average of the sums or quantities in question.

The unbounded hospitality of a kingdom in which every country gentleman is by necessity a farmer, left me under very few difficulties, in gaining intelligence : but I did not trust entirely to this source, having upon most occasions common farmers summoned to assist at the consultations, the design of which was my information. Nor did I neglect opportunities of making enquiries of the cottagers, and of examining into their situation and way of living—the information I procured in this line, I apprehend to be of consequence : in England we know pretty well the state of the poor, but their circumstances in other countries ought to be one of the first objects of a traveller's attention, since from their ease or oppression, a multitude of conclusions may be drawn relative to government, wealth, and national prosperity.

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A Tour in Sligo & Mayo

August 26th, left Mercra, and went to Ballasadore, when I had great pleasure in viewing the falls ; the river breaks over rocks in the most romantic manner, from edge to edge, in many falls, for the space of two hundred yards before it comes to the principal one, which is twelve or fourteen feet perpendicular; the scenery about it is bold, the features of the mountains are great, and Knocknaree in full relief ; if the falls were through a dark wood, the scenery would be among the finest in the world.

To Tanrego, the seat of Lewis Irwin, Esq ; (who favoured me with several articles of useful intelligence) situated in the barony of Tyrera, which is twenty-seven miles long, and cultivated from one and an half to three in breadth, by the seaside ; lets from 12s. to 17s. an acre, a little for 20s. The soil a light sandy loam, on limestone, one foot to two deep, farms are in general from 20 to 30 acres ; many taken in partnership, four to eight families take 200 acres.

1. Manure with wrack for potatoes. 2. Potatoes. 3. Barley. 4. Barley. 5. Oats.

1. Potatoes. 2. Barley. 3. Oats. 4. Potatoes again.

1. Potatoes. 2. Barley. 3. Oats. 4. Lay out for grass.

No feeds, in one or two years white clover will come if not over cropped. For potatoes, from 100 to 150 horse loads sea weed, mix no dung with it. Plant 12 pecks, each 56lb. and get 12 to 20 fold, that is 144 to 249 pecks. Of barley they get 13 or 4 barrels per acre. Of Oats, 10 barrels. They burn vast quantities of kelp, in the whole barony, 300 tons, all in summer ; in winter or spring they manure with it. The brown alga, which is the more luxuriant, and fuller of the saponaceous liquid, they don't manure with, thinking it too strong for the land, burning it up as they call it ; but if they would lay it in heaps till rotten, or made composts, neither of which they ever do at all, this would not be the case. They manure with it every six or seven years. Mr. Irwin spreads it in his pound upon a stratum of potatoe stalks, and over both one of turf and mould, for cattle to tread on to manure, this is a most excellent practice. The mountains nearest to the sea, are chiefly flocked with sheep, and farther in, with young cattle near the bog. Upon a part of these mountains, of three miles in extent, whatever

sheep feed, are immediately killed by the flaggers, and horses affected ; there is a good deal of limestone, and the land is dry, and to appearance, and in fact, good ; it fattens bullocks ; it is attributed to the lead mines, which this part is supposed to be full of. When first affected, if brought down to a salt marsh, it recovers them immediately. Within a few miles of Tanrego, is Glanesk, and Loch Alt, six to ten miles broad, and 20 long, one continued chain of mountain and bog. Three fourths of Sligo bog, and uncultivated mountain. In the above tract, limestone everywhere, in some, limestone gravel, and a good road runs through it ; in all this no cultivation or improvements. Mr. Irwin, upon a part of this country, tried about an acre of boggy, moory mountain, to see if paring and burning would do, it answered greatly, and the best potatoes in the country were there next year. Lime he also tried, and with great success ; he did this in order to shew the people that their wastes were improveable. Upon the sea-shore are immense beds of oyster shells, which are burnt into lime for building and plaistering, as they take much less fuel ; these hills received no little increase from all the gentlemen of the interior country coming to the sea-coast to eat oysters, where having filled themselves sufficiently in the mornings, they got drunk in the evening ; this was in the *uncivilized* times. Most of the gentlemen of this country were Cromwell's soldiers, and many Welch families, Jones's, Morgan's, Wynn's, &c. In the barony of Tyrera flax is universally cultivated ; a man with 20 acres will have a rood, which is sown with five gallons of seed ; all the females spin, but the number of weavers is inconsiderable. Walked down to the coast of Tanrego, immediately, opposite Knocknaree, which rises very boldly ; the bay of Ballysadore comes up under it, and Ylanabaolane island of five or six acres, so rich, that it will fatten 9 sheep an acre ; it forms Sligo bay.

To Sortland, the seat of ——Browne, Esq ; to whom I am obliged for the following particulars.

The barony of Tyreragh, black mold on lime-stone 6 inches to a foot deep, lets at 18s. average. The farms are various, generally taken in partnership, which is found a most mischievous custom, and destructive to all good husbandry. The course ;

1. Potatoes manured with sea-weed. 2. Barley produce 15 barrels. 3. Oats 10 barrels. 4. Oats. Very little ever laid out to grass.
1. Potatoes. 2. Barley. 3. Oats. 4. Flax on spots.

The sea-weed the only manure, and they depend intirely on it, and apt to do that too much neglecting other parts of management. The circumstances of the people are not at all improved in 20 years, they are not better fed or clothed, or in any respect better off than formerly. Nor are they at all industrious, even of sea-weed they do not make one half the advantage they could, they might get an hundred loads where they get one. They increase in number very greatly, so as to be evidently crowded ; this has been the case particularly since inoculation was introduced, which was about ten years ago. They live upon potatoes and milk, and for 3 months in the year, on oat-meal. Mr. Browne is convinced from every observation, that the potatoes are a very wholesome and nourishing food. The linen manufacture consists only in spinning, which is universal in all the cabbins, and it is so much, that they are assisted by it, in paying their rents. They earn 3d. a day by spinning : one lb. of flax for 3 hank yarn a woman is 4 days spinning.

Within a mile of Sortland is a vast bog, which stretches 10 miles in length, and 2 or 3 over. It is a black one, 16 spit deep. There are hillocks in it of lime-stone gravel, but lime-stone is not to be found near it in general, though not searched for with any attention, it is, however, so cheap here that any improvements might be worked ; Mr. Browne can burn it at 3d. a barrel roach. He hires 1100 acres of this bog, of Mr. King of Ballina, at 4l. a year, though he

has not improved it, has no doubt of its being improveable, and remarks that he never yet saw a bog that had not a fail enough to drain by. In the barony of Tyreragh, there are a few grazing farmers, but not many. Mr. Nesbit is the greatest, he farms above 3000 acres. Not a 3d of the county is bog and mountain, but more than half Mayo is so : average rent of the whole county, exclusive of bog and mountain, 16s. an acre. The shore is a very fruitful one in seaweed, which is burnt into kelp in summer ; they pay a rent for it by the ton of what they get.

From the slate quarry to Enniscrone, 9 miles, they make 200 tons of kelp. The men have 17s. to 20s. a ton for serving, making, and burning, and it sells at 21. 2s. There is not half so much used in manure as in burning. It is made all the way from this country to Galway. Mules, Mr. Browne thinks superior to horses, for carrying back loads, but much inferior in drawing ploughs and cars. They are so long lived, that the age is scarce ever asked when they are bought ; they will live in common, in full work, to 30 years. They will also in bog, draw out their legs infinitely better, though they go deeper in. From 100 ewes, Mr. Browne sells 100 three year old wethers, fat, at 18s. to 20s. also 20 old ewes at 13s. 300 fleeces at 41b. at 1s. or 45l. Buys in yearling bullocks at 40s. and fells out at 7l. gets thereby 5l. for keeping 2 years and a half. No hay given, except in snow. He has improved 20 acres of dry moor from heath, it would not yield any rent, but now would let for 15s. an acre. The moor was one foot deep on lack clay , and under that a loose gravel, not limestone. Marled it at the rate of 150 barrels an acre, which cost, in labour 5s. white marle from under a bog ; spread it, and left it for a year, which killed the heath effectually, then ploughed it twice, and took two successive crops of potatoes, without dung, the first an extraordinary one, the second not bad : then two crops of barley, which were very good : then oats. 2 crops, both very good, and then set it at 15s. an acre. If he had ever such quantities of such land, he would never stop from the improvement of it, being amazingly profitable.

August the 27th to Ballyna, where I experienced the most polite reception from the Right Honourable Mr. King ; the views of the distant mountains is very fine ; the country is almost encompassed by them. Those of Donnegal to the right, a great ridge, which separates Tyreragh to the left, Nephin-noble in the front, and Knockaree behind. Many kilns for drying corn in the road. Passed three miles of pasturage under cattle, before I came to the river leading to Ballyna. The views there are very beautiful, it spreads in different reaches. That of Ballyna is uncommonly pleasing ; the river a noble bend to a few rising grounds on which a part of the town is seen ; beyond it the bridge, and the whole crowned by the Nephin mountain, which rises with a magnificent regularity from its base, and is one of the finest mountains I have seen.

At Ballyna is a salmon fishery, let for 520l. a year, which is one of the most considerable in the kingdom ; generally seventy or eighty tons salted, besides the fresh. Close almost to this fishery is a very pretty, and well-planted farm, belonging to Mr. Jones. Mr. Lindfay, the owner of this fishery, improved 16 acres of moor, covered with heath, in the following manner : he covered it with lime-stone gravel, at the expense of 30s. an acre, left it two years, by which time the heath was all dead ; then ploughed it the end of summer, and in a month harrowed it ; ploughed it and harrowed it again after Christmas, and in the spring set it to poor people, for potatoes, at 4l. an acre ; they got a very good crop ; next year ploughed it, and set it for a second crop, reversing the ridges, at three guineas. After this crop, barley, and got a good crop, sowing grass feeds with it.,

Mr. Gore of Ballyna, had been mentioned to me as one of the most considerable in cattle of any person in Connaught ; he was not at home, but his son-in-law, the Right Hon. Mr. King, was so kind as to procure me the particulars of his domain. Mr. Gore's breed of horned cattle is fine. Some years ago he sold heifers at 50l. a piece, and now from ten to twenty gui-

neas ; the breed not declined, but purchasers not quite so mad as they were. Yearling bulls 20 guineas. This breed he got from Yorkshire 30 or 40 years ago. His breed of sheep is also excellent, being much improved by rams from England. He improves much moory land and bog, generally 10 or 15 acres every year, by lime-stone gravel and marle. Average rent of Tyreragh 12s. Walked in the evening to a most noble garden, walled and planted by Mr. King : it is one of the completed I have seen in Ireland.

August 28th, took my departure from Ballina, and waited on the bishop of Killala. I wished to have some information concerning that vast wild and impenetrable tract of mountain and bog, the barony of Erris. His Lordship and Mr. Hutcheson were so kind as to give me every particular in their power. The only cultivated part is the peninsula called the Mullet, where they plant a good deal of potatoes, barley, and flax, by means of sea weed ; and there is a rabbit warren, the skins of the rabbits yielding 100l. a year. The rest of it is without cultivation, except in small patches here and there ; and it is supposed, generally speaking, to be without limestone or limestone gravel, but probably no great search has been made in so dreary a region. It is no easy matter to get in or out of it in winter ; and very few persons ever attempt it from November to Easter, having impassable bogs in the way. There were 896 families in the barony in 1765, 400 of which are inhabitants of the Mullet : 47 protestant, and 849 popish. The bishop of Killalla has built a house in the Mullet for a clergyman, who resides there ; the living is between 50l. and 60l. a year, and 40 acres of land, which the bishop has given from the fee lands. This may truly be called a sphere for content, and the philosophic virtues to exert themselves in ; there is not a post-house, market-town, or justice of peace, in the whole barony, which is also the case with another barony in this county Costello. A post-house and a market are excellent things, but a justice may very well be dispensed with. There are many herds of small cattle, and some sheep kept, which are sold from thence. There is not a tree in the whole barony of Erris ; a man going out of it to pay his rent, &c. his son with him, a lad of near twenty, when he came near Killalla, and saw a tree, “ Lord, Father ! what is that ?” But bare of wood as it is at present, it was, in the sylvan age of Ireland, completely covered : for in no part of the kingdom is there found more or larger in the bogs.

The barony of Tyrawly is among the best parts of the county of Mayo ; 800 bullocks, most of them fat, are sold from it annually at Ballynasloe fair, which are kept here from being year olds, and sold at 4l. The quantity of tillage is very inconsiderable, but what there is, is vastly improved by the use of sea weed. Lands near the sea let at 20s. which at two miles, would yield but 14s. merely from being too far, as they reckon, to carry the sea weed. The poor people in this barony are not improved in their circumstances in eighteen years past, that the bishop has resided at Killalla. There is some weaving, so that there is scarcely a market at Ballina, or Killalla, without some linens sold. Spinning is universal in all the cabbins, but the yarn is only four-hank yarn. They spin and weave wool enough to cloath themselves, with drugget, yard-wide for the women, at 1s. a yard, and frize for the men ; at a *slatt*, or measure, four feet two inches long, and 20 to 23 inches wide, which sells from 1s. 11d. to 2s. 4d. Their food is potatoes, cockles, herrings, and a little meal ; and when the potatoes are out, on oat-meal only. They do not all keep cows, but the majority do, and those who do not, buy milk. Beef 1d. per lb. in autumn, twenty years ago, now three halfpence. Fish very plentiful ; I partook of three gurnet, two mackarel, and one whiting, at the bishop’s table, which his steward bought for sixpence halfpenny, enough to dine six people. Lobsters plentiful. Turbot 3d. a pound. There are 150 boats belonging to the bay of Killalla, or Moy, and to the town, from twenty to twenty-five, five men to a boat, the boat has a fifth, the nets two-fifths, and the crew two-fifths ; the two-fifths belonging to the crew, are subdivided into sixths, of which the skipper has two. The herrings are caught near the bar, and in the river Moy ; the fishery begins in October, and lasts only two or three weeks. They judge of the shoal being there by the Gant, a bird that pursues the fish ; they sometimes get each boat 10.000 herrings, which is

a full load, but this is very rare, in general a good night's work is from 3000 to 5000, and the price is from thirteen pence to two and sixpence, the medium is 8d. per hundred, or 16s. 8d. per thousand ; consequently a night's work 2l. 10s. The boat is 4 ton, and costs 20l. and the nets 10l. Seven share of nets to each boat ; each share sixty yards long, and four fathom deep, eight score mesh. The nets are all made here ; the poor people use flax, but others use hemp ; they bark them, but none tar and oil. The fishery was once much more considerable than at present. There is no ship belonging to this port, they had one, but that wicked fellow, Thurot took her, and quite unshipped the harbour.

August 29th, took my leave of the good bishop, to whom, and his son, Mr. Hutcheson, I am obliged for the preceding particulars and many civilities. Breakfasted with the Rev. Mr. Garrat, at Foxford ; passed over some very fine reddish sandy loams, till I came to a hill, from whence an extensive tract of bog is seen. Rents about Foxford are 12s. for cultivated, arable, and pasture, and thence to Castlebar the same. From Foxford to Tubbercurry sixteen miles of bad country ; the best of the cultivated land 12s. some at 8s. and 10s. but these rents are only the improved spots : they are improving the moors and mountains very fast, particularly the estates of Mr. Rutledge and Lynch. It is done with white marle from under bogs. It must not be imagined that when I speak of mountains and moors in Mayo, or its wild barony Erris, that these lands yield no rent ; they are let in the lump, and applied to feeding cattle. They put on two year old bullocks, and keep them till full three, when they bring them to the good grounds, and from thence take them to Ballynasloe. These mountains will not do for year olds. Some of them are unhealthy for cattle ; for if they are left more than a month or six weeks on them, they are disordered with lumps on their joints, so that they cannot rise from the ground ; yet at the same time shall be in good order, it disappears on a change of pasture. Red deer run wild in the mountains of Erris.

To Castlebar, over an indifferent country, and a vile stoney road ; about that town the husbandry is admirable. They have three customs, which I must begin with ; first. they harrow by the tail, item the fellow who leads the horses of a plough, walks backward before them the whole day long, and in order to make them advance, strikes them in the face : their heads I trow are not apt to turn. Item, they burn the corn in the straw, instead of threshing it. Among their customs it may be worth mentioning, that at the wakes or funeral entertainments, in addition to the circumstances I related at Castle Caldwell, both men and women, particularly the latter, are hired to cry, that is, to howl the corps to the grave, which they do in a most horrid manner : they are not so disagreeable, however, in Munster, as I was told. The quantity of whisky and tobacco consumed upon these occasions is pretty considerable. In the lake of Castlebar, near that town, is the char, and the Gillaroo trout with gizzards, and it is remarkable that there are no pike in the lakes of this country. Land lets at 15s. to 20s. cultivated, both grass and arable : town parks 40s. The mountains are reclaiming by limestone sand and gravel ; it is the common cottars who do it. There are more than 500 affidavits sent to the Dublin Society upon this account, in which I was told they are apt to be deceived, as well as in the corn Handings. There are very large farms in this neighbourhood, even up to 2000l a year : but all the great ones are stock farms, and most of the tillage of the country is performed by little fellows, cottars, and tenants to these large farmers. Eight or nine years ago there were no linens here, but now 300 pieces are sold in a week, 200 looms are employed in the town and neighbourhood, yet great quantities of yarn are sent off. The town, which belongs to Lord Lucan, is greatly rising from manufactures ; the houses are well built, yet only 31 years, or 3 lives granted.

In the evening reached Westport, Lord Altamont's, whose house is very beautifully situated, upon a ground rising gently from a fine river, which makes two bold falls within view of his windows, and sheltered on each side by two large hanging woods ; behind, it has a very

fine view of the bay, with several headlands projecting into it one beyond another, with two or three cultivated islands, and the whole bounded by the great mountain of Clara Island, and the vast region of Crow-Patrick, on the right, from the hill above the wood, on the right of the house, is a view of the bay, with several islands, bounded by the hummocks, and Clara Island, with Crow-Patrick immediately rising like the superior lord of the whole territory, and looking down on a great region of other mountains that stretch into Joyce's country.

In Lord Altamont I found an improver, whose works deserved the closest attention ; he very readily favoured me with the following account: he began to improve mountain land in 1768, and has every year since done some, making it a rule to employ whatever labourers offer for work. All of it covered with heath, (*erica vulgaris*) and the soil on the surface moor ; would let for two shillings an acre for turning young cattle on, the only use to which it was applied.

Experiment, No. 1.

Improved a piece of mountain land, of the above description, by spreading limestone sand. (N. B. The marle called here *sand*, is what I have generally found under the denomination of limestone *gravel* ; the stones in it are of the size of a man's double fist, it is clayey, and very hard bound together in the stratum ; the harder to raise, the better it is. It has a strong fermentation with acids.) Spread the sand on the heath, and left it for one year, at the expense of 11. 1s. dunged it, and planted potatoes ; found great difficulty in digging it from the roots of a kind of grass, like a rush, called *keeb don*, in English, *black keeb*. The crops very bad. Dunged it the year following for oats ; the crop very fine, and repeated them the next year. Left the oat stubble, and it covered itself so with good natural grass, that the next year mowed a crop of hay, and the same two years more. Finding it not well reclaimed from having ploughed it too soon after the sanding, gave it a new manuring at nearly the same expense ; did not plough it any more, but such of the stones as had not sank of themselves, were beat in with mallets, at the expense of 2s. 6d. an acre, in order to smooth it for mowing. This was very practicable, having two spits of boggy turf on the surface. Ever since it has been excellent meadow, worth 11. 2s. 9d. an acre.

Experiment, No. 2.

In 1764, improved another piece, sanding it at 40s. an acre, owing to the distance ; left it two years on the land, and then set it at 40s to the poor people for potatoes ; after which took three noble crops of oats. Then left to grass, and the first year mowed a great crop, and set it for 16s. an acre.

Experiment, No. 3.

In 1765, began with fifty acres more of mountain land, but full of heath. First drew off the stones, and made a wall round it six feet high, and the stones not wanted for this threw down the river, some of which were so large that it took sixteen bullocks to draw them. Expense 30s. an acre, besides 1s. 6d. a perch for the wall. Dug and burnt it, and spread the ashes, 2l. 2s. an acre ; it was before too-rough and coarse to plough. Then ploughed it with bullocks, and sowed rape ; the crop middling, where the ashes were yellow, good, where white, bad ; seeded the rape, and then dug it, and limed it, 160 barrels an acre. Would not use lime had not the hill been too steep to lead gravel up ; he had nineteen lime-kilns burning at once. Upon this liming ploughed for oats ; the crop tolerably good. A second crop of oats, which were very fine, and then let it run to grass. Observed that the burning brought up a great quantity of rushes, which had not appeared before.

Experiment, No. 4.

Another considerable piece, where turf had been cut, was manured, part with lime-stone sand, and part with mortar rubbish, and another with *graulagh*, or coralline shelly sand ; the expense each about 1l. 2s. 9d. an acre. Ploughed it and burnt it, and sowed it with turnips : a very noble crop. Drew the turnips, and fed them in a pasture. The spring following planted it with potatoes without any other manure, and the crop much the greater he ever saw in his life ; from one stalk had 143 potatoes, then took three crops of oats, which all proved exceedingly good. The black Frizeland oat, and the second crop, yielded 26 barrels an acre, each 14 stone. Sowed Dutch clover with the last crop, and could let it at 20s. an acre.

Experiment, No. 5.

Another piece of heath mountain, not entirely dry, worth 1s. an acre, manured very richly with lime-stone sand, and at the expense of 30s. an acre, and left so without any other improvement. In three years it was worth 5s. in eight years 10s. an acre, and in twelve years 1l. 1s. and so has remained.

Experiment, No. 6.

Another piece, worth five shillings an acre, was sanded at 1l. 2s. 9d. which was left three years on it, and then planted with potatoes, by the country people, who paid 3l. 10s. an acre. After which it was sown thrice with oats, the crops very good, left for meadow, and let it at 30s. an acre.

Experiment, No. 7.

Sanded another piece, at 1l. 5s. left it three years, and ploughed it up in dry weather, in May ; left it till after wheat sowing, and then cross-ploughed it, and in the spring harrowed it with great ox harrows, and planted it with potatoes ; after which two crops of oats, great crops, and then left it for grass. Worth immediately 1l. 2s. 9d. an acre.

A curragh of one hundred acres, that is a wet quaking bog, which will not do for turf ; with a long sedgy grass on it. Part of a farm at 30l. a year, Lord Altamont took into his hands, with the consent of the tenant ; he drained it to the amount of 30l. at yd. a perch, five feet deep, and ten feet wide ; this simple thing improved it so much, that without any other improvement, he set it to the same tenant, at 70l. a year. Made perfectly sound ; so that bullocks of 8 cwt. could graze on it.

Upon the whole, Lord Altamont is of opinion, from a variety of experience, that the best, method of breaking up heathy mountain land, is by manuring with lime-stone sand, to the thickness of an inch, which at present costs 1l. 11s. 6d. per acre. If sand is not to be had, then the white marle from under moory bottoms ; and if there is none of that, then lime. Objects to lime, as it brings the land infallibly to moss, which is so powerful as to choak the grasses, but marle is an excellent manure. To leave it for three years, or till daisies (*bellis*) and white clover (*trisolium repens*) appear, then to plough it in May or June, and again in autumn ; and in the spring to plant potatoes, in the common trenching way, and after the potatoes, would sow oats successively, till the chickweed (*alsine media*) appears, which is a sign that the tillage has so enriched the land, that the crops will be too great, and then leave it for grass. This is what he has on experience found to be the best way. If seaweed is plentiful, he would manure the potatoes with it, and then would have the first crop barley instead of oats. A large portion of these mountains are wet, owing to the lack clay, but the potatoe trenches break it,

and let off the water ; after which the land settles by degrees, and becomes perfectly dry. There are great tracts of many miles extent of heath mountain in this neighbourhood which are capable of the above improvements.

I forgot to observe, that when the heath dies, which it does in three years, then dairies appear, and white clover, which are signs that the land is fit for culture. There is something very extraordinary in this circumstance, that laying on a powerful manure for cultivated vegetables, mould prove poison to the spontaneous growth. It is only to be accounted for by supposing that the heath is nourished by an acid in the soil, which being ; neutralized by the alcali, is no longer the food of that plant, after which it dies for want of its usual support. It is very remarkable, that all the wild mountains in this country have marks, and to a great height of former culture, mounds of fences, and the ridges of the plough. Lord Altamont's great grandfather found the estate a continued forest ; in 1650, those woods were of much more than a century growth, so that no cultivation could have been here probably of 300 years. There is a tradition in the country that it was depopulated by the plague, and upon that the wood sprung up which formed those forests. At present there is no wood on any of the hills, except immediately about Westport.

I observed, besides this great range of mountain improvement, that Lord Altamont prosecutes various parts of husbandry with much spirit. He has been at great expenses in introducing the best breed of English cattle. I had no slight pleasure in seeing great composts formed of dung and earth, and sea ore, well mixed together, and then carried into his meadows. Stands were also building for corn stacks, and under them standings for cows or oxen, and vaults for potatoes : they are executed in the most perfect manner. A sort of oat he has introduced into cultivation, a few grains of which he got by accident, cultivated them carefully in drills, and has got a large quantity now. They are of so great a body that he calls them Patagonian oats. He favoured me with a few for feed. In introducing the linen manufacture, his lordship has made great exertions. He found it to consist principally in spinning flax, which was sent out of the country, without any looms in it, except a very few, which worked only for their own life. In order to establish it, he built good houses in the town of Westport, and let them upon very reasonable terms to weavers, gave them looms, and lent them money to buy yarn, and in order to secure them from manufacturing goods, which they should not be able readily to sell, he constantly bought all they could not sell, which for some years was all they made ; but by degrees, as the manufacture arose, buyers came in, so that he has for some time not bought any great quantity. The first year, 1772, he bought as much as cost him 200l. the next year, 1773, 700l. the next, 1774 ; as much as 2000l. ; and in 1775, above 4000l. worth: and this year, 1776, the number of buyers having much increased, he will not lay out more than 4000l. the same as last year. This year he has also given such encouragement as to induce a person to build and establish a bleach green and mill. The progress of this manufacture has been prodigious, for at first Lord Altamont was the only buyer, whereas for two years past there has not been less than 10,000l. a year laid out at this market in linen - yet with all this encrease, they do not yet weave a tenth part of the yarn that is spun in the neighbourhood. The linens made are all coarse, generally 8 to 1100, from 9d. to 1s. 1d. a yard. They are double webs of 42 yards and upwards, and 32 inches wide ; and they earn 1s. a day by weaving it, on an average of workmen. It is of 2½ to 3½ hank yarn, and the spinners earn two-pence halfpenny to three-pence halfpenny a day by spinning it. The price of it has been in 5 years gradually rising from four-pence to seven-pence a hank. All of it is spun of flax raised in the country.

The poor in general live on potatoes and milk 9 months out of the 12, the other 3 months bread and milk. All of them have one or two cows ; fish is exceedingly plentiful, particularly oysters for 1s. a cart load, and sand eels, yet they eat none ; herrings, however are an article in

their food. In their domestic œconomy, they reckon that the men with their labour in the field, and the women pay the rent by spinning. The increase of population is very great. Lord Altamont is of opinion that the numbers have doubled on his estate in 20 years.

The farms around Westport are in general large, from 400 acres to 4 or 5000, all which are stock farms ; and the occupiers re-let the cultivated lands, with the cabbins, at a very increased rent, to the oppression of the poor, who have a strong aversion to renting of these tierny begs. The soil in general is a cold spewy stoney clay and loam ; the best lands in the country are the improved moors. Rents rise from 2s. for heath, to 16s. for good land. Average 8s. about three-fifths of the country unimproved mountains, bog and lake. Great tracts of mountain, but bogs not very extensive. Clara Island 2,400 acres, at 300l a year; Achill 24,000 acres, at 200l. a year; Bofin 100l. a year, and is above 1,200 acres. It belongs to Lord Clanrickard. The course of this country, 1. Potatoes, manured with sea-weed : this is so strong that they depend entirely on it, and will not be at the trouble to carry out their own dunghills. On the shore, towards Joyce's country, they actually *let their dung-hills accumulate, till they become such a nuisance, that they move their cabbins in order to get from them.* A load of wrack is worth, at least, six loads of dung. They do not take half what is thrown in. On the shore, open to the Atlantic, there is a leather sort of Alga, which comes in in the spring. The kelp weed grows only where it is sheltered. The coast of Lord Altamont's domain and islands let for 100l. a year for making kelp.

1. Potatoes. 2. Barley. 3. Oats. 4. Oats.

1. Potatoes. 2. Barley. 3. Oats. 4. Flax.

1. Potatoes. 2. Barley. 3. Oats.

Potatoes they measure by the barrel of 12 cwt. and in each barrel 16 pecks of three quarters each. They plant 10 bushels, of 3 cwt. each, at the average price of 123, a barrel, or 1s. per cwt.

A man, his wife, and four children, will eat a bushel of 3 cwt, every week : in 39 weeks, therefore, they eat 117 cwt. or 5 ton, 17 cwt. this is just half an acre for a family. Of oat- meal, the common allowance is a quart of oat-meal a day for a labourer. A mower that is fed is allowed that quantity, and 6 quarts of butter milk a day, or as much *bonny clobber*. To explain what this is I must observe, that they set the milk three days for the cream to rise, and having then skimmed it, the milk that remains is as thick as blamange, and as sour as vinegar, and this is bonny clobber.

Of barley they sow 6 pecks, each 21 quarts, and the crop is generally from 20 to 30 fold, or at 25 it is 150 pecks. Of oats they sow a barrel of 24 stone per acre, and they get 6 inch barrels. Of flax they sow 40 gallons, and it will sell in common on the foot at 8l. they find that it enriches the land. No wheat sown but by gentlemen for their own consumption. *They burn their corn, instead of threshing it.* The grazing system is generally the succession, buying in at year olds, or if the lands are very bad, two year olds ; keep them till four year olds, and then sell them lean at Ballinasloe. They give 10s. 6d. to 31. 10s. for yearlings ; average 40s. For two-year olds, they give 3l. They fell for 6l. what they gave 2l. and for those they gave 3l. they will sell at four-year olds for 6l. They keep but few sheep, but generally buy year-old wethers ; *hoggerils* in May, at 8s. to 10s. each, shear them and turn to the mount-ains ; bring them on to their arable lands in winter, shear them again the following year, and send them to the mountain again, and in the following summer shear again, putting them on their best pastures, and selling fat at Ballinasloe, at 15s. or 16s. their fleeces 5 lb. at 1s. a pound. There are some dairies, as far as ten or twelve cows, which are employed for butter. Twenty years ago cows were lett for 1 cwt. of butter for the year, and rearing the calf. Very few swine

kept, and of a bad kind. They plough all with horses, four in a plough, directed by a man, walking backwards, who to make them move forward, strikes the beasts in the face. Young colts they harrow with by the tail. Twelve horses are necessary for one hundred acres in tillage. They winnow their corn in the road, and let the wind blow away the chaff.

Lord Altamont mentioned descriptive of Mayo husbandry, acts of parliament to prevent their pulling the wool off their sheep by hand ; burning their corn ; ploughing by the tail ; in hiring and stocking farms, the common commutation is, three rents for a grazing one. Land sells at twenty-one and twenty-two years purchase, at rack rent. Rents have fallen within five years, 1s. in the pound ; they are at present on a balance, with a tendency to rise. Tythes are compounded in the lump. Leases, three lives, or thirty-one years, also twenty years. Much land let to those who re-let. The Rents in Mayo are trebled in forty years. No emigrations. Farms are generally let in partnership, but the term *Rundale* not known. Labour generally done by cottars, who have land let to them, or grass for cows, under agreement to work for the landlord. Provisions, which the poor eat, not risen, but butchers meat doubled. They pluck their geese alive every year. All carriage done by horses with baskets : the bottoms of which fallen with sticks, and let out the load. The industry of the people very much increased ; an astonishing change in industry, sobriety, &c. and are in much better circumstances in every respect, than twenty years ago. They have a practice common among them, which shews an increasing civility in the change from Irish names to English ones. Even surnames, for instances *Stranaghan*, Irish for *birds*, which they call themselves. *Markahau*, Irish for a rider, which name they take ; *Cullane*, Irish for a *whelp*, which name they assume ; others call themselves *Collins*. *Conree*, Irish for a *king*, which they call themselves ; *Ruddery*, a *knight*, and many others. Among Lord Altamont's labourers, is one Mowbray Seymour ; his great grand-father was master-worker of the mint at London. There are many Mortimers, Piercys, &c. and within a few years, a Plantagenet, in the county of Sligo. Eagles abound very much in this country, and do great mischief, by carrying away lambs, poultry, &c. they also watch the salmon jumping, and seize them even out of the water, by darting with that celerity, of which they are such masters ; this is so common, that men with guns are set to kill and frighten them.

August 30th, rode to Rosshill, four miles off, a headland that projects into the bay of Newport, from which there is a most beautiful view of the bay on both sides ; I counted thirty islands very distinctly, all of them cultivated under corn and potatoes, or pastured by cattle. At a distance, Clara rises in a very bold and picturesque stile ; on the left, Crow Patrick, and to the right, other mountains. It is a view that wants nothing but wood.

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