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BY

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F.R.S.F.A.S.

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Let us now turn our eyes towards the *modern* prospect which the capital and its provinces present to the *Stranger in Ireland*. A native writer has observed, that “ from the first view of Dublin, we must not judge of its provincial cities and villages :” yet in some degree the comparison will hold good between the town and country. In the *former*, and particularly in the capital, we behold a city abounding with the most splendid works, of architecture ; extensive in their plans, and imposing in their effect : yet at every step, our feelings and senses are assailed by misery, filth, and beggary [1]. In the *latter*, the same magnificence of idea is extended to the nobleman and gentleman’s demesne : we see splendid houses, with inadequate establishments ; extensive parks, and pleasure-grounds oftentimes neglected, and generally ill kept ; in short the plans, both of the public and of the individual, seem in this country both to have been formed and executed on a scale beyond the powers of either, and the “ *simplex munditiis*,” the neat and clean simplicity, is seldom to be found in either situation.

In travelling through Ireland, the attention is immediately and most forcibly arrested by the situation of the *labouring poor* ; and both the eye and mind are in a certain degree compelled to dwell upon this distressing object, by the general want of interest which the surface of the country affords. They are seldom relieved by picturesque scenery, or by improved agriculture ; but the *poor man’s hovel*, every where presents itself, and encourages a train of thought most galling to humanity. In describing the state of the poor throughout the different provinces, the authors of the *Statistical Surveys*, have performed both their duty to, the public, and to themselves, as men of feeling, in painting the miseries of the poor in the strongest colours. As their own words need no comment, and will speak more emphatically than any from the mouth of a *stranger*, I shall make use of them on this occasion.

Mr. TIGHE, in his “ *Survey of the County of Kilkenny*,” says, “ The peasants are most miserably lodged ; there are numbers who have not a bedstead, nor even what is called a truckle bed frame ; a pallet to sleep on, is a comfort unknown to them ; a wad of straw, or perhaps heath laid on a damp clay floor, forms their resting place ; but very few of them have

any thing like sheets ; their blankets are wretchedly bad ; in short, their bed clothes are ragged and scanty ; they put their coats and petticoats over them in aid of blankets in cold weather: too often these are still damp, having been but imperfectly dried by a miserable fire, after they were worn at work in the rain. Even through the scanty thatch, the rain sometimes descends upon their beds, and bringing down the sooty substance lodged there by the smoke of the cabin, wets and stains the bed itself, and those who are stretched upon it.”

Neither are the habitations of the poor, except in the immediate neighbourhood of some man of feeling, who has looked upon them with an eye of pity, (and few indeed are these examples), at all more comfortable in other provinces : in short, the above may serve as *general* and *just* description of the poor man’s hovel. I shall however subjoin a few more extracts from other County Surveys,

CAVAN, “ In civilization, they have made no proficiency, for the very wealthiest of these mountaineers have no better bed than straw, nor is a bedstead to be seen amongst them ; but they indiscriminately herd together with the hogs, and all the domestic animals of their hovel. In more minutely examining the condition of this abandoned peasantry, we have an opportunity of seeing far into human nature, and behold the natives happy, and abundantly possessed of those qualifications which endear mankind to each other. In acts of friendship to their neighbours, they are rarely deficient. Their generous hospitality to strangers is proverbial ; for educating their children they are particularly anxious, and a close attention to religion is universally prevalent ; and though their ideas may be strongly tinctured with superstition, it only argues that their minds have been totally neglected ; and they shew a great wish and anxiety for instruction even in religious concerns.”

QUEEN’S COUNTRY. “ Truly it may be said, that the hogs in England have more comfortable dwellings than the majority of the *peasantry* in Ireland. How can we expect propriety of conduct from our peasants, when we take so little pains to improve them ? In how many places do we find the whole stock of domestic animals, and the peasant family, herd together under one miserable shed, with perhaps no better covering than sods or weeds ; and from their extreme filth alone, what ravages has sickness made through a whole district !

MONAGHAN. “ A bare recital of the state of this class of the community, has been considered as an unmerited satire on the country, and those who have endeavoured to call the attention of the public to the amelioration of their situation, have been stigmatized as *incendiaries*.”

But the time, I hope, is not far distant, when the “ *poor man’s friend*” [2] will no longer be disgraced by such an opprobrious and ill-merited title ; when greater confidence will be established between him and his landlord; and when greater comforts will be the happy result of that confidence.

These extracts will sufficiently prove the abject and distressed situation of the labouring poor throughout Ireland. Four mud walls, with one entrance, and frequently without either a window or a chimney, will in a few words describe the Irish hovel. Such was G i l- Lo’s habitation :

“ At one of th’ ends he keeps his cows,
At th’ other end he kept his spouse :
On bed of straw, without least grumble,
Nay, with delight, did often tumble :
Without partition, or a skreen.

Or spreading curtain, drawn between,
Without concern, exposed they lay,
Because it was their country's way."

The rent of these cabins is from one to two guineas a year : the expence of building a mud cottage complete, has been stated in the *Survey of Derry*, to amount to £.8. 4s. 4d.

To each cabin is attached a plot of ground, of about an acre in quantity, which is cropped alternately with Oats and potatoes, and sometimes a small portion of flax is added. With these supplies, the cottier rests contented ; the potatoes and oats afford him food for the year ; and the flax is spun into linen by the female part of his family. The overplus of corn and potatoes serves to fatten a pig, which is generally sold to defray a part of his rent, the remainder of which is made up by manual labour ; and thus all his real wants being supplied, the rest of his time is spent in total inactivity. I fear the character applied to the Irish by GIRALDUS de BARRI, in the *twelfth* century, may in some degree be applied with equal propriety to them in the *nineteenth*.

" Alone given up to ease : alone abandoned to sloth, they think it the greatest delight to be free from labour ; they think it the greatest opulence to enjoy their liberty."

" *Solùm etiam otto dediti, solùm desidiæ dati, summas reputant delitias labore carere ; summas reputant divitias liber tate gaudere.*"

But in a country, where, owing to a want of capital and a contracted system of agriculture, employment cannot be found for the peasant, his idleness is in some degree palliated, and becomes an act of necessity. ,

If we ascend one step higher, we shall find a peasant renting a small farm, from eight to ten guineas a year, which enables him to keep a small dairy ; but perhaps this class of men might be employed with more advantage to themselves and the public, if they worked for a more extensive farmer.

Of these, the stranger would suppose there were *none*, if he judged only from the general appearance of the farms and their offices ; for we see no conveniences of sheds, stalling, fenced rick yards, &c. &c. as in England ; nor is the house of a farmer, renting three or four hundred pounds a year, at all better than many of the cottages of our labouring poor : and until a new and more advantageous system of letting estates is adopted ; until the class of *Middle Men* [3] is annihilated ; and until the land holder condescends to look with *his own*, and not *his agent's* eyes, over the plans of his estate ; the agriculture of the country can never be improved to that degree which the great fertility of its soil demands ; nor can the wretched situation of the labouring poor be materially amended.

Of the strong necessity of this measure, the Irish land holders seem to be fully sensible. Farming societies have been established in different parts of the country, and the most improved breeds of cattle, as well as the best agricultural instruments have been imported from the Sister kingdom [4].

But till we see farmers with *capital* engaged in agriculture, we cannot expect any very rapid improvement or alteration in the appearance of the country. " From a deficiency of *capital*, says a late writer, arises almost every other deficiency : deficiency in ditching, in draining, in manuring, in cropping, in exertion, and even in industry ; for every faculty is dulled in every pursuit by difficulties arising from that essential want, *the want of capital*[5]."

Another author (ARTHUR YOUNG) says, “ A man may have all the abilities in the world ; write like a genius, talk like an angel, and really understand the business of farming in all its depths ; but unless he has a proper capital, his farm will never be fit for exhibition, and then to condemn him, for not being a good farmer, in practice as well as theory, is just like abusing the inhabitants of the Irish cabins for not becoming excellent managers.”

I could wish that more attention were paid to one important class of rural improvement, namely, *Planting* [6] ; the more important, as the whole island is so peculiarly destitute of wood. I am surprised that it has not been more generally attended to, as there is a most excellent regulation established by parliament, both to encourage and benefit the planter.

I never saw a country better adapted to the growth of trees, both in climate and soil. Whilst the richer ground is calculated for the oak, ash, and elm ; and the poorer and more mountainous, for the larch and birch tree ; the wet and marshy soil would repay a very high rent, by the cultivation of willow.

The utility of the three former species of timber trees, for every purpose of building and agriculture, is too well known to need any comment The *thinnings* of the larch, [which in the first instance, should be planted thick, in order to shelter each other] would in a very few years repay the planter for his *first* expences. This tree, at the growth when first thinned, appears to me admirably calculated for the rafters of Irish cottages, for which there is so great a demand throughout the whole country [7].

The consumption also of willow in making baskets, and carts employed in the carriage of turf is so great, that marshy, and otherwise useless ground, could not be more profitably employed than in the cultivation of that plant.

Until a new and more enlarged system of agriculture prevails throughout the kingdom, it would be in vain to attempt the plantation of quick hedges, and hedge-row timber ; though nothing would contribute so materially both to the beauty and advantage of the country, as the adoption of such a measure, and the consequent destruction of those small plots of ground, and high earthen fences, which so disfigure the general surface of the country.

After so short a residence in Ireland, it would be deemed presumptuous in me, to enter deeply into the actual state of agriculture: I may be allowed, however, to skim lightly over the surface, and to notice the most prominent features of a country little visited by strangers, and too little noticed by the natives. If we take a view, either of the country, climate, or inhabitants, Ireland can undoubtedly recommend itself to the notice of the stranger by its *novelty* : and what is the object of the stranger’s tour but *novelty* ? which carries along with it both amusement and instruction.

Without consulting the *arcana* of physiognomy, the most inattentive observer of human nature, will soon remark, that the *Irishman* is a very different being from either the *Englishman*, or his neighbour the *Welshman* : he will see a hardy and active race of people, civil, and willing to serve and oblige the stranger : he will see, that *nature* has not been sparing in the endowment of his abilities, though *poverty* has denied him the power of improving them by education. A stranger will be struck with the *naivetè*, propriety and singularity of many of the expressions made use of even by the mendicants [8] : in short, the stuff is good, and requires only the skill and management of an able hand to form and fashion it. How different is the character of the *Welshman*, who, still bearing in his breast a deep-rooted jealousy and

antipathy towards the English nation, (whom he distinguishes by the title of *Saxons*) gives the stranger a reluctant answer, even on the most trivial occasions [9]; whilst the more ingenuous *Irishman*, with a blessing in his mouth, will run from one part of the kingdom to the other “*to serve his honour.*”

I found during the whole progress of my tour, the Irish peasant, though talkative and curious, yet always civil.

Amongst the peculiarities of dress, is the *long coat*, worn by the Irish : it is made of wool, and generally is of a grey colour ; it resembles in make so much the great coats worn by the chairmen in London, that it is most probable this fashion was transported from Ireland to London. It is said to be derived from the *mantle* worn by the Gauls and northern nations, and to have answered the triple purposes of housing, bedding, and cloathing : for according to the account given of it by our English poet SPENSER, “ it was a fit house for an out-law, a meet bed for a rebel, and an apt cloak for a thief.

“ First, the *Out-law*, being for his many crimes and villanies banished from the towns and houses of honest men, and wandering in waste places, far from danger of law, maketh his mantle his house, and under it covereth himself from the wrath of heaven, from the offence of the earth, and from the sight of men. When it raineth, it is his pent-house ; when it bloweth, it is his tent ; when it freezeth, it is his tabernacle. In summer, he can wear it loose ; in winter, he can wrap it close ; at all times, he can use it ; never heavy, never cumbersome.

“ Likewise for a *Rebel* it is as serviceable ; for in the war that he maketh, when he flieth from his foe, and lurketh in the thick woods, and strait passages, waiting for advantages ; it is his bed, yea, and almost his household stuff. For the wood is his house against all weathers, and his mantle is his couch to sleep in ; therein he wrappeth himself round, and coucheth himself strongly against the gnats, which in that country, do more annoy the naked rebels, whilst they keep the woods, and do more sharply wound them, than all their enemies’ swords or spears, which can seldom come nigh them. Yea, and oftentimes their mantle serveth them, when they are near driven, being wrapt about their left arm, instead of a target, for it is hard to cut through with a sword ; besides, it is light to bear, light to throw away, and being (as they commonly are) naked, it is to them all and all.

“ Lastly, for a *Thief*, it is so handsome, as it may seem it was first invented for him ; for under it he may cleanly convey any fit pillage that cometh handsomely in his way ; and when he goeth abroad in the night in free-booting, it is his best and surest friend : for lying, as they often do, two or three nights together abroad, to watch for their booty, with that they can prettily shroud themselves under a bush, or a bank-side, till they can conveniently do their errand ; and when all is over, he can, in his mantle, pass through any town or company, being close hooded over his head, as he useth, from knowledge of any to whom he is endangered. Besides this, he, or any man else, that is disposed to mischief or villany, may, under his mantle, go privately armed, and without suspicion of any, carry his head-piece, his skean, or pistol, if he please, to be always in readiness. Thus necessary and fitting is a *mantle* for a bad man.” But though *fitted* for all such nefarious purposes, I should hope that the *modern mantle*, or *Irish long coat*, were made use of only for the innocent and cheering purposes of warmth and comfort.

To the female peasant, I would recommend the adoption of the black beaver hat, which is universally worn in Wales, and gives a look of comfort and neatness ; whereas the want of covering to the head, and the cap flying loosely in the wind, with the long flowing hair, give the sex the appearance of maniacs.

Another branch of the peasant's family deserves notice, namely, his sons. By accustoming them from their infancy to run on errands, their limbs require a wonderful degree of strength and activity. I have heard these boys called *Spalpeens*, a word derived from *spal*, a scythe, or sickle, and *een*, small ; and which in a literal sense implies a working husbandman, or harvest cutter. The quickness with which they will perform a journey of many miles, and the fidelity with which they execute their commission, is really wonderful.

Let us now take a short view of the general appearance which the surface of the country presents to the tourist. In traversing the dreary tract of twenty-five miles, between BANGOR FERRY and HOLYHEAD, I complained most bitterly of its unvaried *monotony*, and thought it could scarcely be equalled in any other country ; but on journeying from my friend's house at MITCHELSTOWN, to the Lake of KILLARNEY, (a distance of 165 Irish miles) I found this *monotony* far surpassed. I complain not of the bad or uncouth features that form the outline of the country, but I complain of the general want of hedge rows, woods, and timber trees. These are at present confined to the immediate neighbourhood of gentlemen's seats, and the banks of rivers ; on which subject, Mr. TIGHE, in his *Survey of Kilkenny*, says, " Though the banks of our rivers may often be beautiful, yet the face of the country, at a distance from them, possessing from nature every capability that variety of surface can give, too often presents, from a mere defect of trees, only a cold outline, or forms ragged and uninteresting."

The *subterraneous* forests (if I may be allowed to use the expression) that are found at a very considerable depth under the surface, evidently prove, that this *defect* could not in former ages be imputed to this country [10]. These are generally discovered in digging turf from the bogs. The fir timber found therein, bears the highest price, being sold for two guineas the ton, and the oak timber only for one guinea.

We must not form our ideas of the Irish Bog from those we meet with in England [11], for they differ totally in their nature, and in the present neglected state of Ireland, where neither trees are planted, nor coals sought for with a proper spirit of investigation, form the greatest comfort of every class of people. Neither is the Bog reduced to a *caput mortuum*, after having been excavated for many feet ; for it is afterwards reclaimed and made abundantly productive both of corn and grasses.

In surveying the state of agriculture, and the different crops with which the soil is tilled, we shall find that the oat and the potatoe prevail over every other kind of grain : here also, a large species of barley, that ripens the first of all grain, is much cultivated. The act for allowing the exportation of corn, will probably be the means of bringing more land into tillage, and encrease the culture of wheat. It is impossible not to remark the slovenly state in which the pastures are left. On this subject, an Irish agriculturist says, " Less attention is paid to this object than any other ; the pastures in the tillage district, are in general such fields as will no longer bear corn, let out without any seeds, and covered with a few starved and useless plants."

The Irish method of making hay, though most obstinately defended and approved by the generality of the natives, appears to the English farmer both singular and contrary to reason. Its progress is thus described in the *Statistical Survey of the County of Down*, page 125 : " Hay-harvest extends from the beginning of July, to the beginning of October, including the early crops near towns, and the more backward in the mountainous regions. Saving hay is thus performed : after the mowers, the grass is shaken out, and the day following, if weather permits, it is turned in rows with rakes and forks ; after which it is made into small cocks, called *lap-cocks*. This operation is thus conducted : One person goes before, with a rake, and

takes in as much ground as can be reached ; a small arm-full of the grass, gathered from this space into a ridge, is taken by another person, who closely follows, shakes it, and with the hands and knees, neatly folds it into a small round heap, with a hole passing through it like a muff, and lightly lays it on the ground. In this situation the grass is suffered to, remain until sufficiently withered ; in the course of one day, by shaking and turning, it is in a proper state to be put into *tramp-cocks*, which are made of different sizes, and so it is suffered to remain until it is taken in."

Such is the mode almost universally adopted by the Irish in making their hay ; and as an objection to their adopting the English method, they state the extraordinary succulence of their grass, and humidity of their climate, which renders it necessary to expose the hay in *cocks* for a considerable time to the sun and wind ; and this I have seen carried to a great excess in many places, where the *tramp-cocks* have remained for several weeks exposed to all kinds of weather : and as the corn follows the hay harvest at a very short interval, the latter is frequently not put into a rick, before the other is safely housed. The loss of good hay, by the great surface of *outside* in the *tramp-cocks*, and which are often soaked with rain from top to bottom, must be evident to every one ; and I am clear that if the grass, when cut was turned *as often* as it is in England, during the heat of the day, there would be no danger in ricking it ; but the operation of turning is slightly attended to ; and that process only constitutes the difference between good and bad hay.

Some account also of the management of flax may be interesting to the traveller : as from the cultivation of this plant, the northern provinces of Ireland derive their greatest affluence and population. " This plant ripens from the middle of July, to the middle of August, When it is pulled and bound into sheaves of about six or eight inches diameter : if the seed is to be saved, it is drawn through an iron comb, fastened in wood, called a *ripple*, by which means the heads, in which the seed is contained, are taken off : these are dried on a winnow cloth, and the flax tied up in bundles, and steeped from four to twelve days, according to the strength of the flax, or softness of the water, in order to rot the pith and other useless parts. When it has lain a proper time in water, it is taken out, and spread thinly in a new mown meadow, or if steeped in a bog, it is spread on an adjoining heath for ten days or a fortnight to bleach ; after which it is gathered, tied up in bundles, and brought home, dried in a kiln made for the purpose, and broken with wooden mallets ; it is then tied up in bundles of twenty-one sheaves, about six inches in diameter, and delivered over to the women for its further process, to be scutched, hackled, and afterwards spun." Those who wish for fuller information respecting the flax, &c. will find a sketch of the Linen Manufactory from the importation of the flax seed, until the sale of the linen in a home or foreign market, detailed by Sir CHARLES COOTE in his *Statistical Survey of the County of Monaghan*.

STOCK. Of the larger species of cattle, the long-horned breed of oxen and cows is the most general, though the *Hereford* and *Devon* breeds have been successfully introduced. The breed also of pigs, which in some districts is still very bad, has been materially improved by the introduction of the best sorts from England. The *Kerry* cows are esteemed in dairies, for the quality of milk they yield. In speaking of them, Mr. TIGHE, in his *Survey of Kilkenny*, says, " I have seen a bull and three dry cows sold for six guineas ; and a bullock and six dry cows, for nine guineas ; and a score has been sold for thirty pounds : lately their price risen. Their size does not exceed that of a moderate sucking calf." The sheep also of the same country are much esteemed for their superior flavour. The common sheep of the country are of a good size and knot. The breed of goats is very numerous, and are kept by the labourers and small farmers, for the use of their milk. They are chiefly white, and resemble the breed of those in North Wales. The horses are very hardy, and patient of fatigue ; and I was surprised to see

with what apparent ease such half-starved animals could draw my chaise for so many successive miles.

CLIMATE. The climate of Ireland does not seem to have altered much since the days of GIRALDUS, who in the twelfth century describes it as subject to continual rain and clouds. “ *Tanta siquidem pluviarum hinc jam inundat ubertas, tanta nebularum et nubium incumbit impuritas, ut vix tres dies vel æstivos continuâ serenitate clarescere videas.* ” Such I found it in the summer 1806, though in England a finer and drier season was never known. Yet though certainly the Irish climate is much more humid than that of England, and of course rather adverse to scorbutic and rheumatic complaints, yet upon the whole I do not learn that it is generally unwholesome : indeed the healthy and populous appearance of the peasant’s hovel, with every disadvantage of closeness and filth on its side, seems to speak strongly in favour of the climate. Dr. BEAUFORT observes, “ that it is rather more variable, and perhaps milder than that of England ; the summer less hot, the winter less severe. The air is certainly damper, but this quality is not to be attributed entirely to the bogs which are scattered all over the kingdom, but chiefly to its insular situation, and to the great quantity of moist particles that are wafted from the ocean by the westerly winds, which most frequently prevail. This moisture, however, is not prejudicial to health, neither is the neighbourhood of bogs unwholesome. The bog waters, far from emitting putrid exhalations, like stagnant pools and marshes, are of an antiseptic quality, as appears from their preserving for ages, and even adding to the durability of timber, which we find universally buried beneath their surfaces, and from their converting to a sort of leather, the skins of men and animals, who have had the misfortune of being lost, or remaining in them for any length of time.”

The winter season is in general so mild, that stalls for the shelter of cattle are thought useless, and little hay is consumed ; which, may account in some degree for the want of attention paid to the pastures. BEDE, a writer of the seventh century, speaking of Ireland, says, to the same purport : “ *Nemo propter hiemem aut fœna secet, aut stabula fabricet jumentis.* ” “ Let no one cut hay for the winter, nor build stabling for his cattle.”

ROADS and TURNPIKES. It is somewhat singular, that a *turnpike* should be a synonymous term for a *bad* road, and that the *cross* roads should be so remarkably good. These are made by presentment before the Grand Jury at the county assizes in the following manner : “ Before a presentment to mend a road is granted by the Grand Jury, an affidavit must be made by two persons, to say, that they have measured it, and that it is out of repair, and that it will require a certain sum *per perch* to repair the same effectually. This application must be lodged with the clerk of the Grand Jury six days previous to the assizes, to be by him registered, to which registry all persons have access, and where they find a road applied for that does not want repair, they have a power of traversing, the presentment. If no such traverse is entered, the parties applying generally get permission to mend it ; between which time, and the ensuing assizes, they repair the road, and when accounted for, and audited by the Judge and Grand Jury, they receive the amount. The overseer has five per cent upon the money expended [12].”

In my Preface, I had occasion to remark, that to travel with comfort through Ireland, a man must be independent, as to carriage and horses ; all inconveniences will then cease ; for he will find excellent roads [except in some few instances] tolerable inns, and better wine and poultry than he will generally meet with on a provincial tour, either in England or Wales,

It has been justly remarked, and with credit to the higher class of society in Ireland, that “ it is easier for a stranger to find his way *into* their houses than *out* of them. Abolish the *vale*, or parting token, which the menial servants still in many houses expect, and Irish

hospitality will be complete. Neither is the heart of the poorest cottier a stranger to these generous feelings : his jug of milk, and plate of potatoes, are charitably offered, alike to the errand boy, and to the mendicant who appears before his door : in short, charity throughout the whole island supplies the want of poor laws. In gratitude to two unknown Irish gentlemen, it behoves me to record the instances of civility which I, as a *stranger*, received from them. During my Southern Tour, while employed in drawing M'CORMAC'S Chapel at CASHEL, a gentleman entered into conversation with me, and we returned together to the inn. Soon afterwards he begged to introduce his friend to me, who in the most pressing manner invited me to his seat in the neighbourhood, and on the truly urged plea of ill health only, could I decline this friendly and unexpected invitation.

During our Northern Tour, another instance of marked attention occurred. Whilst changing horses at an inn on the road to CAVAN, we entered into conversation with a gentleman who was travelling the same way ; and on our arrival at CAVAN, we received from him several letters to his friends on the line of our road, desiring them to point out to us the different beauties, and objects worthy of our notice.

Englishman ! do thou likewise !

CONCLUSION. If we look to the temperature of the Irish climate, the fertility of its soil, the bays, æstuaries, and rivers, with which its provinces are intersected ; in short, if we consider the numerous and great advantages which nature has profusely lavished upon this island ; although we must *at present* lament the want of industry and activity in improving them, yet every one must view with secret satisfaction, the latent riches and succour which the Mother Country may in *future times* derive from the Daughter ; and as from their extraordinary fertility, the island of SICILY, was esteemed the *buttery* of the Roman Republic, and the *nurse* of the Roman people [13] ; and that of ANGLESEY was called the Mother of Wales ; “ *Mon mam Cymbry* [14] ;” so may HIBERNIA in succeeding ages be dignified with titles equally endearing, and equally beneficial both to herself, and to that kingdom with which she has of late been so happily united.

[1] So badly regulated is the police of Dublin, that (as I was credibly informed) dead bodies are frequently exposed in the streets, to procure, by charity, the means of burying them : and I was also told, that a mother had carried about the streets her infant who died of the small pox, in order to excite the compassion of those she met.

[2] At the late anniversary of *Saint Patrick*, (17 March, 1807) upon the health of Sir John Newport (the Chancellor of the Irish Exchequer) being drank, the Right Hon. Baronet returned thanks, saying, “ that he would be *the poor man's friend*, and the friend of his country ; and that whether in or out of office, *his* sentiments and principles would remain *unaltered*.”

[3] The Middle Man has been described as the cause of the misery and poverty in the lower classes, and in England is considered as a sort of *non-descript monster* ; in fact he is the natural result of a competition for land, and of the long lease generally granted in this country : and this mischief results from the absolute want of a proper form of lease to guard against it. In a competition for lands, men capable of paying great rents, and good security, for the rents of large tracts of land, *necessarily* were preferred, and the *long* terms univerrally given in former times, and *still* very frequently, render it almost impossible to prevent the grounds being *relet* ; no man can be compelled to occupy ground during the whole continuance of a lease, which may and often does last 60 or 70 years ; a lease of three lives, or 31 years, which is not an uncommon lease even now, often extending to that term. This length of lease, and the power of *reletting*, encouraged *jobbers* of land, who took large tracts to *relet*, and of course they necessarily enhanced the rent of ground ; but

it is desirable that there should be a competition for every thing, and no article can be for a long time above its value. In fact it appears to me, that the whole mischief of the *Middle Man* might be prevented by a non-alienation clause, under certain modifications, the object of which should be, not to oppress a tenant under a long lease, by forcing him or her to occupy ground when in a state of infancy, or inability ; and on the other hand, to take care that when relet, it should be done on terms to guard the proprietor from injury, and the under tenant from oppression. It is the practice of all *Middle Men* to relet for a term *shorter* by *one, two, or three* years than that for which they hold the ground ; and their object in so doing, is, to *reenter* into possession, in order to appear before the Head Landlord as the *tenant in occupation*, and to treat for a *new lease* ; and the consequence of this practice is as fatal to the prosperity and industry of the under tenant, as it is to the general improvement of the country ; for the under tenant, who occupies and tills the ground, knows, that at the expiration of his term, the *Middle Man* will turn him out, in order to treat *himself* with the landlord for a new lease ; and in fact all connexion between the proprietor of the soil, and the man who tills it, is cut off : the latter can rarely look up to the former for encouragement, without creating the jealousy of the *Middle Man*, and instigating him still more to remove the under tenant, as soon as his lease is at an end ; and of course the under tenant has no motive to improve the ground he occupies, or to look to any thing but the immediate return. Proprietors of land have of *late* preferred letting it to the *occupiers*, and leases of *21 years* are now becoming very common, whilst the increased price of land, and increasing means of paying for it among the middle classes, are rapidly doing away the *land-jobber*, or *Middle Man*, by profession. One of the greatest of these from *relet* ground, has profit rents of £.4000 per annum.

[4] From the patriotic zeal of the noble Duke [BEDFORD] who at this time presides over the kingdom, much encouragement and improvement may be expected in this department. His serious attention has been also given to matters of still greater importance ; to the establishment of schools, by which the benefits of a better education may be extended to the lower classes of his Majesty's subjects.

From another distinguished subject, (Sir John Newport) the country may expect to derive very important advantages. Many useful acts have been brought forward by him during the present session of Parliament, amongst which none will prove more gratifying to the *Stranger* than the abolition of the unnecessary offices at the customs, and the removal of their vexatious appendages.

“ To relieve the poor from every burden, of which possibility admitted the exemption ; to restrain the oppressive exactions of petty authorities ; to economize the public expenditure ; to suppress places which had emolument and a name, but no utility ; to regulate the revenue laws in such a manner, as at once to secure the independence of the fair trader, and the interest of the crown ; to punish the secret, but successful eluder of national imports ; to devise the means of diffusive improvement, and to give force and efficacy to such institutions as favoured this valuable purpose ; to allay the irritations which are the offspring of religious bigotry, or of party zeal ; to establish an harmonious unanimity, where discord had so long and so fatally prevailed : these, and such as these, were the worthy and magnificent designs which occupied all his meditations and all his toils.”

Extract from the Waterford Chronicle,

Such *were* the happy rays that began to illumine the uncivilized regions of *Hibernia* : and such was the pleasing prospect which the well-wishers for its prosperity had in view before them. The cloud of party has on a sudden overshadowed them, and whether they will emerge with lustre, and present the same flattering prospect, time only can ascertain.

[5] Survey of Derry, p. 246.

[6] For the encouragement of planting, the Legislature passed an act, by which the *propriety* of all trees planted by tenants (under leases for lives, or for any term exceeding 12 years,) becomes vested in the tenant, provided he registers at the Quarter Sessions the trees so

planted ; for which purpose he must first give notice, either in the Gazette, or by a notice served upon his landlord, or his agent, of his intention to register. He must then make oath of the number of trees planted by him within the last 12 months, stating the denomination of land, the name of his landlord, and the term of his lease ; this is registered by the Clerk of the Peace, and a copy given to the planter. At the expiration of the lease, all trees standing on the farm, are to be offered to the landlord at a valuation, and if not purchased by him, the person who registers, or his representative, may cut down and carry off the timber. Hitherto no inconvenience to the landlord has been felt, but, one appears evident, and not unlikely to occur ; namely, by felling the trees upon an acre of ground, and leaving the roots in the ground, the land may be left useless, or the landlord obliged to incur a heavy expence by clearing it. I think the act ought to be amended, by obliging the tenant to *clear* the ground, which might be done at no great expence, if instead of *cutting* down, he *stubb*ed up the trees.

- [7] In plantations of larch and other fir trees, I would strongly recommend a system which in my own woods I have followed for several years with great success, and which accident led me to adopt. I had often observed the smooth and taper form of a Scotch fir that stood in a cottage garden, and on enquiry, found that its lateral branches had constantly been trimmed up, from which arose the smooth surface of its stem. I adopted this system from that time, even in my old plantations, but with less advantage, than with those of a younger growth. I this year began to operate in the same manner on a plantation of larch first made in the year 1796, about which age I found them sufficiently large to answer the purpose of rafters. But as the rapid or slow growth of trees depends entirely upon the soil in which they are planted, no general rules can be given about the time of thinning. When that time is come, I would recommend the trimming of those that remain to take place, taking care not to cut the branch off close to the stem, but leaving about an inch of it remaining ; this will rot off, and the bark, from which the tree derives its sustenance, will not be injured. The growth of this plant is so rapid, that a second, and a more profitable thinning, will be required in a very few years ; and at the same time, a second trimming should be performed : thus will the growth of the timber not only be materially increased, but the value of it be enhanced by rendering it free from knots. I this year cut down the Scotch fir that had been planted by a cottager in his garden, which, owing to its repeated trimmings, presented the clearest stem I ever saw, being for thirty feet entirely free from knots.

To those who study the *beauty* of their trees, and not the *profit*, I do not mean to recommend this trimming system ; but to them I will recommend a mode which I have often adopted, and which will add a great degree of beauty and consequence to some of the fir tribe. I particularly allude to the *spruce* fir ; whose growth is spiral and uniform ; in short, when you see one of the sort, you see the *whole* tribe. The nature of this tree is, as it grows *upwards*, to die *downwards* ; but if before the lower branches begin to decay, you cut off the leading shoot at top, the formal and spiral outline will be destroyed ; the tree will become more bushy, retain its lower branches, and assume a much more consequential appearance ; and whenever anyone *leader* gets the start of his neighbour, his progress should be again checked ; and thus by continuing a similar operation from time to time, the luxuriant beauty of the tree will be preserved, as long as it survives. I have a curious instance in my gardens of a spruce fir, thus treated, trailing its lateral branches, first on the ground, and then shooting up again (like another tree) in a spiral form. To those who plant this tree as a *blind* to any disgusting objects, this mode is particularly eligible ; otherwise after a few years, all the lateral branches (constituting the blind) will die away, and nothing will remain but a taper stem, and a pointed *apex*.

- [8] The mendicant greets you with a variety of blessings and good wishes : “ *God bless your honour ; God speed your honour : Good luck to your honour this morning* ” &c. &c. Their curses are equally strong and pointed ; what can be more so than “ *May the grass grow*

before your door."

Amongst the many odd expressions I heard during my tour, the following may be classed amongst the most singular. One of my postilions, when stopping to refresh his horses with some hay and water, at a small public house, desired the maid servant, who acted as hostler, to make haste, and received for answer, "*Have patience, Pat ! had not your mother to wait for you before you were born !*" To *embroider a quilt*, or to engrave a tombstone, is another singular expression.

[9] In drawing the parallel between the *Irishman* and the *Welshman*, I allude only to the lower class of people, whose ancient prejudices have not been removed by the enlightening aid of education. I could give numberless instances which have occurred to me during my repeated tours through Wales, of the jealousy and antipathy which the Welsh still bear to the English, and of the extraordinary civility, and even obsequiousness, they shew to the superior class of their own countrymen.

[10] Mr. *Tighe*, in his *Survey of Kilkenny*, states the following curious circumstance respecting some timber found in a bog. " Mr. *John Prim*, in sinking a pump near his house at *Killree*, 8 miles from *Kilkenny*, discovered a bog having timber under it. At the depth of 33 feet from the surface, he found the following *strata* : 1. Vegetable earth 3 feet ; 2. Marle with black stones 15 feet ; 3. Yellow clay and hard gravel 15 feet ; 4. Bog 10 feet. Total depth 43 feet. Immediately under the bog lay a large block of wood, which appeared to be oak ; it was in contact with the bog-earth, or bed of black moory mould, evidently composed of rotten vegetable matters, and was well preserved."

[11] The bogs in Ireland, present in general an extended surface of dry heath, nor after that the turf has been cut to a considerable depth for fuel, are they to be considered as useless ; for nature has been so lavish in her fertilizing gifts to this country, that even the bog can be made *doubly* productive, first in fuel, and afterwards in corn. Two modes of procedure are adopted, either by planting potatoes, *gravelling* and sowing oats with grass seeds, or by burning the rough sods, spreading the ashes, *gravelling* and sowing grass seeds. The operation of *gravelling*, is generally beyond the reach of the peasantry ; but its effect in producing the white clover, and the sweetest sort of grass seeds, is astonishing. Landlords generally reserve the *right* of bog in their own hands, but the tenants and peasantry obtain leave to cut the necessary quantity for their own consumption.

[12] *Survey of the County of Meath*, page 359.

[13] "*Itaque ille M. CATO cellam penariam reipublicæ nostræ, et nutricem plebis Romanæ Siciliam nominavit.*"

Cicero Actio in Verrem.

[14] "*Est enim hæc insula (Mona) præ cunctis Cambriæ finibus triticeo germine incomparabiliter fæcunda, adeo ut proverbialiter dici soleat linguâ Britannicâ, " Mon mam Cymbry," quod Latinè sonat.*" *Mona Mater Cambriæ.*" Giraldus Itin. Cambriæ.

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