

Into The North 1780

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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July 18th, once more to Lord Harcourt's at St. Woolstan's, where I was so fortunate as to meet Colonel Burton : he gave me a fresh packet of recommendations into the north of Ireland, and taking my leave of his excellency, passed Manooth to Kilrue. From Cellbridge to Manooth is a line of very fine corn. Passed Dunboyne, from thence to Kilrue ; the soil is clay, flat and strong, and I observed much hollow draining going on, with very fine crops of wheat and oats. The land about Mr. Jones is very fine rich strong loam, called here clay.

Mr. Lowther, to whom I had a letter, not being at home, I was forced to take refuge in a cabin, called an inn, at Ratoath. Preserve me, fates ! from such another.

In their strong lands about Kilrue their courses are :— 1. Fallow. 2. Wheat, yielding 8 to 15 barrels an acre. 3. Oats, 9 to 20 barrels.

1. Potatoes 80 barrels. 1. Potatoes.

2. Beans 7 to 15. 2. Barley 9 to 14,

3. Oats. 3. Oats.

Limestone gravel they use in great quantities ; lay it on a fallow, and it lasts 7 years, the expense from 4*l.* to 8*l.* Lime they also have, but find that it will not last like gravel. Hollow, called *French* drains, are very general, even among the common farmers : some done with stones, but much with sods, laid an edge in the ground, they dig them 2½ or 3 feet deep, at two feet and an half, the expense is 5*d.* a perch. At 3 feet it is 8*d.* Clover they sow pretty much, let it lie two years, and then break it up for oats on one ploughing. They sow it on both winter and spring corn. The poor give 5*l.* 5*s.* an acre for lay to plant potatoes on, and the same for stubbled ground dunged. A cabin and half an acre of land 30*s.* rent, and 30*s.* more for a cow's feed. Farms rise to 300 acres, and rents from 18*s.* to 25*s.* an acre.

July 19th, left Ratoath, passing Robertstown, found much of the land a strong loam without stones, with all the appearance of being a very fine soil. Got to Baron Hamilton's at Hampton, near Baibriggen, by breakfast. His house is new built, and stands agreeably by a fine shore, with a full view of the mountains of Mourn, at 16 leagues distance, and the isles of Skerry near him, much improving his view. He favoured me with the following account.

About Hampton, the soil clay or strong loam, and many stones in it ; lets from 20*s.* to 30*s.* Farms rise from 40 acres to 100 and 150. No taking in partnership. Courses :

1. Fallow. 2. Wheat, 7 barrels. 3. Barley, 10 to 12. 4. Oats, 10.

1. Fallow. 2. Wheat. 3. Barley. 4. White pease.

1. Fallow. 2. Wheat. 3. Barley. 4. Oats. 5 Clover for 2 years. 6. Wheat or fallow.

The manures lime, sea-sand, marle, and lime-stone gravel got three feet deep. Lime 6*d.* to 8*d.* at the kiln ; they lay from 100 to 150 barrels, which last 8 or 9 years ; on the dry soils best. On clay well drained, they spread of lime-stone gravel, that has a strong fermentation, 300 to 400 loads, generally out of drains, ditches, &c. draining their lands at the same time ; lasts long, and is best on strong land. Sea sand on poor clay excellent ; lay 300 barrels an acre, which is a good dressing ; lasts many years, and changes it from scutch (*tritricam repens*) to white clover ; it has an effervescence with acids. The marle white under black bottoms ; 300 loads an acre. On new lays the Baron has found a very fine effect from it. Flax chiefly after potatoes, and then barley. Sow enough for their own use, not enough for manufactures for sale. For potatoes 4*l.* an acre for dunged land, or lay on dung and have it for nothing. Much French draining, 4 feet deep, and 5 inches at bottom ; fill with stones, and the improvement found very great ; the common farmers do much of it. Tillage mostly with horses. In hiring farms they will take 100 acres with 200*l.* Tythes are generally compounded. The Baron has 800*l.* a year in tythes, and they pay upon an average 2*s.* an acre. If distinguished, wheat is 8*s.* or 9*s.* Barley 8*s.* Oats 5*s.* Pease 4*s.* Meadow 4*s.* 6*d.* Many lands are hired to be relet. Population increases very fast, and the country in every respect improves amazingly. A cottage and half an acre 40*s.* to 3*l.* for a cow 30*s.* generally have 2 cows. A belly full of potatoes and oatmeal for *stir-about* ; keep 2 or 3 pigs, and a great deal of poultry. They are universally much better off in every respect than 20 years ago. More industrious, owing perhaps very much to the high rents ; insomuch that they have been the parent of all improvements. All the manures have been found out within 20 years. Lime has not been used more than 10 years. When Baron Hamilton built the pier at Balbriggen, in the year 1763, there was only one stoop of culm for burning lime in a season, but now from 60 to 100.

Cattle of all sorts a very inferior object here. This place is in Fingal, which is a territory from near Dublin, extending along the coast, inhabited by a people they call Fingalians ; an English colony planted here many years ago, speaking nearly the same language as the barony of Forth, but more intermixed with Irish in language, &c. from vicinity to the capital.

A horse and car and driver 1*s.* two cars to a driver. The rise of labour great, 20 years, from 4*d.* to 6*d.* An extraordinary circumstance is, that Ireland has been very prosperous on comparison with former times, and yet interest of money now 6 per cent, and 20 years ago 4½ and 5. Land sells at under 20 years purchase, fallen from 24 in 4 or 5 years, owing partly to the rents being run up too high.

Baron Hamilton has been a considerable improver ; he took in near Hampton 150 acres mountain land, covered with scutch grass (*tritricum repens*) furz, (*ulex europæus*) and a little heath (*erica vulgaris*) ; stubbed it up, ploughed it 4 times, limed it 140 to 150 barrels each acre. Sowed rye, sold it on the land 7*l.* 10*s.* an acre. For two successive years let it at 4*l.* 10*s.* an acre for two crops of oats, which yielded from 16 to 20 barrels an acre ; then two years more at 3*l.* 15*s.* and 3*l.* 10*s.* the crop 14 barrels. Fallowed it to destroy scutch grass for maslin, and then a crop of spring corn with grass seed. This is the course in which the rough ground has been generally improved. This soil clay without much stone. In its rough state worth only 5*s.* an acre to remain so, but the Baron paid 16*s.* 6*d.* The first year's expense was, crop included, 10*l.* an acre, now worth 20*s.* to 28*s.* an acre.

The Baron carried me to Balbriggen, a little sea port of his, which owes its being to his care and attention. It subsists by its fishing boats, which he builds ; has 23 of them, each carrying 7 men, who are not paid wages, but divide the produce of their fishery. The vessel takes one share, and the hands one each, which amounts on an average to 16*s.* a week. A boat costs from 130*l.* to 200*l.* fitted out ready for the fishery : they make their own nets. The port owes its existence to a very fine pier which Baron Hamilton built, within which ships of 200 tons can lay their broad sides, and unload in the quay. Such vessels bring coals and culm from Wales, &c. The base of the pier is 18 feet thick, and on the outside is a considerable rampart

of great fragments of rock, sunk to defend the pier against the waves. In moving these huge stones, some of which weigh 8 or 10 ton, the Baron made use of a contrivance which deserves to be generally known. They are spread along the shore, between high and low water mark, but to get them to the place where wanted was a very difficult business. He lashed puncheons to them at low water, which floated them when the tide came in, and conveyed them over the spot where wanted ; but in disengaging the calks from the stone to sink the latter, he often had them broken, and found many difficulties. To remedy this, he had a contrivance very simple and ingenious, which answered the purpose completely. The puncheons were hooped strongly with iron near each end, and between these irons was a chain, from the centre of which went an iron tongue. The Hones, at low water, were lashed round with a chain with open irons that corresponded with those tongues in the cask chains, the one went into the other, and when closed had a female screw through all three ; through the two jaws of the one, and the tongue of the other, a male screw at the end of a bar was then screwed in when the stone was ready to move. One of 8 tons required 10 puncheons upon being floated over the spot where wanted ; these bars were unscrewed, and the stone and casks disengaged at once without trouble, the one sinking, and the cases floating away with the chain that was lashed round the stone.

Left Balbriggen and went to Bally-garth, the seat of —— Pepper, Esq ; a place very agreeably wooded on a riling ground above a river.

Mr. Pepper keeps a considerable domain in his hands, and has practiced several parts of husbandry with much attention ; he has laid down large tracts to grass, which he has made so good that he could let it readily for 50s. to 3*l.* an acre. His course of crops has been sometimes, 1. Turnips. 2. Barley. 3. Clover. 4. Wheat ; and has cultivated turnips in considerable quantities. In several particulars, which I saw myself, Mr. Pepper appears an excellent farmer. His quick fences were in perfect order ; his wet lands hollow drained, and the mouths of the drains well faced with stone. The old ditch earth on the borders of his fields was carting away to form composts ; he did it by contract, the men digging and leading it from 20 to 30 perches, driving and finding horses and cars at 5*d.* a score loads, each a barrel. This is much *against* the Irish cars, for 4 horses carry but 16 bushels of earth, whereas 3 in an English cart would carry double that. Mr. Pepper is much a friend to them for some things, but in others thinks that two horse carts are preferable ; with 2 horses in a well made cart, he sends 10 barrels to Dublin, whereas 2 horses in 2 cars carry but 5 or 6 barrels, which is a great inferiority ; but he likes the little one horse cart better still, which brings him 3 barrels of coals, lime, &c. A circumstance in the fattening of cattle, in which he is peculiar, is, not letting his bulls go among his fattening cows ; he never does this, and finds that they fat as well without as with it. In breeding sheep he is attentive, finding it a profitable branch of farming. He keeps his lambs till they are 2-year-old wethers, and fells them in spring at 35s. each on an average ; but could not do it without the assistance of turnips. His ewes clip 81b. of wool, and his lambs 71b. 20 acres of grass will carry 100 through the year, except the turnip season. Sea sand Mr. Pepper spreads on his clay meadows, and finds the benefit of it very great.

In conversation on the common people, Mr. Pepper assured me he never found them more dishonest than in other countries. They would thief slightly till they found him resolute in punishing all he discovered ; even his turnips have suffered very little depredation.

July 20th, to Drogheda, a well built town, active in trade, the Boyne bringing ships to it. It was market day, and I found the quantity of corn, &c. and the number of people assembled very great ; few country markets in England more thronged. The Rev. Mr. Nesbit, to whom recommended, absent, which was a great loss to me, as I had several enquiries which remained unsatisfied.

To the field of battle on the Boyne—The view of the scene from a rising ground which looks down upon it is exceedingly beautiful, being one of the completed landscapes I have seen. It is a vale, loosing itself in front between bold declivities, above which are some thick woods, and distant country. Through the vale the river winds and forms an island, the point of which is tufted with trees in the prettiest manner imaginable ; on the other side a rich scenery of wood, among which is Doctor Norris's house. To the right on a rising ground on the banks of the river is the obelisk, backed by a very bold declivity ; pursued the road till near it, quitted my chaise, and walked to the foot of it. It is founded on a rock which rises boldly from the river. It is a noble pillar, and admirably placed. I seated myself on the opposite rock, and indulged the emotions which with a melancholy not displeasing filled my bosom, while I reflected on the consequences that had sprung from the victory here obtained. Liberty was then triumphant. May the virtues of our posterity secure that prize which the bravery of their ancestors won ! Peace to the memory of the Prince to whom, whatever might be his failings, we owed that day memorable in the annals of Europe !

Returned part of the way, and took the road to Cullen, where the Lord Chief Baron Forster received me in the most obliging manner, and gave me a variety of information uncommonly valuable. He has made the greatest improvements I have any where met with. The whole country 22 years ago was a waste sheep walk, covered chiefly with heath, with some dwarf furz and fern. The cabbins and people as miserable as can be conceived ; not a protestant in the country, nor a road passable for a carriage. In a word, perfectly resembling other mountainous tracts, and the whole yielding a rent of not more than from 3s. to 4s. an acre. Mr. Forster could not bear so barren a property, and determined to attempt the improvement of an estate of 5000 acres till then deemed irreclaimable. He encouraged the tenants by every species of persuasion and expense, but they had so ill an opinion of the land that he was forced to begin with 2 or 3000 acres in his own hands ; he did not, however, turn out the people, but kept them in to see the effect of his operations.

These were of a magnitude I have never heard before : he had for several years 27 limekilns burning stone, which was brought four miles with culm from Milford Haven. He had 450 cars employed by these kilns, and paid 700*l.* a year for culm : the stone was quarried by from 60 to 80 men regularly at that work ; this was doing the business with incomparable spirit—yet had he no peculiar advantages, but many circumstances against him, among which his constant attendance on the courts, which enabled him to see Cullen but by starts, was not the least. The works were necessarily left to others at a time that he could have wished constantly to have attended them.

While this vast business of liming was going forwards, roads were also making, and the whole tract inclosed in fields of about 10 acres each, with ditches 7 feet wide, and 6 deep, at 1*s.* a perch, the banks planted with quick and forest trees. Of these fences 70,000 perches were done.

In order to create a new race of tenants, he fixed upon the most active and industrious labourers, bought them cows, &c. and advanced money to begin with little farms, leaving them to pay it as they could. These men he nursed up in proportion to their industry, and some of them are now good farmers, with 4 or 500*l.* each in their pockets. He dictated to them what they should do with their lands, promising to pay the loss, if any should happen, while all the advantage would be their own. They obeyed him implicitly, and he never had a demand for a shilling loss.

He fixed a colony of French and English Protestants on the land, which have flourished greatly. In Cullen are 50 families of tradesmen, among whom sobriety and industry are perfectly established.

Many of these lands being very wet, draining was a considerable operation : this he did very effectually, burying in the drains several millions of loads of stones.

The mode in which the chief baron carried on the improvement, was by fallowing. He stubbed the furze, &c. and ploughed it, upon which he spread from 140 to 170 barrels of lime per acre, proportioning the quantity to the mould or clay which the plough turned up. For experiment he tried as far as 300 barrels, and always found that the greater the quantity, the greater the improvement. The lime cost him 9*d.* a barrel on the land : his usual quantity 160, at the expense of 6*l.* an acre, and the total of that expense alone thirty thousand pounds ! After the liming, fallowed the land for rye, and after the rye took two crops of oats. Throughout the improvement, the lime has been so exceedingly beneficial that he attributes his success principally to the life of it. Without it, all other circumstances equal, he has got 3 or 4 barrels an acre of oats, but with it 20 and 22 of barley. Has compared lime and white marle on an improved mountain-soil for flax, that on the lime produced 1000 lb. well scutched, the other 300lb.

His great object was to shew the tenantry as soon as he could, what these improvements would do in corn, in order to set them to work themselves. He sold them the corn crops on the ground at 40*s.* an acre : the three crops paid him therefore the expense of the liming, at the same time they were profitable bargains to the tenants. With the third corn-crop the land was laid down to grass. Upon this operation, after the manuring, ditching and draining, the old tenants very readily hired them. Some seeing the benefit of the works, executed them upon their own lands ; but their landlord advanced all the money, and trusted to their success and honesty for the payment. This change of their sentiments induced him to build new farm-houses, of which he has erected above 30, all of lime and stone, at the expense of above 40*l.* a house; the farms are in general about 80 acres each.

After six or seven years, the chief baron limed much of it a second time on the sod, and the benefit of it very great. It is all let now on an average at 20*s.* an acre. Upon the whole, his Lordship is clearly of opinion that the improvement has been exceedingly profitable to him, besides the pleasure that has attended so uncommon a creation. He would recommend a similar undertaking to others who possess wastes, and if he had such another estate he would undertake it himself.

He also allotted a considerable tract of many acres for plantations, which are well placed and flourishing. Ridings are cut in them, and they form a very agreeable scenery. Mr. Forster, his son, takes much pleasure in adding to them, and has introduced 1700 sorts of European and American plants. The country is now a sheet of corn : a greater improvement I have not heard of, or one which did more genuine honour to the person that undertook it.

THIS GREAT IMPROVER, a title more deserving estimation than that of a great general or a great minister, lives now to overlook a country flourishing only from his exertions. He has made a barren wilderness smile with cultivation, planted it with people, and made those people happy. Such are the men to whom monarchs should decree their honours, and nations erect their Statues.

Some other circumstances I learnt from his Lordship were : more than half the county of Louth, which is one of the best in Ireland for tillage, is every year tinned corn, 25 years ago, it was all at 10*s.* an acre, now 21*s.* *Corn-acre* rents, 40 years ago, were 25*s.*— 25 years ago 30*s.*—now 3*l.* 12*s.* Conjectures one family to every 10 acres in the county, exclusive of towns : found this by observing generally four families to every farm of 40 acres.

The general course of crops in Louth is : 1. Fallow. 2. Wheat, the produce 6 barrels. 3.

Oats, ditto 15 barrels. 4. Barley, ditto 15 barrels. 5. Oats. 6. Grass seeds sown, or left waste to turf itself.

In his Lordship's circuits through the north of Ireland he was, upon all occasions, attentive to procure information relative to the linen manufacture.

It has been his general observation, that where the linen manufacture spreads the tillage is very bad. Thirty years ago the export of linen and yarn about 500,000*l.* a year ; now 1,200,000*l.* to 1,500,000*l.* The chief baron has taken some pains to compare the linen and woollen manufactory for Ireland, and found from the closest inspection that the people employed in the linen earned one-third more than those in the woollen. One stone of wool is the produce of an acre of grass, which feeds two and an half, or three sheep. Raw, it is equal to one-third of the manufactured value, and at 10*s.* is only 1*l.* 10*s.* gross produce. An acre of flax at 8*cwt.* and he has had 12*cwt.* wrought into the worst linens, will amount to ten times the value of the acre under wool.

Respecting the thieving disposition of the common people, which I had heard so much of, the Chief Baron was of an entire different opinion—from his own experience he judged them to be remarkably honest. In working his improvements, he has lived in his house without shutters, bolts or bars, and with it half full of *spalpeens*, yet never lost the least trifle—nor has he met with any depredations among his fences or plantations.

Raising rents he considers as one of the greatest causes of the improvement of Ireland ; he has found that upon his own estates it has universally quickened their industry, set them to searching for manures, and made them in every respect better farmers. But this holds only to a certain point ; if carried too far, it deadens, instead of animating industry. He has always preferred his old tenants, and never let a farm by advertisement to receive proposals. That the system of letting farms to be re-let to lower tenants, was going out very much : it is principally upon the estates of absentees, whose agents think only of the most rent from the most solvent tenant.

In conversation upon the popery laws, I expressed my surprise at their severity : he said they were severe in the letter, but were never, executed. It is rarely or never (he knew no instance) that a protestant discoverer gets a lease by proving the lands let under two-thirds of their value to a papist. There are severe penalties on carrying arms or reading mass ; but the first is never executed, for poaching (which I have heard), and as to the other, mass-houses are to be seen every where : there is one in his own town. His Lordship did justice to the merits of the Roman Catholics, by observing that they were in general a very sober, honest, and industrious people. This account of the laws against them brought to my mind an admirable expression of Mr. Burke's in the English house of commons, **CONNIVANCE IS THE RELAXATION OF SLAVERY, NOT THE DEFINITION OF LIBERTY.**

The kingdom more improved in the last 20 years than in a century before. The great spirit began in 1749 and 1750.

He was allured that the emigrations, which made so much noise in the north of Ireland, were principally idle people, who, far from being missed, left the country the better by their absence. They were generally dissenters, very few churchmen or catholics.

It is found in that manufacture, that it never flourishes when oatmeal is cheap—the greatest exports of linen are when it is dearest.

July 21st, took my leave of this prince of improvers, who gave me a letter to Mr. Forster of Rossy Park; bent my course thither, but being from home, went on to Atherdee ; and one of

the finest sheets of corn I ever beheld is from the hill which looks down on that town. It is a glorious prospect, all waving hills of wheat as far as the eye can see, with the town of Atherdee in a wood in the vale.

To Dundalk, the view down on this town also very beautiful, swelling hills of a fine verdure, with many rich inclosures backed by a bold outline of mountain that is remarkable. Laid at the Clanbrassil Arms, and found it a very good inn. The place, like most of the Irish towns I have been in, full of new buildings, with every mark of increasing wealth and prosperity. A cambrick manufacture was established here by parliament, but failed ; it was, however, the origin of that more to the north.

July 22d, left Dundalk—Took the road through Ravensdale to Mr. Fortescue, to whom I had a letter, but unfortunately he was in the south of Ireland. Here I saw many good stone and slate houses, and some bleach greens ; and I was much pleased to see the inclosures creeping high up the sides of the mountains stoney as they are. Mr. Fortescue's situation is very romantic on the side of a mountain, with fine woods hanging on every side, with the lawn beautifully scattered with trees spreading into them, and a pretty river winding through the vale, beautiful in itself, but trebly so on information, that before he fixed there, it was all a wild waste. Rents in Ravensdaie 10s. mountain land 2s. 6d. to 5s. Also large tracts rented by villages, the cotters dividing it among themselves, and making the mountain common for their cattle.

Breakfasted at Newry, the Globe, another good inn.—This town appears exceedingly flourishing, and is very well built ; yet 40 years ago, I was told there were nothing but mud cabbins in it : this great rise has been much owing to the canal to Loch-Neagh. I crossed it twice—it is indeed a noble work. I was amazed to see fhips of 150 tons and more lying in it, like barges in an English canal. Here is a considerable trade.

Take the road to Market-hill : the town parks about Newry let up to 2*l.* and 3*l.* an acre, which is here English measure. They low oats chiefly as I advanced, with a little barley—no fallows, and but little clover. Within 4 miles of Market-hill, the course :

1. Oats. 2. Oats. 3. Oats. 4. Oats. 5. Oats, and then leave it to the rubbish, which comes for 3 or 4 years : some potatoes, and after it flax. I am now got into the linen country, and the worst husbandry I have met with ; my Lord Chief Baron is right. Rents 10s. to 13s. the English acre ; all the farms are very small, let to weavers, &c. They measure by the boll of 10 bushels, a good crop of oats three to four and a half.

This road is abominably bad, continually over hills, rough, stony, and cut up. It is a turnpike, which in Ireland is a synonymous term for a vile road, which is the more extraordinary, as the bye ones are the finest in the world. It is the effect of jobs and imposition which disgrace the kingdom ; the presentment roads shew what may be done, and render these villainous turnpikes the more disgusting.

Called at Lord Gosfort's, to whom I had been introduced by Lord Harcourt, but he was not yet come from Dublin ; his steward, however, gave me the few following particulars. About Market-Hill they measure by the English acre, and let from 8s. mountain to 12s. and 14s. The courses are :

1. Oats. 2. Oats. 3. Oats, 4. Oats. 5. Oats. 6. Oats, then leave it to itself to graze 3 or 4 years, this on good strong land ; on worse 3 or 4 of oats, and 3 or 4 of grass, that is weeds, they reckon-the best management to lime it on the sod, then 3 crops of oats, and 3 years left, and that one liming will last many years.

Measure by bolls, each 10 bushels ; sow 6 bushels of oats to an acre ; a good crop is 60 bushels, but that is extraordinary, 4 or 5 bolls common ; and the crops will hold good through the whole course, the first will be the worst. Another course :

1. Potatoes. 2. Flax, or oats. Also after several crops of oats, plough thrice and sow flax feed, 2 bushels to an acre, and yield 12 to 18 stone to every bushel of feed. Never sow flax twice running. Plant 16 to 18 bushels of potatoes on an acre ; they do not live entirely on them, but have oatmeal, oaten bread, and sometimes flesh meat, once or twice a week. In spinning a woman will do 5 or 6 hanks a week, and gets 30s. for it by hire, as wages for half a year ; a girl of 12 years old three halfpence, or two-pence a day. A man will earn, by weaving coarse linen 1s. 2d. and 1s. 6d. by fine linen. The manufacturers live better than the labourers; they earn 3s. 6d. a week in winter, and 4s. in summer. Manufacturers have all from 6 to 15 acres from 6s. to 20s. an acre, and the house into the bargain ; generally 2 or 3 cows, and a bit of flax enough for half a bushel or a barrel of feed, at 3 bushels to an acre. The country labourers have also from 6 to 10 acres. A cabin without land 1l. 1s. a year. Cloth and yarn never so dear as at present, and people all employed—none idle. A cottage-building 5l. ditto stone and slate 80l. A great rise of both labour and provisions ; 20 years ago beef 1d. and 1½d. per lb. and labour 3d. and 4d. a day.

Religion mostly Roman, but some Presbyterians and church of England.—Manufacturers generally Protestants.

The manufacturers wives drink tea for breakfast. No cattle but for convenience among the small farmers. No farms above 100 acres, and those stock ones, for fattening cows and bullocks. Very few sheep in the country. Manures are lime, of which 20 to 60 barrels per acre, at 1s. 6d. will last for ever : best for light land—marle grey and white, best on heathy ground. Some soapers waste at Armagh and Newry, but not much.

Reached Armagh in the evening ; waited on the primate.

July 23d, his Grace rode out with me to Armagh, and shewed me some of the noble and spirited works by which he has perfectly changed the face of the neighbourhood. The buildings he has erected in 7 years, one would suppose without previous information, to be the work of an active life. A list of them will justify this observation.

He has erected a very elegant palace, 90 feet by 60, and 40 high, in which an unadorned simplicity reigns. It is light and pleasing, without the addition of wings or lesser parts, which too frequently wanting a sufficient uniformity with the body of the edifice, are unconnected with it in effect, and divide the attention. Large and ample offices are conveniently placed behind a plantation at a small distance : around the palace is a large lawn, which spreads on every side over the hills, and skirted by young plantations, in one of which is a terrace, which commands a most beautiful view of cultivated hill and dale. The view from the palace is much improved by the barracks, the school, and a new church at a distance, all which are so placed as to be exceedingly ornamental to the whole country.

The barracks were erected under his Grace's directions, and form a large and handsome edifice. The school is a building of considerable extent, and admirably adapted for the purpose : a more convenient or a better contrived one, is no where to be seen. There are apartments for a matter, a school-room 56 feet by 28, a large dining-room and spacious airy dormitories, with every other necessary, and a spacious playground walled in ; the whole forming a handsome front : and attention being paid to the residence of the matter (the salary is 400l. a year), the school flourishes, and must prove one of the greatest advantages to the country of any thing that could have been established. This edifice entirely at the primate's expense. The church is erected of white stone, and having a tall spire makes a

very agreeable object, in a country where churches and spires do not abound—at least such as are worth looking at. Three other churches the primate has also built, and done considerable reparations to the cathedral.

He has been the means also of erecting a public infirmary, which was built by subscription, contributing amply to it himself.

A public library he has erected at his own expense, given a large collection of books, and endowed it. The room is excellently adapted, 45 by 25, and 20 high, with a gallery, and apartments for a librarian.

He has further ornamented the city with a market-house and shambles, and been the direct means, by giving leases upon that condition, of almost new building the whole place. He found it a nest of mud cabbins, and he will leave it a well built city of stone and slate. I heard it asserted in common conversation, that his Grace, in these noble undertakings, had not expended less than 30,000*l.* betides what he had been the means of doing, though not directly at his own expense.

When it is considered that all this has been done in the short term of 7 or 8 years, I should not be accused of exaggeration, if I said they were noble and spirited works undertaken upon a man's paternal estate, how much more then are they worthy of praise when executed not for his own posterity but for the public good ? Amidst such great works of a different nature, it is not to be expected that his Grace should have given much attention to agriculture ; yet has he not neglected it. In order to improve the breed of cattle in the country, he brought from England a bull and several cows of the true Teeswater breed, of a vast size, with short Holderness horns ; they give a great quantity of milk, and he has preserved the breed pure and to their size, by feeding the calves with much attention : they have a considerable quantity of milk given them while at grass.

In the husbandry of the neighbourhood no other corn is raised than oats, and they have a notion that wheat will not do here : to convince them of the contrary, the primate has fallowed a large field, manured it differently for a comparison, and sowed wheat. The crop I viewed, and found it a very fine and a very clean one.

In order that I might be well informed about the linen manufacture, his Grace was so obliging as to send for one of the most considerable merchants in the city, Mr. Macgeough, who very intelligently gave me all the particulars I wanted.

The following circumstances I owe to his information. About Armagh the farms are very small ; the principal people occupy from 40 to 60 acres, these sow some flax as well as raise corn, but in general they are from 5 to 20 acres ; the only object the linen manufacture. This is the case all the way to Newry ; also to Monaghan, but in that county the farms are somewhat larger. Towards Lurgan, Dungannon, and Stewart's-town, much the same. Rents around Armagh are from 7*s.* to 15*s.* Much mountain let in grass by townlands not measured ; average 10*s.* The whole county much lower. To Newry 10*s.* To Dungannon 11*s.* To Lurgan 10*s.* The manufacturers, under-tenants on the church-lands, have leases of 14 years ; on other lands 3 lives, which make a visible difference in culture. A manufacturer who has 10 acres will keep 2 cows and a horse, a pig, but not much poultry ; he will sow 1½ or 2 bolls of oats on 3 acres—a bushel, or ¼ of flax-seed on a rood or a rood and a half, and half an acre of potatoes, or as much as he can dung, His course is :

1. Potatoes.
2. Flax.
3. Oats, and let it then lay for pasture, not sowing in general any grasses—some of them a little clover ; the benefit of which is very great. When his son grows up and marries, he universally divides his farm with him, building a new mud cabbin : thus

farms are constantly growing less and less. This is found very hurtful, by reducing, them so low that they will not supply the people with necessaries. Scarce any of them have potatoes and oats to feed their families ; great importations from Louth, Meath, Monaghan, Cavan, and Tyrone, besides what comes occasionally from England and Scotland.

Their food principally potatoes and oatmeal, very little meat ; the better sort, however, buy some beef for winter, but it is not common. Many of them live very poorly, sometimes having for 3 months only potatoes and salt and water. There are few labouring poor unconnected with the manufacture, but when it is not in a very flourishing state, they live better than those employed by linen. No flax farmers ; scarce any but what is raised in patches by the cotters. Upon light or mountain lands they prefer the American flax-seed. Upon heavy or clay lands they sow Riga Dutch, or Flanders seed ; the quantity they get is more and better in quality than from the American, and will last 20 years. For fine linens they never save seed, pulling it green : but for coarse linens they save as much as they can.

I was informed that the produce of the flax depended on the oiliness of it, and that the goodness of the linen on not being too much bleached, which is only an exhalation of the oil. If so, it should appear that perfecting the seed must injure both linen and flax : but still the contrary is the opinion here. The quantity of seed from 2½ to 3 bushels per acre : or 4 bushels of their own, from the idea that it is not so well saved.

They plough their potatoe-land or barley-stubble once the end of March or April, and sow it. But it is found by several that the best flax, and the greatest quantity, is by sowing their poorest lands that have been ran out by oats, upon 3 ploughings, and the reason they do it not more is for want of ability to give the 3 ploughings. They weed it very carefully. They generally pull it the latter end of July and the beginning of August, and immediately ripple it to get the seeds off, and then lay it into water from 6 or 7 to 12 days, according to the softness of the water, trying it before they take it out : the softer the water the shorter the time, generally bogs or pools, the bog the best. They lay it so thick as to fill the pool. When they take it out, they spread it on meadow ground from 10 to 15 days, according to weather ; if that is very bad, much of it is lost. Upon taking it up, they dry by laying it in heaps on a hurdle fixed upon posts, and making a fire of turf under it. As fast as it dries, they beat it on stones with a beetle, then they scutch it to separate the heart or the *shoves* from the rest. Mills are invented for this, which if they use, they pay 1*s.* 1*d.* a stone for it, which is cheaper than what their own labour amounts to. They next send it to a flax-hackler, which is a sort of combing it, and separates into two or three sorts ; here generally two, tow and flax. In this state it is saleable. The crop is from 18 to 48 stones per acre of flax rough after scutching. The medium is 30 stone, and it sells from 6*s.* 8*d.* to 9*s.* Much Dutch flax is imported, also from Riga, Koningsberg and Petersburg, which generally regulates the price of their own : the 12 head Petersburg is much the belt of the common fort, 12 head Narva not so good, but Marienburg better than Narva. The 9 heads to a bunch coarse. Dutch blay and Dutch white, good and wirey ; but the best of all is the silver blay from Bristol, which comes down the Severn : it is fuller of oil, softer and better than any other sort. The average price of their own 2*l.* 8*s.* to 2*l.* 12*s.* per cwt. or 7*s.* to 7*s.* 6*d.* a stone. It is liked better than imported. If let to a man who should farm flax, the labour would be much higher, as it is here reckoned only at the earning, which they could make by the manufacture, and not the rate at which they work for others. Hackling is 1*s.* 1*d.* a stone.

We next come to the manufacture. The stone-rough after hackling will produce 8lb. flax for coarse linen, and 3½ lb. of tow. The 8lb. will spin into 20 dozen of yarn, or 20 hanks or 5 spangles fit for a ten hundred cloth, which is the common sort here ; and the earnings in spinning will be from 5*s.* to 6*s.* 8*d.* the 5 spangles, and it is very good work to do that in 20 days by one woman ; in common 25 days, consequently they earn something better

than 3*d.* a day. Seven and a half spangles will weave into a piece of linen (ten hundred sort) of 25 yards long, and yard wide. Thus one stone and a half of flax at 7*s.* a stone, market-price, will make that piece. But the tow remains 44 lb. which is 2*s.* 2*d.* of which they make a coarser linen. 30 stone, the produce of an acre, make therefore 20 such pieces. The price of this cloth is from ten-pence half-penny to eleven-pence halfpenny a yard brown, the state in which they sell it. Average eleven-pence. The fixed price for weaving it is two-pence half-penny a yard. But this is when the poor are not able to raise it, and work for hire for those who advance them the yarn. A great deal is done in this manner, as well as by those who raise the flax, and go through the whole of the operation. When the weaver has made his piece of cloth, he goes into the market of Armagh, which is every Tuesday, and sells it to the draper as he would any other commodity, always receiving the money on the spot, as there is no credit. The draper names the price, and the man takes or refuses it. There are many drapers, so that the man tries whom he pleases : there is no combination against the seller, but rather a competition. The draper generally has the bleach greens ; and the expense to him of bleaching is 4*l.* 10*s.* to 5*l.* a pack of 30 pieces, or 3*s.* to 3*s.* 2*d.* a piece. Then he either sends it to factors in London or Dublin, or sells it at the linen-hall in Dublin. Some go over to Chester fair themselves, and dispose of it there. In London he gives 7 months credit : in Dublin 2 or 3 : but if he goes himself to the hall, he gets part ready money. The London factor has 6 per cent, for selling and advancing the money as soon as sold, and half per cent, for warehouse room and insurance from fire. This is the principal part of the trade about Armagh.

In general the manufacture was at the height in 1770 and 1771. In 1772 and 1773 there was a great decline both in price and quantity. In 1774 very low, till May ; when a sudden rise from a speculation of sending to America, and for the demand of the Spanish flota, which was detained a year for want of coarse linens, not being able to be supplied from Germany as usual : and since May 1774, it has continued very flourishing, but is not yet equal to what it was. The decline in 1772 and 1773, owing to the definition of credit, and to the want of a market, but let me observe that a convulsion in credit necessarily contracts the market. Another circumstance was the price of bread in England, which they think, was so high, that the English could not afford to buy much of these coarse linens, of which they are the great consumers. Germany they consider as the great rival, and not Scotland. It is thought that their flax is well cultivated, and admits of no great improvement. The emigrations were chiefly in 1772 and 1773. Many weavers and spinners, with all their families, went. Some farmers, who sold their leases, went off with sums from 100*l.* to 300*l.* and carried many with them. They stopped going when the war broke out. In 1772 and 1773 many turned farming labourers, which is not the case when the trade is high.

The religion generally Roman, some Presbyterians : Protestants emigrated most. The oak boys and steel boys had their rise in the increase of rents, and in oppressive county cesses.

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