

CO-OPERATION
IN LAND TILLAGE



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BY M. A.

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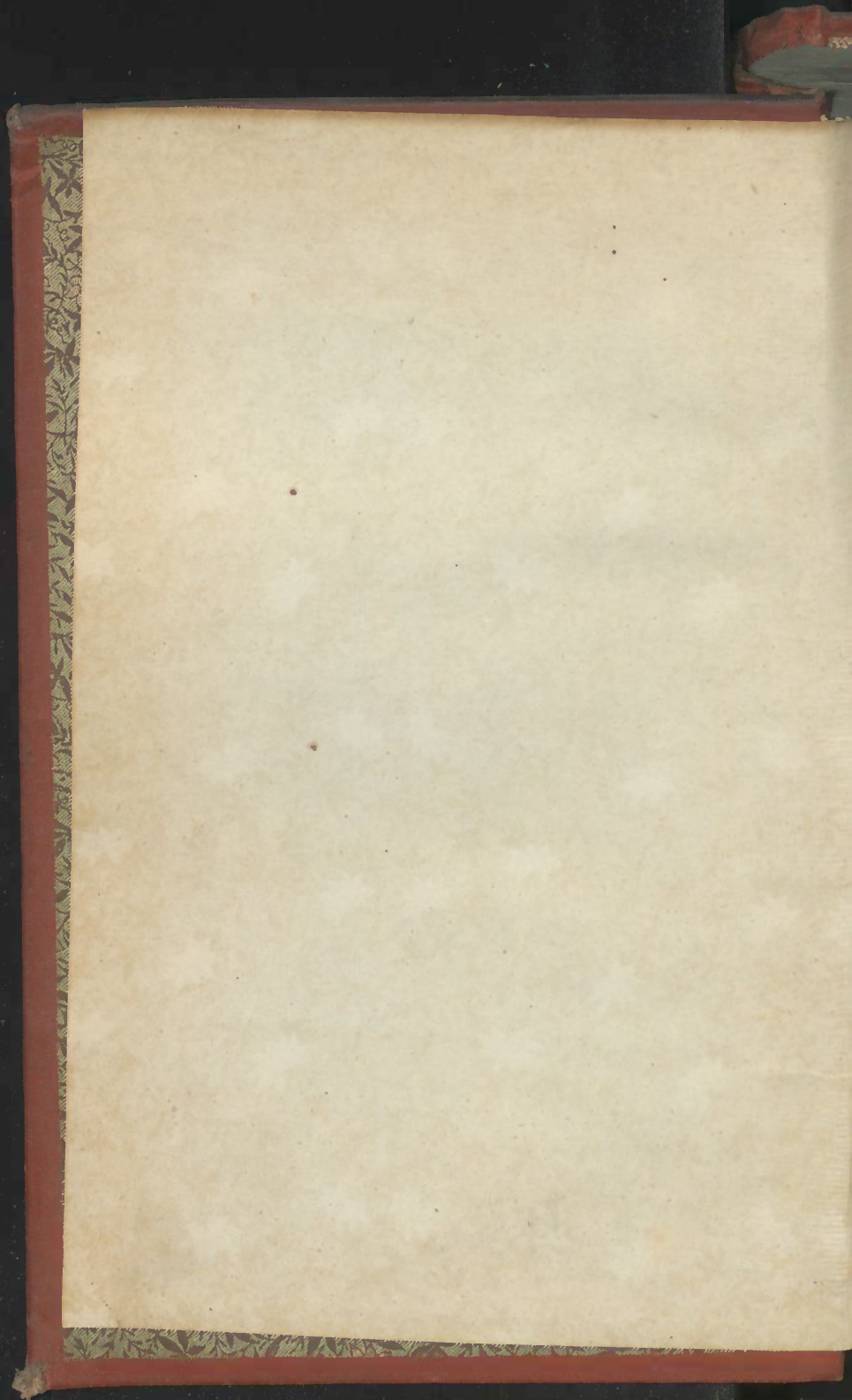
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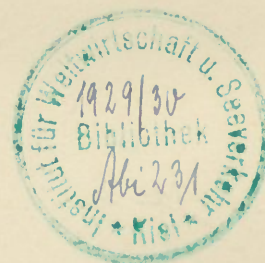


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PREFACE.

THE work here presented to the public is one, it must be admitted, of a rather unusual character; but the events which have called it forth have been anything but usual. England seems to be entering on a crisis in her history which bids fair to lead to very serious results unless some steps be taken to divert the drifting of her affairs from their present dangerous course into a more healthy channel. The foundations of her prosperity hitherto seem to get looser and looser every year. Her land is going more and more out of cultivation; and its owners and cultivators are getting every year more and more impoverished. As a natural consequence her trade is becoming year by year less expansive, if not actually decreasing, in proportion to the increase of the population—a fact acknowledged in the budget speech of one of the most sanguine of her Chancellors of the Exchequer. The future of the trade of England is even darker still, for it is becoming every year more dependent on the export of her coal and iron not to be replaced, of her machinery to be used against her manufacturers by their rivals in other countries, and of her capital to be employed in other countries in working up the exported raw minerals of her land and in working her machinery.

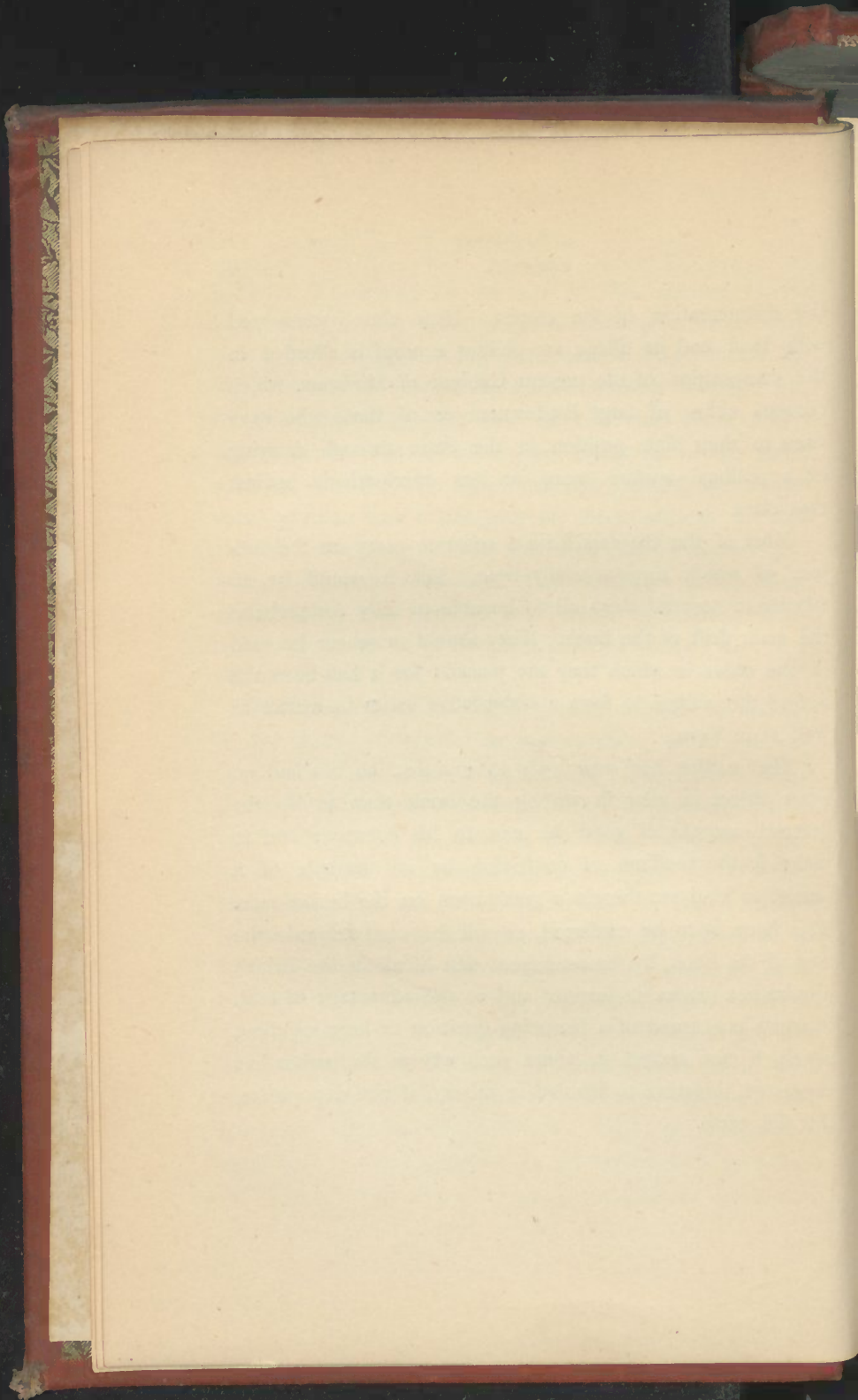
Now, the remedy for the most of this advance to the decay of England's trade the author believes to be co-operation in the tillage of the land, which would place the prosperity of the country on a much sounder footing. But, for co-operation to have this effect it must be of such a nature as to raise up the labour employed in the actual tillage of the land to a higher material, political, and perhaps social position than it has ever yet been allowed to take. Possibly, it has been with this view that a peasant proprietary has been advocated. But, as shown in the course of the work, this form of land tenure and tillage would make the condition of the farm labourer scarcely any, if at all, better than now.

The author feels he ought to offer a word of apology to the reader for introducing politics into a work professing to treat of co-operation in land tillage. The truth is, when he began it, it was with the intention of confining himself to the subject of the title of his book. But, as he proceeded, he found the ownership of the land, the condition of its cultivators, and the nascent power of the cultivators to give expression to their discontent at that condition so inextricably mixed up with politics that he could not avoid making allusion to them. He has however been careful to do so only so far as co-operation in the tillage of the land is concerned. His references to politics have been made with the view of showing from a political standpoint how extremely effective would be the kind of co-operation suggested by him for preserving the capital and institutions of England, and through their preservation for preventing

the disintegration of the empire.' How closely connected with land and its tillage are politics a proof is afforded in the composition of the present Cabinet of Ministers, which consists either of large landowners or of those who have risen to their high position in the State through carrying on a political warfare more or less unrelentingly against that class.

Most of the chapters form a separate essay on the subject of which they severally treat. Yet, it would be an advantage to read them all to be able to fully comprehend the main drift of the book. They should moreover be read in the order in which they are placed: for it has been the aim of the author to form a consecutive series in matter as well as in form.

The author has now only to say that he has had no other object in view in writing the book than to do the greatest amount of good he can to his country: and to make it the medium of conferring by an example of a particular kind set therein a great boon on the human race. This boon is to be conferred, as will be seen towards the end of the book, by the settlement first of all in the British empire in a peaceable manner and to the advantage of both interests concerned of a harassing question of long standing, which, if not settled in some such way as the author has suggested, threatens to involve in misery, if not depopulate, this fair earth.



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CO-OPERATION IN LAND TILLAGE.

CHAPTER I.

CO-OPERATION IN FARM LABOUR: A REMEDY.

Labour in Feudal Ages—Wage-fund of Political Economy—Labour discontented—
Signs of such discontent—Alterations of conditions of Labour a necessity—
Co-operation of Labour the remedy—Co-operation; how used in other ways—
Need for a new System of Co-operation—Co-operation in Agriculture—Present
System of Farming—Peasant proprietorship—Large and small Farms.

IT is the aim of this work to throw out some suggestions in the hope that they may have some effect in allaying the feelings of hostility now so prevalent in all countries between the givers of manual labour, and the classes owning the capital through which this labour is employed. As this want of harmony exists no less in such republics as France, Switzerland and the United States, than in empires like Germany, Austria and Russia, it is evident that forms of government have nothing whatever to do with it. The cause must lie deeper than anything that ordinarily falls within the range of government action. It probably springs in a great measure, if not altogether, from the customs and habits of the peoples of all these countries, which, so far as capital and labour are concerned, have grown out of the feudalism of the Middle Ages.

Feudalism was beyond doubt suitable to those ages, or else it would never have come into and remained in existence for so many centuries. In those ages population was thinly

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scattered over the country, and the communication between its different parts was infrequent and extremely slow. It was through these obstacles to the union of labour in the defence of its own interests that it became dependent on the will of those in a condition to employ it, and these in most cases were the feudal lords, abbots, &c., in whose hands the greater part of the land of the country, on which labour was most required to be spent in those days, was centred. As population waxed denser there increased along with it a greater demand for the produce of the land, and therefore for the labour by which alone this produce could be obtained. With this greater demand for labour sprang up a craving on the part of its givers for a greater freedom in its disposal, and hence arose their efforts to shake off from time to time, and one by one, the restraints imposed upon it by feudalism. To their efforts to free themselves from such fetters were most likely due the revolts that took place in the Middle Ages among the peasantry, of which, as one, may be reckoned that of the Kentish men under Jack Cade.

The efforts at emancipating labour from the arbitrary and capricious control of, and insufficient remuneration by, the employer in the age of feudalism, led in the course of time to the substitution of remuneration by a payment in money for one in kind, and this again led to a greater freedom in the disposal of that labour on the part of its givers. This advance in the condition of labour became inevitable after population had increased, and it had become more concentrated in towns, and facilities had been multiplied for storing it up in the form of capital.

The question now to be considered is, whether the time has not arrived for an advance in the improvement of the condition of labour, as great as was that made when it was freed by its remuneration in the form of wages from the arbitrary and capricious control over it exercised by its feudal

employer. The same causes that produced what was believed to be the necessity for a change from one form of remunerating labour to the other, have now for some time been at work to stir up people's minds to consider whether another change equally great is not equally necessary. It is true, that the system of remunerating labour in kind under its feudal employers lasted for centuries, while that of remunerating labour by a money payment has been in use but a comparatively short period; but it has to be borne in mind, in forming a comparison, that the causes at work requiring a change have of late years been increasing in number and intensity to a manifold greater extent. Population increases far more rapidly, the centralisation of this population into cities goes on to a much greater extent, and the means of communication between these populous centres are being more continuously improved now-a-days in a decade than formerly in a century.

As a natural result of these vast changes in its surroundings, labour has been growing in much greater demand. For instance, every one of the countless inventions of late years, though many of them have been brought into existence to supersede labour, has yet been the cause of a fresh demand for it. Again, as the practice of storing up the labour of the past under the name of capital has gone on increasing, so has the number of its possessors, all of whom are more or less dependent on the labour of others for the comforts expected from the possession of this capital.

The outcome of the immense increase in the demand for labour has been to cause the givers thereof to become more and more discontented with the manner and amount of its remuneration. The great changes which have been producing this greater demand for the commodity at their disposal, have also given them facilities for expressing in ways not to be easily mistaken their discontent. In some

countries, quite irrespective of the forms of their government, this discontent has been made only too well known, under the names of Socialism, as in the empires of Germany and Austria; of Communism, as in the republics of France, Switzerland and the United States of America; and of Nihilism, as in Russia; and in England and Scotland in the forms of Trades' and Labourers' Unions; and in Ireland in those of Home-ruleism and Fenianism, &c. That under these differently-named associations for overturning the institutions of a country some of its members do not get their living by hard labour, is no proof whatever that actual givers of labour are not connected with them. On the contrary, it is from these latter that such associations derive their main strength; so much so that, were not the bulk of the members workmen and labourers dissatisfied with the way and amount of remuneration of their labour, these associations would soon collapse.

Are not all these revolts, under whatever name they may be called, against the social institutions of the country in which they take place, so many proofs that the time is come for another readjustment of the relationship between capital and labour, as great as that made when labour was freed from its dependent state in an age of feudalism, by being paid for its remuneration in money in the form of wages instead of as previously in kind? Until such a readjustment does take place, it is to be feared there will be no harmony between capital and labour. So long as this harmony is absent, givers of labour will be discontented, and so disposed to listen to the advice of those profiting by the existence of dissensions between the two.

Unfortunately, these are the only people who are gainers by the dissensions between capital and labour. It is by them that these organisers of discord acquire popularity in their career of politics, and therefore is it by them that the

institutions of a country are undermined before being finally destroyed, all which are done under the pretext that they stand in the way of the better remuneration of labour, through their preventing the development of wealth required for an ever-increasing population, and out of which alone could a large enough wage-fund be created. If, by the destruction of all former institutions the wealth of the countries in which they existed had been developed, and labour had in consequence received a larger share of this developed wealth, something might perhaps be said in favour of it. But it is a fact, proclaimed by history and experience, that in the destruction of the old institutions of a country labour is left no better off in its relationship with capital. Quite the contrary: for every attempt that has hitherto been made by the givers of manual labour to improve their condition through a revolution causing the destruction, or even the disorganisation, of the institutions of a country, has resulted in their becoming worse off. The reason for this is obvious. Every such attempt has been accompanied by force, and this means the destruction of the capital upon the existence of which labour is dependent for employment.

As givers of labour still continue their attacks on capital, and on the social orders and institutions of their respective countries, notwithstanding that they find each time they gain nothing by them, one is led to think they must be actuated as much by a spirit of retaliation as by a hope of amending their condition. However great may be the satisfaction of labourers at witnessing the owners of capital involved in the same ruin by which they are themselves affected, it cannot be sufficiently lasting to entitle it to any claim as a remedy against the recurrence of similar disasters, or as a basis for bettering their condition in the future. Besides, for labourers to feel a satisfaction at seeing capitalists involved in ruin, is for them to take an entirely wrong view of the causes

of the evils from which they themselves suffer. Such a feeling implies that it is through the insatiable cupidity of its owners that capital is the cause of the insufficiency of the remuneration of labour ; whereas, from the point of view to be here taken, the cause oftener than not proceeds from a want on the part of capitalists of knowing a method by which labour can be better remunerated without loss to their own interests.

It has been a misfortune for the interest of both capital and labour, that writers on political economy have not turned their attention to the adjustment of the relations between them on the footing to be here indicated. They all treat of both ; but the basis of such treatment is a wage-fund. This error was excusable when the science was still in its infancy, for then the great changes just now alluded to as causing the greatly increased demand for labour had not taken place. But there can be no excuse for the more recent writers on the science when treating of the same subject. It is not a little strange that these men should follow so closely in the footsteps of former writers, when they cannot but be cognisant of the most unsatisfactory results from their teaching. One would think that the recent writers on political economy, from their treatment of the relationship between labour and capital through a wage-fund, had been living all their lives in the seclusion of a monastery, with no other writings to amuse themselves than the works of Adam Smith and his immediate followers, and consequently had never heard of such things happening on the Continent as Socialism, Communism and Nihilism, or of 'Trades' and Labourers' Unions and strikes in the United Kingdom, all of which, it is hardly going too far to say, are the outcomes more or less direct of such writings ; since, by leading the owners of capital astray on this point, they have prevented these owners from turning their attention to a more satisfactory way of meeting the demands of labour, and so of appeasing its discontent.

The most puzzling feature respecting this teaching is its motive. As Adam Smith, the father of political economy, named his work "The Wealth of Nations," it is to be presumed that his motive in writing it was to increase the wealth of nations. It seems to be far more adapted for destroying the wealth of nations, by giving rise to the discontent on the part of labour at the way in which it is remunerated. It is true that since Adam Smith wrote his work the wealth of nations has increased to a very great extent; but this increase may have been due to other causes than the teachings propounded therein. Since his time thousands of wealth-producing inventions have been given to the world, among which are steam and electricity. It would rather seem that wealth has been increasing in spite of the teachings of Adam Smith and his followers than on account of them. Any way, labour has not been benefited by them to anything like a sufficient extent to give satisfaction to its givers; and so long as labour is discontented, all the wealth of nations rests on a very insecure foundation. If labourers as a class had been benefited by such teachings, one then might think they were published to promote the interests of that class. But, instead of this being the case, the prevalence of the discontent organised under the names of Socialism, Communism and Nihilism of the Continent, and of the Trades' and Labourers' Unions of England and Scotland, and of Home-rule and Fenianism of Ireland, is about as strong a proof as could well be given, that under such teachings the condition of the labouring classes making up these different organisations has become more unsatisfactory than ever, all this increased wealth notwithstanding.

But not only has labour not been benefited by the teachings of the wage-fund doctrines of writers on political economy, it is questionable whether even capital has on the whole been benefited by them. Even if the mildest form of Socialism or Communism begotten of the working out of these doctrines,

namely, Trades' and Labourers' Unions, be considered, the effects of these Unions upon capital have been most disastrous. An employer of labour farmer can have his capital destroyed by the action of a Labourers' Union as effectively as if his farm-buildings and stacks were reduced to ashes by the petroleum-torch of a Socialist incendiary. Neither is there any need to destroy the capital of a manufacturer by burning down his factory, as in the Blackburn riots, since that deplorable object can be brought about in a way equally effective, though less brutal and startling, through the irritating action of a Trades' Union. Even the landowners of Ireland are learning that the capital of a once powerful class like themselves can be rendered well-nigh valueless, by the proceedings of persons trading on the discontent of those who think their labour insufficiently remunerated. If there had been anything sound about the wage-fund doctrine of writers on political economy, there would have been no occasion to bring forward for reflection these sad instances of the instability of capital. That doctrine must surely be deemed unsound that has been the means of putting in the greatest danger the social institutions of the country, from its inability to find a method of adjusting the relationship between labour and capital, in such a way as to give contentment to the former without injury to the latter.

What has now to be done is to find a remedy for putting an end to the ill-feeling now so prevalent on the part of labour against capital, consequent on its insufficient and in other ways unsatisfactory remuneration. The remedy to be applied, in order to be successful, will have to be one making as great a stride in conformity with the present condition of things brought about by the advances made during the last century, as was the stride made when remuneration of labour in kind during the feudal ages was superseded by the truck system and by payment of wages. Such a remedy it will be the aim of this work to supply in the form of co-operation between capital

and labour, so that labour may be enabled to share with capital the profits accruing from the undertaking in which both are engaged.

Though co-operation between manual labour and capital is a novelty, yet co-operation among capitalists and among labourers has been employed in operations industrial and otherwise for many years.

Co-operation among capitalists in the form of Joint-Stock Companies is now of long standing. Of more recent date is co-operation among capitalists in the form of co-operative stores. In both of these forms of co-operation, capitalists have combined together their capital for the employment of labour, and not for sharing with it the profits made by the co-operation. This form of co-operation, employing labour instead of taking it into co-operation, it is superfluous to say, is not calculated to diminish the discontent of labour at its remuneration by wages alone. It is, on the contrary, far more apt to increase this discontent than diminish it; since, in addition to the objection held by labour against its remuneration by wages under a single employer, there is this, that it lessens the number of openings by which wage-receivers may at some time or other become wage-payers. In other words it lessens the chances of givers of labour of more enterprise and spirit than the usual run of them to rise out of the wage-receiving class, and these are the very men who, on finding all avenues to such a rise closed against them, are likely to turn out leaders of organisations capable of giving expression to the discontent of labour, in ways most destructive to the interests of the owners of capital. There can hardly be a doubt that it is owing mainly to the difficulties put in the way of Joint-Stock Companies co-operating for production, by Trades' Unions whose members are discontented with the relation of the capital of these companies towards their own labour, that so very few of them succeed for any length of time in comparison with the manifold

greater numbers set on foot. It is stated that in Sheffield, out of 120 Joint-Stock Companies started to carry on the productive industry peculiar to that town, and that were in existence so recently as two years ago, only thirty-one are still at work, all the others having gone into liquidation ; and that even of these thirty-one, some are in the condition that closely preceded the failure of the others.

Co-operation among givers of labour has been in existence for now many years. The co-operation among these is also known under two forms, of which one is far more satisfactory to the country at large than the other. In its more satisfactory form it is known under the name of Benefit Societies. By means of these benefit societies givers of labour have now for some years been co-operating together to relieve one another in periods of sickness, accident and such like, and by means of them they have been enabled to mitigate much of the evil effects arising from the remuneration of their labour by wages alone. It is possible that capital, society, and the existing institutions of the country owe more to the existence of these benefit societies, brought about by the co-operation of the working classes, than they give them credit for or than they perhaps know of, and that it is owing to these societies that Trades' and Labourers' Unions, mischievous as they have been in their actions against capital, have not developed into the still more mischievous forms of Socialism, Communism, etc.

Would that the other form of co-operation among givers of labour had been producing equally beneficial results ! Alas ! the effects of this form as represented by Trades' and Labourers' Unions have been most disastrous to the interests of the owners of capital, and through these to the interests of all in the country, not excluding even their own. As Trades' and Labourers' Unions have grown out of benefit societies, it is not at all unlikely that the ill-feeling generated in the former against capital

has been brought about through the dissatisfaction caused by the unsatisfactory working of the wage-fund system of remuneration of writers on political economy, and that this unsatisfactory working has been brought more prominently into light through the benevolent efforts of benefit societies to counteract its effects. However, whether these surmises about Trades' and Labourers' Unions be correct or not, this much is certain—that they are both pernicious forms of co-operation, and that the sooner the necessity for their existence has been done away with, by the system of co-operation between capital and labour now about to be laid before the reader, the better must it be for the interests of all in the country, no less of labour itself than of capital.

With respect to the system of co-operation that is to place capital and labour on a more harmonious footing, the principle on which it is to be worked out in the following pages will be the reverse of that which has hitherto obtained between the two. Hitherto, in every co-operation between capital and labour in the carrying on of any undertaking, capital has taken all the risks and all the profits attendant on such undertaking. All the responsibilities connected with the success or failure of the joint enterprise have thus been thrown upon capital, while labour has been employed as a mindless machine at as fixed and at as low a rate of payment as possible, in accordance with "the inevitable laws of supply and demand" of political economy. Labour has consequently never yet had thrown upon it any responsibility connected with its joint working with capital. Now, responsibility implies a power of exercising the mind and will in the conduct of an undertaking, in which the agent responsible has a share. But hitherto, so little have the givers of labour been considered responsible as thinking beings capable of having a control in the carrying on of any business requiring its joint action with capital, that it is not unusual for the owners of this capital, in certain branches of productive

industry, to look upon these givers of labour not as men but as "hands."

The question now comes to the foreground as to whether it is advisable, in the interests of both, that labour should continue to be thus separated from all responsibilities in its joint action with capital. Is not the time come, when the reverse of this state of things should take place, when in fact capital should be the inanimate partner in a joint undertaking with labour? Givers of labour show by their action in co-operating together for the defence of their own interests, that they think the time has come for their taking upon themselves the responsibilities of all undertakings in which the commodity at their disposal is engaged. Surely, the time has come for beings with minds capable of allowing them to co-operate together in secret societies to destroy capital and to overthrow the institutions of a country, to be treated otherwise than as portions of the human frame destitute of mind by the owners of such capital, and by the gainers from the continued existence of such institutions.

It is nothing new that capital should be treated as a sort of inanimate partner in undertakings in which it is engaged with labour. So far is the practice from being rare, that possibly half the capital employed in trading operations, and called by some "sleeping," is of this character. It can hardly be an exaggeration to say, that more than half of the trading and manufacturing firms are carried on by means of borrowed capital lent at a fixed rate of interest, the owners of which have no voice in their management. What can capital be called but inanimate, the owners of which are separated from all responsibilities connected with its employment? It can then be hardly a matter of wonder, that so large a percentage of productive undertakings should, after a more or less brief course, find their way into the all-absorbing morass of liquidation, when all the labour and possibly more than half the capital engaged

in them have been separated from all the responsibilities connected with the management thereof.

On the other hand, when the whole of the responsibilities of an undertaking would be thrown upon labour, they would be thrown upon the owners of the commodity employed on it, having the greatest interest and influence in its success. However necessary may be capital in carrying on works of production, labour, it must be admitted, is equally so. While labour can vary in both quantity and quality according to the disposition of the giver, the capital employed in the same undertaking, whether borrowed or not, is, so to speak, an invariable quantity. This is especially the case with that part of it lent at a fixed rate of interest. True it is that there are minds engaged in the management of capital according to the number of partners in the trading or manufacturing firms in which it is employed. That this is not enough is proved by the vast numbers of failures of such undertakings taking place every year, and by the millions of capital thereby lost.

Under the new system of co-operation, on the other hand, by which the responsibilities of an undertaking would be thrown upon the givers of the labour connected therewith, these givers of labour would have the management of the capital employed therein. These men are to be no longer "hands," but heads capable of thinking and forecasting. Why should they not be able to manage the capital of an undertaking under such a co-operation? They would have this immense advantage over an employer of labour in the management of capital, that it would not be wasted in waging a constant war with their own labour. Moreover, the capital they would have to manage in the system of co-operation here proposed, is to be mostly their own, and what is not their own is to be borrowed at a fixed rate of interest, and so placed beyond the interference of the lenders, so long as the conditions on which it has been lent are being fulfilled. In such a

co-operation nothing would stand between the capital and labour in every undertaking in which the two are jointly employed, but the interests of the owners of the labour. The responsibilities connected with the proper employment of capital in every undertaking would thus be thrown on those who would be as great losers as any by its failure, since by its failure these would lose not only their continuance of employment at remunerative wages, and all their chances of making a provision for the future out of the surplus profits, but, as well, all their capital. A failure then would result in their being thrown back again into the ranks of the mere wage-receiving class of labourers—a class, as said before, so discontented with the manner in which the labour of its members is remunerated, and with the position in which it is placed in regard to capital, that to escape from these evils in connection with it, its members are co-operating together to make war on capital, on society, and on the institutions of their country.

As then the difference between success and failure on the part of givers of labour in the scheme of co-operation here proposed would be so enormous, capitalists would have nothing to fear for the safety of the capital lent to these givers of labour, or for that of the stipulated interest to be paid thereon. So far indeed from lenders having to fear the loss of their capital or their interest, it is not going too far to say that the security of both would be greatly increased by lending this capital in the scheme of co-operation to the givers of labour made responsible for the undertakings in which it would be employed. One reason for entertaining so great a feeling of security for their capital would lie in the fact that a great deal more labour than heretofore, in respect both to quantity and quality, would be given in these undertakings for the amount of capital employed. Another, that strikes and lock-outs would be things of the past. The prevention of the loss of labour through these would alone amount to probably several millions a year, and

the millions thus saved, it need hardly be said, would afford in no little degree an additional security to the lender's capital, and to the regular payment of the stipulated rate of interest on it.

The scheme of co-operation here laid before the reader has not been drawn up so much for bringing about a more harmonious relationship between the capital and labour employed in trading and manufacturing undertakings as in agricultural. In a chapter, however, towards the end of the work, reference will be made to co-operative factories; but they will be introduced mainly to illustrate more clearly the necessity that exists for co-operation in agriculture, if this branch of national industry is ever to contend successfully against the severe competition to which it is subjected from the importation free of duty of the land produce of other countries having a virgin soil and a less heavily-taxed people to cultivate it. The subject of co-operative factories will be introduced, to show also that the probable effect of co-operation in agriculture will be to create a desire on the part of the workmen of manufacturing towns to bring into their own branches of industry and adopt a system that had been making farm labourers extremely contented. As will be pointed out in this chapter, the principles on which co-operative farms would be worked would to a great extent be applicable to co-operative factories, so that the success of this form of co-operation in one branch of the nation's industry would probably lead to its adoption in the others.

In respect to co-operation in land tillage the system would be especially well suited, since it is in agricultural operations that manual labour plays so conspicuous a part. So great, indeed, is the part played in agriculture by labour, that the great difficulty has been to find enough capital to put into it, to reward labour sufficiently to give anything like contentment to its givers. Hence the discontent upon the part of these

givers, as shown by their organisation into unions to better their condition. Hence the efforts to counteract the evils from which they suffer by the establishment among themselves of Benefit Societies. Hence the bankruptcy of so many farmer employers of labour through their inability to procure enough capital to pay for the labour required by their land ; and hence the fact that a large portion of the land of the country is going out of cultivation, and a great deal of the remainder is being cultivated in so slovenly a manner that several millions are wanted to be laid out on it to put it into the condition it was in only ten years ago.

When one reflects on the many difficulties an employer of labour farmer has of late years had to contend against, in respect to foreign competition, to an ungenial climate if not soil, to the discontent of his labourers, and to an insufficiency of capital, it is not surprising that he has had to succumb at last. So long as his produce was protected from foreign competition, he was able to realise enough from it to make up for the drawbacks he was weighted with from climate, soil, labour and capital. But now that this prop has been taken away, these difficulties have proved too much for him, and have thus rendered his collapse inevitable.

Perhaps not the least good free trade has done has been to take away this prop. It was one for the maintenance of which the whole community, according to the dictum of writers on political economy, has had to pay. Whether these writers are correct or not on this point, there can be no doubt that a very large portion of this community, consisting of those engaged in the actual tillage of the soil, has had to pay dearly for upholding this prop. It is quite clear that, so long as the class of employers of labour farmers was propped up by the existence of the Corn Laws, the labour employed in agriculture would have remained in a condition constituting a great danger to capital, to society, and to the institutions of the

country. It has been from the labour engaged on farms that has sprung the greater part of the labour employed in towns, and without this constant supply of labour through the offspring of those engaged as labourers on farms, the labour employed in towns would soon lose its power of increase and its vigour, and so would in the course of time become extinguished, perhaps altogether. So intimate is the connection between the labour of farms and of towns, that it can hardly be surprising that the one should be so strongly in sympathy with the other, and that the givers or lenders of both should be co-operating together to better their condition.

Now that the prop of the Corn Laws has been taken from under the employer of labour farmers, the real position they have been occupying in the agricultural industry of the country stands out in all its weakness. These farmers have been simply acting the part of borrowers or hirers of the three principal commodities with which they have been all along connected—land, labour and capital. In the first place, they have been hiring or borrowing the land and the farm buildings upon it of their capitalist landlord. They have, secondly, been hirers or borrowers of the labour of their men; and, thirdly, the majority of them by far have been hirers or borrowers of more than half the capital required to work the hired land by means of the hired labour. The cry now set up by the employers of labour farmers, who have hitherto been living by a system of borrowing, is for a share in their landlords' property, which would put into their possession a security enabling them to be further borrowers still, and this time of more capital with which, as they give out, to purchase labour-saving machinery, patent manures, and such like.

On the other hand, under a system of co-operation as here proposed, the labourers forming the co-operation would not have occasion to hire or borrow to anything like the extent that the middlemen farmers have had to do. In the first place,

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as that great item of cost in the tillage of land, labour, would be all their own, they would not have to hire or borrow any of it. This alone would make all the difference in the chances of success between the co-operation of these labourers and the present middlemen farmers in the profitable cultivation of a farm. After all, even should these latter succeed in wringing concessions from their landlords so as to enable them to borrow to a still greater extent the capital thought by them to be wanted for making the farms produce larger crops, their difficulties in respect to labour would still face them. Their borrowing more capital, for instance, even though it be spent in the purchase of labour-saving machinery, is not at all likely to do away with Labourers' Unions, or with the discontent of labour at its remuneration, which has given rise to the existence of these Unions.

Again, the labourers co-operating together under the plan here to be treated of, are to be owners of not only all the labour wanted in carrying on the work of their farm, but of the capital also. Thus, of the three principal requirements for farming, land, labour and capital, they would be hirers or borrowers of the land alone, with its farm and other buildings, and these would be lent to the co-operating labourers, as they have hitherto been to the employer of labour, by the capitalist landowner at a fixed rate of interest in the form of rent. In these circumstances, landowners would have a better security for their rent than they have been having since the prop of the Corn Laws was taken from under the middlemen employers of labour. More than this : this security would be permanent, since it would rest on no artificial prop.

Owing to the great difficulties which have beset employers of labour farmers, in respect to the labour necessary to make the cultivation of their land profitable, a section of the Liberal party, supported by certain writers on political economy, are advocating their supersession by the system of a peasant

proprietary. There is no doubt that this substitution would get rid of the labour difficulty, for by it the peasant proprietors, as the peasant co-operators of the plan of co-operation about to be given, would not be hirers or borrowers of labour. This would certainly be an immense advantage ; but, unfortunately, it would be attended with this drawback that in the effort made by the peasant owner to have his little farm worked by his own and not by borrowed labour, he would have to borrow much more largely in another direction, and this would be in that of capital for buying as well as working the land on which his labour is to be employed. Thus, the practical working of a peasant proprietary in this country would be to bring labour back to pretty much the condition it was in during the ages of feudalism, only instead of its being at the beck and call of a feudal lord or abbot, it would be under the capricious control of mercenary money-lenders. It surely has not been to finally reach such a condition as this, that the givers of labour have been struggling for centuries to better their position. They would have been much better off than they are likely to be under the thralldom of a class of avaricious money-lenders, if they had never stirred a step for the purpose. On the other hand, as co-operators using their own labour and capital, and so borrowers of the land only, the labouring tillers of the soil would receive an ample recompense for efforts made during centuries to amend the condition of labour.

Among the many objections to a peasant proprietary there would be this that, when once it had been introduced into the country, and had given rise to the evils that inevitably follow upon its introduction, it would not be an easy matter to substitute it for a system of co-operation among labourers. Such a remedy for satisfying the discontent of labour would be something like the pulling out of the teeth of one suffering from a cold in the head. Impossible would it be to replace these teeth on the discovery that the remedy had

failed to allay the pain for the alleviation of which it had been employed.

Now, a peasant proprietary, as will be sufficiently pointed out in the following pages, will most certainly fail to give the labouring classes the satisfaction expected of it by certain politicians and writers on political economy. If it really has in any degree this tendency, these labouring classes would be now radiant with joy at the satisfaction, at which the commodity at their disposal is now placed in all countries in which a peasant proprietary now prevails. So far, however, from this pleasant theory squaring with actual facts, we find in these very countries labourers so dissatisfied with their position that they are co-operating together in secret societies, known in some under the name of Socialism, in others of Communism, etc., in order to make war on the capital, society, and the institutions of these countries.

Fortunate is it for the capital, society, and the institutions of the United Kingdom, that there is only one portion of it in which the characteristic of a peasant proprietary, small farms, obtains to any extent. In Ireland, it is computed, there are more than 600,000 small farms. Can labour, may one ask, be satisfied in that country, overspread as it is with secret societies the leaders of which are preaching a crusade against capital, especially that in the form of land, against society, and against existing institutions? Again, can labour be considered to be satisfied with its condition in that part of the United Kingdom, requiring to counteract the mischievous effects of such preaching, and the widespread terrorism created thereby, the presence in it of the greater part of the military force of the two other portions? If it were only in Ireland that the tillage of the land by small farms co-existed with the need of a vast military force, the coincidence might not be worthy of notice; but the fact is notorious, that in all the countries in which the small farms of a peasant proprietary prevail, there exists along with them in

each of these countries a vast standing army, made up by the conscription of the male strength and vigour of its whole population. How can the existence in the same countries of the small farms of a peasant proprietary, of a vast network of secret societies under the names of either Socialism, Communism or Fenianism, and of a huge conscripted army, be accounted for in any way less unsatisfactory than this, that the discontent caused among the labouring classes by the working of the small farms of a peasant proprietary has given birth to the secret societies, if not set on foot yet mainly supported by these classes, and that to prevent these secret societies destroying the capital and overturning the social institutions of the countries in which they exist, their governments, composed of the owners of this capital, and of the gainers by the keeping up of these institutions, are forced to keep on a permanent footing an immense army, crushing the industries of these countries by its weighty exactions on the vigour of their population?

Under the plan, on the other hand, of co-operation among labourers, the farms (as will be shown in the unfolding of this plan) are not to be small, but on a comparatively very large scale. It will be by this farming on a large scale that the labour of the co-operators will prove to be so profitable to its owners. Moreover, the labourers of co-operative farms on a large scale are not to be deprived of this profit by being compelled to become borrowers of capital other than that in the form of land and the farm-buildings thereon; and even in respect to this borrowing, as the land, etc., are to be lent them, as hereafter to be shown on invariable terms, it will not have the effect of discouraging them from freely giving their labour and their capital to the full development of the co-operative undertaking. Then, for the first time in the world's history, would the labour engaged in the actual tillage of the soil be remunerated as it ought to be, if the national industry, in which such labour is given, is to be prosperous for a continuance. Then would

take place a stride in the advance of labour to a more satisfactory position, as great as that made when it advanced from the state of dependence it was in under the feudal system to that of modern times, indicated in its remuneration by means of wages dependent as to their rate on the conduct of the payers of these wages.

Now that in the chapter now brought to a close the necessity for co-operation in farm labour as a remedy for allaying the discontent of this kind of labour at the manner and amount of its remuneration has been pointed out, it would not be amiss to give in brief outline the purport of the chapters to follow, so that the reader may at once get a general view of the whole work, and thus a better idea of the evolution of the plan of co-operation among labourers of which it treats. In accordance, then, with this arrangement, there will be in the next three chapters, a rough sketch of the plan of tenant-farming on a large scale by co-operation among labourers. In the five chapters succeeding these will be pointed out the suitability of the plan, under certain modifications to be therein mentioned, for Ireland, India and the colonies. In the chapters immediately following these will be shown its fitness for adoption in the United Kingdom, and this, too, without having recourse, as in the other instances, to the assistance of the State. After these will come the chapters in which will be explained in greater detail the development of co-operative farms under the plan, and the many advantages of this plan over either the system of a peasant proprietary, as on the Continent and in Ireland; or, of large farms worked by an employer of labour, as in England and Scotland. These chapters are to be followed by others in which, as a winding-up, will be laid before the reader a broad forecast of the satisfactory state of things throughout all classes likely to follow on the establishment of co-operative farms therein.

CHAPTER II.

CO-OPERATIVE FARMS: INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

Difficulties of Farming in general.—Difficulties of Farming in the United Kingdom.—
 The Repeal of the Corn Laws.—The Labour difficulty.—A Peasant proprietary.—
 Evils of the system.—Co-operation of Labourers.—Fixity of Tenure.

THE great difficulty which has perplexed the government of all countries, in nearly all stages and eras of their existence, has been the proper cultivation of the land. At the present day it is this difficulty that is so perplexing to the government of this empire to solve, not only as respects India and Ireland, but England herself. In India the result of the present system of cultivation is, that even in what we call good seasons the ryot cultivators are in an impoverished condition, and in bad seasons they die off by millions. In respect to Ireland, more than half of that island has been scheduled lately as being in a distressed condition, and so dissatisfied are the majority of its cultivators that they are on the brink of a revolution, and are crying out for no less a remedy than the taking away the land from its present lawful owners. Fortunately, the cultivation of the land in England has not yet been attended by such lamentable results. This immunity, however, has only been brought about by the existence of capitalist landowners and cultivators, upon whom the losses attending the cultivation of the land have of late years fallen. Were it not for this reserve to fall back upon, England would be no better off in respect to its agricultural classes than Ireland and India. But this state of things cannot go on for ever: the last two years have shown that there is a bottom to the pockets of even capitalist landowners and farmers. Nor is it for the benefit of the com-

munity at large that the portions of it engaged in agriculture should be so heavily mulcted. On the prosperity of that interest greatly depends the prosperity of all the others.

One is at no loss to discover why those connected with the cultivation of the land in Great Britain and Ireland, both owners and cultivators, have had so many difficulties to encounter of late years. It has of course been, in addition to bad seasons, in the unrestricted importation of the raw produce of the land of other countries, against which their own produce has had to compete in their own markets. So many works have been written on the subject that there is no need to take up the readers' time in repeating the observations therein made. It is sufficient for the present purpose to remind them that this imported corn with other produce comes for the most part from countries whose cultivators of the soil work under conditions more favourable for the production of cheap corn than do the cultivators of Great Britain and Ireland. The cultivators in North America, from which the greatest competition arises, are favoured by the possession of a better climate and a soil more prolific by nature. They are also favoured by living in a new country free from the accumulated results of an old-established one, among which is a heavy taxation. The hard part of the case is that no little of the taxation so oppressive to the cultivator of the soil of the United Kingdom has arisen from the performance of the duties of a mother-country in establishing colonies in many parts of the world, against the produce of the soil of which these cultivators now have to compete.

In respect to the importation of cereals from such countries as India, Egypt, Russia, Turkey, &c., the farmers of the United Kingdom have had to compete against the produce of countries, the tillers of the soil in all of which are in a very low scale of civilisation. In some, indeed, is the scale of civilisation so low that in bad seasons their produce has been exported which ought to have been kept back for feeding the cultivators. As

for anything like the possession of goods which go to make up the comforts and decencies of civilisation, and which have helped to sweeten the toils of the farmers of England, in these countries such things are utterly unattainable, if even they are ever thought of. In fact, were it not that all these competing countries, both in the old world and in the new, are separated from the United Kingdom by a wide expanse of ocean, by which the price of their produce owing to cost of freight has been enhanced, the classes connected with the cultivation of its soil would be living the semi-barbarous life of the farmers of America, or in the destitute and semi-starved state of the peasant cultivators of the East.

It would be more satisfactory if the pitiable condition into which the cultivators of the soil in Great Britain and Ireland are fast lapsing could be traced to some other source than merely that of the free importation of the produce of the land of other countries. It must be admitted by all that, though free trade has been the cause of the ruin of thousands connected with the tillage of the land, yet it has in some measure supplied an antidote to the evils it has engendered. Situated as England is, with its dense masses of in-dwellers of large towns, steeped by the ever-recurring seasons of bad trade in poverty, it has staved off a condition of things too horrible to mention, which would infallibly have come to pass had bread become dear through a duty levied on the importation of corn from foreign countries. The benefit conferred by free trade in warding off even the possibility of so terrible a state of things as here imagined cannot therefore be too highly prized. The unfortunate part in connection with it is, that all this good done to the poorest of the population of the towns of England has been accompanied with so much loss, especially in bad seasons, to all connected with the cultivation of her land.

Free trade in land produce has not been the only difficulty the once well-to-do farmers of England have had of late years

to meet with. They have been attacked in the rear, so to speak, as well as in the front, by the demands of their labourers for a higher rate of wages, and by a disposition on the part of these labourers to give less work for their increased pay. If the produce upon which this better-paid labour had been bestowed had fetched a correspondingly higher price in the market, their position would not have been made worse; but, as we all know, the very reverse of this has been the case. With a much higher labour bill they have been getting year by year a smaller return for their crops to pay it with. It is no wonder, then, that under such adverse conditions so many of the once well-to-do farming class have been totally ruined, while others have had to retire from so fettered a contest in order to save a portion of their capital from the vortex in which the great bulk of it had already been swallowed up. It is a pity that the farming class of England, which for so many generations has been looked up to with pride as the mainstay of the country, should now be obliged to give way to the march of events, and, like many other institutions that have been of incalculable benefit in their time, should thus be lost to England. But so it is, however much it is to be regretted. The causes that have been at work to diminish their number are not likely to abate in their virulence until the whole of the class has been swept away. Possibly, an after age may regret their extinction, and endeavour as zealously to restore them as the present age has been exerting itself to extinguish them. It would only find it had taken in hand an herculean, if not an impossible, task. There would be less overthrowing of institutions that had taken centuries to grow, if the generation engaged in pulling them down had the task of setting them up again on the discovery of the injury created by their loss.

However, it is not the office of this book to endeavour to save the remnant of the present race of farmers from the

extinction to which they seemed to be doomed by the action of free trade and labourers' unions. It is rather to suggest a plan by which they can be superseded, so that the whole land of the country should not go out of cultivation from the absence of cultivators, as so much of it has already been doing. The plan, then, to be successful, must first of all be laid on such lines that it has some chance of withstanding the killing competition begotten of free trade. It must therefore steer clear of the defects which have shipwrecked the system so long in practice, of farming on a large scale by capitalists employing hired labour.

Political economists, who have long foreseen the extinction of this class of farmers, if they have not worked for such a result, say that the only class of farmers that can cultivate with profit the land of a country, the produce of which has to compete against the unrestricted importation of the produce of other countries, is that of peasants cultivating on a small scale their own land. They allege that under no other system can the land afford to pay for the large amount of labour required to be laid out upon it, to enable it to produce sufficient profit to its cultivators under the adverse conditions of competition which free trade has imposed on them. In support of their theories, they bring forward the beneficial results that have been obtained from the "petite culture" of peasant proprietors in several countries on the Continent. Certainly, the labour bestowed on the land by these small landowners is something marvellous, compared with the small amount of labour, and this too grudgingly given, by the farm labourer of England working for mere wages. All evidence goes to show that these small cultivators labour so long as it is possible for them to see by daylight, and, on pressing occasions, by moonlight as well. It is no wonder then that after such unremitting toil on the land the results are large; for, however ungrateful many things in this world may be, its soil is not one of them. Upon

it no amount of labour, if at all judiciously bestowed, is thrown away.

To quote one out of many evidences that may be brought forward to the same effect, William Howitt, in speaking of the peasant proprietor of the Palatinate, says:—"In England, with its great quantity of grass lands and its large farms, so soon as the grain is in, and the fields are shut up for hay grass, the country seems in a comparative state of rest and quiet. But here they are everywhere and for ever hoeing and mowing, planting and cutting, weeding and gathering. They have a succession of crops like a market gardener. They have their carrots, poppies, hemp, flax, saintfoin, lucerne, rape, colwort, cabbage, rotabage, black-turnips, Swedish and white-turnips, teazles, Jerusalem artichokes, mangel-wurzel, parsnips, kidney-beans, field-beans, vetches, Indian corn, buckwheat, madder for the manufacturer, potatoes, their great crop of tobacco, millet—all, or the greater part, under the family management on their own family allotments. They have had these things first to sow, many of them to transplant, to hoe, to weed, to clear of insects, to top, many of them to mow and gather in successive crops. They have their water-meadows, of which kind almost all their meadows are, to flood, to mow, and to re-flood, water-courses to re-open and to make anew, their early fruits to gather, to bring to market with their green crop of vegetables, their cattle, sheep, calves, foals, most of them prisoners, and poultry to look after, their vines to prune, and so on and on, and any one may imagine what a scene of incessant labour it is."

The above quotation, out of many of a like import to be found in works on political economy, will give the reader some idea of the amount of work small owners of land ungrudgingly give to its cultivation, and to the preparation of its produce for market, and also of the amount of labour land will profitably repay. In many of the instances given, where this unceasing toil goes on, such as in mountainous countries like Norway,

Sweden, Switzerland, etc., the soil has had to be artificially made by the proprietors of the rock beneath it. For land to be cultivated under circumstances so unfavourable, would be deemed by the capitalist farmers of England employing hired labour the height of folly. Nay, more, there are patches of land connected with most farms of any size, that are allowed to go to waste, but which by the expenditure of labour could with no difficulty be brought into cultivation. The reason why all this waste land exists, which throughout the country would comprise, if put together, several thousand acres, is that even the land the large farmers do cultivate has not anything like sufficient hands at work on it to make it profitable. Such being the case, it is hardly surprising that they grudge the money necessary to be paid for the labour of bringing fresh land into cultivation, even though such land adjoin their farm.

For bestowing upon the land of a country all the labour it is capable of bearing with advantage to itself, no system of cultivation has as yet been employed superior to that of peasant proprietorship. About this there seems to be no dispute. But necessary as it is that the land of the country should have all the labour bestowed in its cultivation it can bear, there are still other points to be considered, not only in respect to the welfare of the community at large, but even of the cultivators themselves. Now, it is generally admitted that there are many drawbacks in peasant proprietorship, and many go so far as to say that these outweigh its benefits. Of these, one is that it is too exacting on the time and physical energies of so large and important a class to the community as the owners of land, which these peasant proprietors are supposed to be, in a civilised country in a civilised age. It cannot be denied that the manual toil that takes up the time of people the whole of daylight, and often of moonlight as well, and this day after day all the year round, cannot leave much time over for the cultivation of the mind, and even for a proper attention to health

and the lowest requirements of a civilised existence. Food beyond doubt is the most essential of all the wants of man; for without a sufficient quantity of it he would soon die. But, this being secured, there is surely something in addition that should raise him above beasts of burden, whose time is wholly taken up in working, eating and sleeping. Political economists who desire to see peasant proprietorship established in this country, omit for the most part to take note of this exaction of the land on the time of its cultivators under such a system. But even some of these are often indirectly compelled to admit this serious drawback, and most travellers who have been eye-witnesses of its effects, and who have no theories to support, lament them as running counter to what might be otherwise a desirable state of things. Again, most people in passing through the districts where the system is being carried on, must have been struck with what to them must have appeared the signs of discomfort connected with the dwellings of these peasant landowners: such as the puddles of liquid manure lying around them, and often even at the doorway, the narrowness, the crookedness, unevenness and general filthiness of the streets of a village occupied by these petty landowners, and which are alive with geese, fowls, ducks and pigs, the scene being diversified only by the presence of noisy and dirty children, whose parents are too much taken up in their incessant toil at their "petite culture" to look after them. English pedestrians through the countries of a peasant proprietary on the Continent, must have been delighted each time they passed out of such villages into a region of comparative sweetness and purity, and have blessed their destiny that such abominations inseparable from a peasant proprietary did not exist in their own country.

Another objection to the system of peasant proprietorship is its tendency to so minute a subdivision of the land, that its cultivating owners can only with the greatest difficulty get the

barest subsistence out of it. It need hardly be said that wherever this minute subdivision takes place, all the evils attending the cultivation of a larger plot of land under the same system of peasant proprietorship are proportionately intensified.

A further disadvantage connected with the system is that by its requiring so large a proportion of capital to be taken up in the purchase of the land, too little by far is left for procuring the necessaries for its cultivation. In many districts where the system prevails, such a thing as a horse is a rarity, and many peasant proprietors cannot afford to keep even a donkey. We have seen in Central and Southern France, girls of fourteen and sixteen yoked abreast to a plough. Surely, the time and strength of these girls might have been occupied to greater advantage than in doing the work of a beast of burden. This deficiency of capital on the part of peasant proprietors leads to their indebtedness to money-lenders often at a high rate of interest. It is true that many of these owners of a small patch of land have inherited it instead of purchasing it themselves; but, even when this has been the case, it has been all in the way of capital that they have inherited, the little cash previously employed in cultivating it having been distributed as portions among the sisters and younger brothers. The country round Zurich, in Switzerland, by reason of its being a large manufacturing town, is one of the most favourable for the success of the system, yet even of this Von Konan says: "The indebtedness of the peasant proprietors in this flourishing canton borders on the incredible (*eine an das unglaubliche grenzende Schuldenmasse*), so that only the intensest industry, frugality, temperance, and complete freedom of commerce enable them to stand their ground."

Altogether, in balancing the advantages against the disadvantages of a peasant proprietary, one is forced to admit that the former do not so much outweigh the latter as to make it a matter of policy to upset the institutions of the United King-

dom to introduce into it that system of cultivating the land. Moreover, it is a question whether it could be done except through the agency of the State, which would have to buy up the land and keep possession of it at an enormous loss, until the labouring classes had accumulated sufficient capital to take the land off the hands of the State. But what is to be the limit to State interference in this direction? Are these small landowners to be prevented from selling their land to any one already owning land? If they are not, what is to prevent the land of the country from getting once more into as few hands as are now holding it? Furthermore, who would bear the enormous loss the State would incur in acquiring all the land of the country, if not the community at large? But political economists tell us the community at large are consumers of land produce, and as such they are on no account to be at a loss for the benefit of a class, above all one connected with agriculture, as would be the new class of peasant proprietors to be established through the agency of the State.

What then is wanted to bring about a more satisfactory way of cultivating the land of a country, is a system that would combine more advantages and fewer disadvantages than that of either tenant-farming by employers of labour or of peasant proprietorship, and yet that can be adapted with the least amount of disturbance to the institutions of that country. Such a plan it is here contended is that of tenant-farming by co-operation among labourers. Under co-operation the labouring cultivators, from having for one thing much greater interest in their work on the land, would get far more produce out of it than do the wage-paid labourers of a tenant-farmer on a large scale. They would get quite as much produce out of the land as a peasant proprietor through the combination of capital, labour, heart and headwork among the co-operators that co-operation would bring about. The combination of all these would allow of this greater amount of produce being realised with far greater profit

to the co-operators, and would for this and other reasons be the means, as will be pointed out further on, of infusing into their life far more sweetness and light than falls to the lot of peasant proprietors.

But co-operators would only reap the fruit of all this combination by having it secured to them, and this can be done only by the landowners granting to the whole body of partners in co-operative farms fixity of tenure to a certain extent. With this fixity of tenure would spring into being the magic effects of property, which, as Arthur Young says, turns sand into gold through the superhuman industry of cultivators to possess it, "The idea of property" says a well-known writer on political economy, "does not necessarily imply that there should be no rent, any more than that there should be no taxes. It merely implies that the rent should be a fixed charge, not liable to be raised against the possessor by his own improvements or by the will of a landlord. A tenant at a quit-rent is to all intents and purposes a proprietor. A copyholder is not less so than a freeholder. What is wanted is permanent possession on fixed terms. Give a man the secure possession of a bleak rock, and he will turn it into a garden; give him a nine years' lease of a garden, and he will convert it into a desert."

The principles laid down in the above quotation, though on the whole approved of in the abstract, it is intended to depart from to a certain extent in the practical carrying out of co-operative farming by labourers, as will be shown in the development of the plan commencing with the next chapter.

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CHAPTER III.

CO-OPERATIVE FARMS: THE PLAN.

Size of Farms—Number of Co-operators to each—Classes of Shareholders—Wages in advance—Distribution of Profits—Retirement of Members—Management of Farm—Inheritance in Co-operative Farms—Farm Buildings, etc.

FOR the sake of clearness, the figures necessary to be used will be given in round numbers. In accordance then with this, let it be first of all supposed that a co-operative farm is to consist, say, of 1,000 acres, and that the number of labourers co-operating in the tillage of this farm to be, say, forty. This would give twenty-five acres to each labourer. This proportionate number of acres to each of the forty partners, though not too large in a co-operative farm, would be too large for a peasant proprietor to work with profit without having recourse to wage-paid labour, unless he had sons besides his wife and daughters to help him, and this is usually the case in farms of that extent. Even these helpers require what may be called wages, in kind if not in money, and thus the peasant cultivator of twenty-five acres paying such wages actually becomes an employer of labour, farming his own land though only on a small scale.

The apportionment of twenty-five acres to a labourer in a co-operative farm would be too large, were it not that by co-operation a larger amount of produce would be raised at a less expenditure of labour than can possibly be the case in peasant ownership, in which each owner would work his farm of twenty-five acres separately. The different kinds of produce to be raised would be no greater in a peasant tenant co-operative farm of 1,000 acres than in a peasant proprietorship farm of

ten acres; but the quantities of each variety would be on an average one hundred times greater. In all manufactures there is great saving of labour and an increase of proficiency the oftener the same processes are repeated.

A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF THE SHARES AND CAPITAL OF A CO-OPERATIVE FARM.

SHARES.			CAPITAL.		
Distribution of 1,000 £5 shares of a co-operative farm of 1,000 acres among its forty members arranged in four classes.			Contribution of £5,000 capital by the forty members of a co-operative farm of 1,000 acres according to their arrangement into four classes of shareholders.		
Class.	Whole number of Shares in each Class.	Number of Shares held by each Member.	Class.	Whole of Capital in each Class.	Capital of each Member of a Class.
1st.	500	50	1st.	£2,500	£250
2nd.	300	30	2nd.	1,500	150
3rd.	160	16	3rd.	800	80
4th.	40	4	4th.	200	20
	<hr/> 1,000 shares	<hr/> 100 10 members		<hr/> £5,000	<hr/> £500 10
		<hr/> 1,000 shares.			<hr/> £5,000.

The forty co-operative labourers of a farm of 1,000 acres it is proposed to divide into four classes of shareholders, according to the amount of capital each would contribute to the capital account of the undertaking. As to the whole amount of capital that would be required for cultivating 1,000 acres, it is usual to reckon it at £10,000, or £10 an acre. But, as this would be a sum much larger than forty men, willing to work as farm labourers, would be able to get together, it is proposed to fix it at £5,000. It is immaterial what amount is fixed on, as it is only wanted as a basis for calculation in the formation of the four classes of shareholders. If £5,000 should prove not to be enough, the balance required to fill up the deficiency would have to be borrowed. But as the co-operators would be numerous in comparison with the number of labourers employed under the old system on a farm of 1,000 acres, and as these forty co-operate labourers would have much greater inducements to work much harder than wage-paid labourers, it is anticipated that half the amount of capital, or £5 an acre, would suffice.

The £5,000 that is to serve for the capital it is now proposed to apportion in the following manner. First of all, there are to be ten co-operators in each of the four classes of shareholders, and the ten co-operators of the first class are to furnish half of the whole capital. This capital is to consist of £5 shares, of which there would be 1,000. The first class of co-operating shareholders would thus absorb 500 of these £5 shares, which would give fifty shares to each. The ten co-operators in the second class would absorb 300 shares among them, each getting thirty shares. Of the remaining 200 shares the third class shareholders are to take up 160, being sixteen for each member, and the remaining forty shares would be distributed among the ten in the fourth class, which would give four to each. Whenever there is a vacancy in any of these classes, the one applying for it in the lower class is to be preferred to any outsider, provided he can produce the increased amount of capital required. By means of this gradation of classes according to the amount of capital, and totally irrespective of any favour, every man by industry and thrift could rise from the lowest round of the ladder to the highest.

The members of a co-operative farm are to hold all the shares among themselves, so that not one of them is to be held by an outsider on any account, and none of the money with which the respective shares would be bought by the members is to be borrowed. The necessity for these precautions is obvious. For one thing, they would prevent others than the working labourers in the co-operation from reaping the profit of their labour, and for another, they would hinder a man without capital of his own from getting into the first class of shareholders, and so from being in the position of managing the finances of the whole undertaking. To allow of a borrower being a shareholder, would be unjust to all the co-operating labourers who had furnished their own capital

through the exercise of prudential restraint. Besides, if a borrower be admitted into the co-operation, an outside interest of an objectionable kind in the character of a money-lender would also be admitted. The only lender of capital the members of a co-operative farm should have any connection with, outside their own body, should be the landowner, whose loan of capital should be in the form of land and buildings at a fixed rate of interest.

As one of the peculiarities of farming is to incur a great expense for labour months before realising the fruits of that labour, it is proposed to anticipate the division of the yearly profits of the farm among the members by the payment to them of weekly wages. What these wages should amount to is obviously a matter of arrangement; for, as whatever wages would be paid would have to come out of profits, the higher the rate of these wages the less balance would there be to be distributed among the members at the end of the year. The arrangement that has been here considered to be the best is to vary the amount in accordance with the rank of the classes. To the members of the first class of shareholders it is proposed to give each 30s. a week, to those of the second class 25s., to those of the third 20s., and those of the fourth 15s. a week.

Whatever profits may be made in the course of the year ought not to be distributed among the co-operative labourers till its close. They should then be distributed pro rata according to the number of shares. For instance, as there would be 1,000 shares, should the profits for a year amount to £2,000—a by no means exaggerated supposition, as will be shown more at length towards the end of the book—there would be £2 for each share held by each co-operator in addition to the weekly wages he is supposed to have already received. As a co-operator in the first class would be a holder of fifty shares, his share of the £2,000 profits would be £100,

while the holder of four shares in the fourth class would get only £8. It has not been thought necessary to enter into anything like minute detail showing on what probabilities is based the amount of profits likely to be made every year by a co-operative farm of 1,000 acres. Owing to the uncertainties respecting seasons, etc., such figures might after all prove misleading. It suffices to say that, if the crops were not likely to be much larger from the same land and under the influence of the same climate, and the profit from cultivating these crops much greater under tenant-farming by co-operation among labourers than under either tenant-farming carried on by wage-paid labour alone or a peasant proprietary, this work would never have been written. The co-operative farming would be especially suited for the growth of the many kinds of produce raised with so much profit by the peasant proprietors of the Continent, called by us market-gardening, and for the rearing of animals requiring the intelligent and painstaking care of those interested in their being brought up in a healthy condition.

It need hardly be said that, before the division of profits takes place at the end of the year, it will be necessary that provision should be made for keeping the £5,000 working capital of a co-operative farm intact, so that there would be no difficulty in paying over to the retiring members their proportion of capital. The actual capital thus paid away would be supplied by those succeeding to the vacancies in the classes of shareholders caused by the retiring members. On no account must this practice be departed from, and therefore to secure it for all time, there should be an allowance made every year out of the profits sufficiently large to cover all losses, necessary repairs, renewals of machinery, and such like. These annual outgoings should all be deducted from income, and not met by an addition to the capital account. Should, however, a co-operative farm enter upon an enterprise connected with

farming beyond tilling the ground, rearing animals, etc., requiring an outlay of additional capital, there would be no harm perhaps in increasing the capital account by that amount. Even then it would be sound policy to pay off this capital as soon as possible by instalments out of yearly profits.

It is of importance for the efficient working of the scheme that no saleable interest should come into existence. Should a member fall ill, so as to incapacitate him for keeping pace in his work with the others, he would have to fall out of the course, just as in the same circumstances all others have to do, whether they be in a trade or in a profession, and this too without receiving any compensation. He would, of course, get his capital back at once by the sale of his shares to the member of the class below stepping into his place, but to nothing more would he be entitled. Whatever hardship there may be in such a rule would be lessened by the establishment of an insurance fund, to be spoken of further on, to which every member of the co-operation should subscribe, and the premiums on the policy of which ought to be paid not out of wages, but out of the profits to be distributed among the members at the end of the year. As the misfortune of falling ill, or meeting with an accident might happen to one member as well as another, all should contribute to this fund. In cases, however, of illness lasting, say, a few weeks, the above rule respecting retirement should not apply.

The next point to be considered is the way in which a co-operative farm should be managed. The management ought to be wholly left to the discretion of the members of the co-operation, subject to no interference on the part of the landowner. It would be to the interest of the members quite as much as to that of the landowner that it should be managed profitably. In the management amongst themselves five members of the first class of shareholders out of the ten are to be employed. One, for instance, would keep the accounts,

another would undertake dealings, whether of buying or selling, in the markets, while two would superintend all the processes connected with the production, and over these would be placed the fifth as a sort of captain, on whom the whole responsibility of the working of the co-operation would fall. As to who these five members of the first class of shareholders should be, it would be better to have it settled by the members of the first and second classes, the decision perhaps to be ratified by the members of all the other classes at a special meeting of all the co-operating shareholders. There should be a meeting of the shareholders in the first and second classes on a certain evening in every month, for talking over the ordinary business of the co-operative undertaking, and a quarterly meeting of the members of all the classes for the discussion of unusual matters, such as the election of a manager on a vacancy, etc. At the annual meeting of all the co-operating shareholders, there should be laid before each a printed statement of the financial affairs of their farm for the year just closed. It would be as well if at the half-yearly meeting a half-yearly statement could be presented to the shareholders.

The five members of the first class of shareholders not chosen to take part in the management, are to do the ordinary labourers' work as much as if they were men in a lower class. It must never be lost sight of that the co-operators, with the exception of the five privileged managers and overseers, are to be as much labourers at field and other work connected with a farm, during all the time they are members of the co-operation, as are the small landowners of a peasant proprietary. They would gain from being in the first class by having more capital invested in the co-operation than the members of the other classes, which would entitle them to a proportionately larger share of the weekly profits, by receiving a higher rate of weekly wage, and by being chosen as next on the roll to fill up a vacancy in the management. In order to keep alive a circula-

tion of promotion, it is proposed that no member of the first class of shareholders should remain in it after his 65th year, when he would be supposed to have passed work, at any rate as a farm labourer. A co-operator, by the time he is 65 years old, would be supposed to have made enough to keep him in tolerable comfort for the remainder of his life. He would certainly have a capital of £250 on his retirement, and perhaps many years before; for unless he had owned that amount he could not have got into that class at all. His sons would have been provided for, unless he had many, by the co-operation, since most likely one, if not two of them, would be members of it, and thus be in a position of stepping into their father's shoes as much as if they had been sons of a peasant proprietor.

Another feature in the plan is, that as five out of the ten members of the first class of shareholders would be prevented, by their clerical and superintending duties, from performing manual labour on the farm, there should be five lads, as supernumeraries or probationers, brought into the co-operation, so as to keep the number at manual work all the year round on the farm at forty. It would be better not to put these five additional young men into any class, but to treat them as supernumeraries on trial. They would not be required to furnish any capital, and their wages ought not to exceed, say, 10s. a week. In the course of time these unclassed supernumeraries would consist chiefly of the sons of men in the first class. These lads would thus have an opportunity of serving an apprenticeship under their father's eye as much as if they were sons of peasant proprietors, and on their being able to show that they possessed a capital of £20 entirely of their own, they would each in his turn be chosen to fill up a vacancy in the fourth class of shareholders in preference to a stranger. In this, so far as the principle of inheritance goes, so much lauded by writers on political economy, the large co-operative farms of peasant tenants would prove quite

as efficacious for the purposes for which it is advocated as the small separate farms of peasant proprietors.

There is much said about the value the labouring population attach to being able to transmit their land from father to son; but experience teaches us that this theory is upset by the fact that peasant proprietors in most countries are ever ready to sell their inherited land at the first tempting offer. The annual sales of land by peasant proprietors in France on this account are so numerous as to be scarcely credible. How is it that the yeomen-farmers of England, once so numerous, have all but become extinct? It has been from their having been tempted to sell their inheritance by an enticing offer from probably some wealthy neighbouring landowner; and, depend upon it, the same kind of interference would happen again, unless forbidden by State action, should peasant proprietorship ever be established in England. With the handsome sums realised by the sale of their inherited land, these once yeomen-farmers have bought new homes and fresh land of much greater extent in America and the other colonies. In the colonies themselves, nothing is more common than for settlers near the coast to sell their freehold, acquired by inheritance or purchase, to found new homes by buying land of greater extent and of less marketable value, farther in the interior. But in a co-operative farm in England its members would not be able to do this, so that in these sons may succeed fathers for many generations. When the fathers die, the capital that would in consequence be withdrawn from a co-operative farm could be replaced therein on the sons, members of the co-operation, inheriting such capital. In fact, the sequence of succession thus sketched would correspond pretty much to that which goes on every day in commercial undertakings on a large scale, such as bankers, manufacturers, merchants, and such like, in which there are many partners, and in which the sons succeed the fathers, by the aid of their inherited capital, for generations.

It is not the power of transmitting the actual ownership of a particular piece of land down to their male descendants that the peasant proprietors so much value, as the sense of security that the fruits of the labour spent in their almost superhuman efforts at cultivating it should not be taken from them by some one else owning the land, and having the power to appropriate these fruits to his own advantage.

What has been said respecting the plan of co-operative farms has related chiefly to the land, the capital, and the labour connected with them. There is something else having an important bearing on their success, which must not be left out of account. Reference is now made to the buildings that would be necessary, whether these be the dwellings of the members, or the outhouses, barns, stalls, etc., in which the farming work is to be carried on. In respect to this portion of the plan there need be no difficulty. Obviously, a large outlay of capital would be required, as it would greatly conduce to the success of the scheme, morally as well as financially, if the buildings to be erected should be substantial and on the most approved principles, according to the newest inventions for carrying out the purposes for which they would be required. The stalls for the animals, for instance, should be so built as to afford sufficient ventilation for their inmates, and yet be able to retain sufficient warmth in cold weather. They should, again, be so built as to admit of the manure being collected with the least amount of labour and waste.

As to the dwelling-houses of the co-operators, the ordinary cottages built of late years by liberal-minded landlords for their farm-labourers would be sufficient. Some of them, however, should be built large enough in case their occupier should have a larger number of children than the others, or wish to let a room to a bachelor member of the co-operation. Semi-detached cottages would perhaps be the most suitable, with a small piece of land connected with each for a flower

garden. These also should be built with a view to proper ventilation and drainage. The best form of application of the nightsoil of these cottages to the land would perhaps be by means of earth-closets, since there would be plenty of earth close at hand to be used in the process. As there would be nearly 200 persons living in the cottages occupied by the co-operating labourers, the amount of fertilising matter collected in this way during the course of the year would be large.

CHAPTER IV.

CO-OPERATIVE FARMS: THE PLAN CONTINUED.

Muck manure of towns—Part to be played by landowners—Manager of a co-operative farm—Difficulties at outset, how to be overcome—Capital of co-operative farms—Partners possessed of capital to join—Rent of a co-operative farm—Fixity of tenure—Moral effects of co-operative farms—Tramways to farms.

It would be in the collection and application to the land of muck manure from towns wherever practicable, that co-operative farming by labourers would prove itself to be so much more profitable than the present system of farming on a large scale by capitalist employers of labour. The proper application of this kind of manure to the land requires a great amount of patient labour. The soil for one thing must be well pulverised and cleared of stones and weeds. In fact all these forms of preparation of the land are usually accompanied with what is called spade husbandry, and it is the patient, unremitting manipulation of the soil to prepare it for receiving manure that gives whatever profitable results come from the "petite culture" of peasant proprietorship.

But forty men ought to produce equally profitable results on a co-operative farm of 1,000 acres. In the course of time every yard of earth of these 1,000 acres ought to be brought into as friable a state and so as manurable and manageable as every foot of the peasant proprietor's farm of ten acres. Even the five unofficial members of the first class of shareholders would never lose their character as labourers, and like the rest would be willing to turn their hands to anything. As a matter of course, the privileged five during their term of office would be let off manual labour in the field, since it would not only be

inconsistent with their new duties, but they would not have time for both. But these men as the executive, as it were, of the little farming republic would be the cynosure of the eyes of all the others in it. They would hold a position much more enviable than any peasant farming his own land could ever aspire to. With these latter it must be dig, dig, dig to the remainder of their days, without a single prospect of alleviation. Yet this comparatively enviable position of the five executive shareholders of the first class is no more than any shareholder in the fourth, or even any one of the five supernumerary lads may hope one day to reach.

In regard to the capital to be laid out on a co-operative farm in buildings of all kinds, cottages as well as stables, barns, cattle-stalls, piggeries, etc., it would be necessary that this should be found by the landlord himself, for the same reason that the land should be found by him. The co-operating tenants could no more find capital for the erection of the buildings needed to carry on with profit the operations of a co-operative farm of 1,000 acres, than they could for purchasing the land itself. It would take up all their comparatively little capital to meet the annual outgoings connected with profitably working the land. If the landowners were to co-operate among themselves for finding the capital necessary for erecting these buildings, there would be no more need for the State to interfere with respect to the buildings on the land than in respect to the land itself. As they would be all built on the landowner's land, they ought to be a secure investment as well as a fairly remunerative one.

A rent should be charged to the co-operative labourers upon all farm buildings as well as cottages, sufficiently high to produce an interest on the outlay of six per cent. This would give three-and-a-half per cent. for interest on the capital, and two-and-a-half per cent. for a repairing fund and a sinking fund for eventually paying off any debt of borrowed money. Should

it be necessary for the landowners to borrow of the public outside themselves, the best way of their doing so would probably be by the issue of three-and-a-half per cent. bonds with coupons attached, and negotiable on the Stock Exchange. As the security for the payment of these bonds would be the landowner's interest in the land as well as in the buildings thereon, to say nothing of the existence of a sinking fund for paying them off at par, there would be no more favourable investment for trust-moneys than these landowners' building-fund bonds.

The co-operative labourers, however, ought to have fixity of tenure for the buildings on the same conditions as they could have it for the land, since the one would be of no use to them without the other. If they are to throw heart and soul into their work, they must feel as secure of not being deprived of the fruits of their toil as if not only the land, but the buildings on it, were their own.

To avoid any misapprehension, it would be as well to state that in all transactions between a landowner and the co-operative labourers of a farm, the latter should be treated with not singly, but through their head manager in their corporate, or rather co-operate capacity. The landowner should look to this head manager as responsible for the actions of the whole body of members, and not to any single one for the fulfilment of any contract. All squabbles, then, among the members would have to be settled among themselves. Suppose, for instance, the extreme case of an intractable member, expelled from the partnership by his fellow-co-operators, refusing to give up the cottage he had been occupying: in such an event the landowner would have to look to the head manager for his rent, and not to the defaulter. His late co-operative partners would have a much readier way of bringing such a man to reason than could possibly lie in the hands of a landowner, who had given up all power of

interference in the co-operation. Indeed, it would greatly simplify matters if the head manager of a co-operative farm should be made responsible for, and collect the rents of all the cottages inhabited by the members of the co-operation as well as of the farm buildings, and pay all these rents at the same time to the landowner. It would save the employment of any agency between the landlord and the headman among his co-operating tenants—a thing to be especially avoided. Were these suggestions attended to, an estate of 100,000 acres, divided into 100 co-operative farms, could be well-nigh as easily managed by the owner himself as the 1,000 acres of one farm. This is accounted for by the fact that each manager of a farm, though selected to the post by the co-operating members, would be, to all intents and purposes, the landlord's agent also for that farm.

Respecting what has been called fixity of tenure, it is not essential for the security required by the co-operative labourers that a rent should be fixed now, and remain at the same amount in perpetuity. It might be fixed for a period of thirty years, and at the end of that time, should a revision be deemed necessary, the representatives of the farm should have a voice in it equally with the landowner. In a period of thirty years one cannot tell how much the value of land may vary. Its value may increase from other causes than the improvement in the quality of the soil made by the co-operative labourers. On the other hand, causes may be at work to lessen its value, and in that case the arbitrators would recommend a reduction instead of an increase in rent. Necessary as it is for the success of a co-operative farm that its co-operators should not have to pay too high a rent, it is still more so that their hopes should not be discouraged by a probability, however remote, that others than themselves are to reap the reward of their labours. The peasant proprietor toils away from morning until night to get his land into

a high state of cultivation, because he looks forward to be benefited by this improved condition whether he keeps it or sells it. The co-operative farmers ought, as far as possible, to have a like security, if like results are to be produced. This they would have if the above plan respecting fixture of tenure were carried out. In fact, it is on the basis of this security that mainly lies the chance of success of co-operative farming by labourers, and so of its taking the place left vacant by the failure of farming on a large scale by individual capitalists and their wage-paid labourers.

With regard to the rental of the land of a co-operative farm, it would be advisable to have it as low as possible at first, in order to entice small capitalists into the partnership. As there is hardly a county in which there are not at present many farms, the owners of which would be only too glad to get a tenant for them at a nominal rent, if only to escape paying rates, etc., themselves, they ought to be glad of the opportunity of getting as much as 15s. an acre. This rent of 15s. an acre might be raised sixpence an acre every year, until in the course of twenty years it would reach 25s. an acre. Then should the fixity begin, till at all events for another generation, when the rent might be submitted to arbitration as to whether it should be in some degree increased or lessened. Thus for fifty years the rent would not exceed 25s. an acre. By that time the landowners ought, by the scheme set forth in a former paragraph of a sinking fund, to have secured for themselves the possession of all the buildings connected with the farm, for which, however, the tenants would still pay rent, though, perhaps, at a reduced rate, just as a tradesman does for the house in which he carries on his business.

If a difficulty should arise in the practical carrying out of the plan of a co-operative farm, it would result from the inability to obtain a sufficient number of members with the requisite capital. But whatever difficulty would be created on this

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account, would be so only at the outset. When once the number of members had been filled up, it is anticipated that no hitch even on this score would ever happen again. The vacancies would occur through death, or severe illness incapacitating a co-operator from working, or through retirement voluntary or compulsory. Most probably, by reason of the healthiness of the occupation, the greatest number of vacancies would take place through the retirement of the members of the first class of shareholders on reaching the age of 65. When one or more of these should retire, his or their place thus left vacant would be filled up, not by an outsider bringing in a capital of £250 for buying therewith the fifty £5 shares of the retiring member, but by the member of the second class who had saved sufficient money for the purpose—that is, the difference between £150 and £250—and the place of this latter would be filled up by a member of the third class, and his place again by one of the fourth, and his again by a supernumerary, provided this latter had saved up the requisite sum of £20 for buying the four shares of the fourth class of shareholders. Thus, when once the plan is in full working order, it will be rare indeed that an outsider with capital would be wanted to join the co-operation. The money yearly withdrawn from the first class would be supplied by the savings of those in the other classes profiting by such withdrawal; and these savings would be made out of the yearly distribution of profits. In this way the capital of a co-operative farm would be in a measure self-continuing. What would be withdrawn from the top, would be supplied partly by its own self out of its surplus profits, and partly by the replacement by the son of what had been withdrawn by the father.

Even the obtaining the requisite capital at the outset ought not to be an insuperable difficulty. Many farmers who had been able to save £250 from the wreck attending the attempt to carry on a large farm with an insufficiency of capital, could not do better than to become members of the first class of

shareholders of a co-operative farm. By doing so, their money would be safe, and they would find employment for themselves congenial to their habits and tastes in their own country. If these farmers were to take their £250 to a colony, they might make a more profitable use of it, or they might, as thousands before them have done, lose it. The lower classes at the outset might be filled up by artisans, mechanics, or porters in towns, who had once been farm labourers, and who had saved up the *sine qua non* amount of capital.

Again, in these days of high wages earned by female servants, there ought to be no dearth of £20 nor even of £80, the amount of capital necessary for a member of the third class to possess. The young women who had saved up these sums could not do better than marry young men striving to save up by their own industry and thrift the capital indispensable to their becoming members of the third and fourth classes of shareholders of a co-operative farm.

It would be as well to say a word or two about the moral and intellectual effects of tenant-farming by co-operation among labourers. Writers on political economy claim for the system of peasant proprietorship great advantages over every other existing system in regard to these two points. They assert that it gives rise on the part of the peasant owner to excessive industry, thrift, forethought and self-restraint and, by reason of the varied culture of their farms, to a great development of intelligence. About the excessive industry, any one who has seen the system in daily work can have no doubt, nor can there be much doubt about its giving rise to the admirable qualities of thrift, forethought, and a certain amount of self-restraint, but about the intelligence, those who have been on the spot to watch carefully the working of the system for any length of time, with a view to take note of its results, must have great misgivings about its capacity for increasing intelligence. On

the contrary, it is well known that the majority of the peasant proprietors or landowners are intensely ignorant, and as a natural consequence intensely narrow-minded. Indeed, it may be questioned whether they are any better in this respect than the farm labourers of England are at present. Any one in the habit of reading French newspapers must have been struck with the many cases he comes across of the grossest superstition, and of crimes mostly attended with murders in respect to atrocity far more revolting than occur in the rural districts in England. In reading the account of the trials of these cases, one gets a better knowledge of the moral and intellectual effects of the working of a peasant proprietary than it is possible to get from reading the highly-coloured assumptions indulged in by writers on political economy in support of their theories. What is most revolting to read of in the crimes committed among the peasant proprietors of France, Belgium, and Switzerland, is that they are not so much committed by a criminal class as in England, as among the members of a family, chiefly for the sake of getting at the hoarded-up savings of a relation, and this relation oftentimes a parent.

It is here contended that the system of tenant-farming on a large scale, by co-operation among labourers, would give equally good results as that of a peasant proprietary in point of industry, thrift, forethought and self-restraint. The members would be stimulated to industry by the knowledge that all the profits of the farm, after payment of necessary outgoings, would be shared among themselves in proportion to the amount of capital they had advanced, and even this capital most of them would become possessed of only by a previous exercise of industry.

As to thrift, which involves both forethought and self-restraint, the members would have to exercise this quality, or else they would never save up enough out of their share of the yearly profits of the co-operative farm to enable them to

advance the requisite capital for securing a vacancy in a higher class of shareholders. Writers on political economy are wont to compare the little farm of a peasant proprietor to a bank, into which are at once deposited all the profits made from it. With no less truth might each of the four classes of shareholders in a co-operative farm be called a bank. By means of these classes, an inducement to save is held out to each member from the day of his entering to the day of his leaving it. To facilitate the accumulation of their capital until it is wanted for purchasing a step in promotion, the members,—if the farm be at some distance from a post-town,—should establish among themselves a branch of a Post Office Savings Bank, which should be in weekly communication with that of the Government. This would answer all practical purposes, without throwing any additional outlay on the State. There would not then be, as in countries of isolated peasant proprietors, the murdering of all that ought to be most dear, for the sake of getting at a few coins tied up in a stocking or stored away in a secret drawer.

As to robberies by strangers, as in the case of the lone farmhouse of a capitalist employer of labour such as occurred lately near St. Albans, when the farmer, Mr. Anstie, was shot, these are not at all likely to happen to any member of a co-operative farm. The dwellings of the co-operators would be all close together, and the men themselves would be actuated by an "esprit de corps" for their mutual self-defence. The gang of thieves that would attack the dwellings of forty-five men, including the supernumeraries, with any chance of success would have to be very large indeed, and the prospect of plunder from such dwellings would hardly be attractive enough to make it worth the while of criminals to form so large a gang. So, not only would co-operative farms be as conducive to industry and thrift, forethought and self-restraint as the farms of peasant proprietors, but in the former case the fruits of all these qualities are more likely to be preserved to their owners than in the latter.

Touching intelligence, it has already been shown how little is the claim which peasant proprietorship has in promoting this desirable object, nor is it here intended to assert that the members of a co-operative farm would be endowed with a vast amount of knowledge. In all ages there has been a failing in the agricultural mind in this respect. But in spite of this admission, it may be claimed for the system of co-operative farms that its members would be in point of knowledge, not only in things connected with agriculture but on subjects outside of it, more intelligent than the general run of peasant proprietors. The very fact of their having meetings every quarter, at each of which would be discussed the position of their affairs, the filling up vacancies in the different classes, the prospects of the markets, and such topics for discussion, would alone have the effect of brightening the intelligence, which is so apt to become sluggish in a constant round of digging, hoeing and planting.

But more than this might be done by and for the co-operating labourers to rouse their wits into action beyond the sphere of farming operations. To this end it is suggested that close to the cottages should be erected a building that would answer all the purposes of a club-house, to be used by both sexes. In this building should be a room large enough to hold comfortably all the members of the co-operation when assembled to discuss affairs at their quarterly meetings. It could in the evenings, especially in winter, be used as a reading room, in which would be found two or three daily newspapers treating, among other subjects, of agriculture. There should be also attached to the building a library of a few standard works and books of reference, with which the young men connected with the co-operation could improve the education picked up at the Board or National school. In this way co-operation would be found to be as beneficial for the mind as the co-operative work on the farm would be for the body and finances of the co-operators.

It would add to the success of a co-operative farm if all the buildings, even dwellings, in connection with it, were as nearly as practicable in its centre, and that this centre should be brought into as direct a communication as possible with the nearest railway station. The latter would best be done by means of a tramway. There need not be a tramway going direct and exclusively from each co-operative farm to the railway station. Three or four tramways radiating from the station in opposite directions might be used for some distance out of it in common by the farms, near which each of them would go, and from these radiating tramways could branch off the tramways going each to its particular farm. The tramway trucks would be propelled, not by a steam locomotive, but either by an electric battery or compressed air, either of which would be very much cheaper than steam, and could probably be used by the farmers themselves.

As to the laying down of these tramways, this might be done at the charge of the landowners, or of the railway, to which they would act as feeders. In the latter case a little State interference might be employed with great benefit to the interests of the country at large, without cost to the public. It would have only to exert a little pressure on the different railway companies concerned, through its permanent Railway Commission, in case the directors of these companies should be sluggish at perceiving it would be to their interest to do so. Besides the trucks wanted on these tramways for conveying the produce of the farms to the railway station, there need be only a few covered vans for conveying to it the labourers of the co-operative farms and their families, and their children to and from school in wet weather. The tramways need not cost much to construct. They might even be laid on the existing macadamised roads, for these would absorb by far the greater part of the previous traffic on these roads. With respect to the conveyance of the children to and from the school in the

nearest village or town, a contract by the year on favourable terms might be made feasible, with or without State interference.

It would only want the service of these short tramways to put every co-operative farm in immediate railway and telegraphic communication with every part of the country. By means of them would the produce of these farms be taken speedily to market, and as a great deal of this produce would be vegetables, fruit, poultry, eggs and milk, a rapid transit from the farms to towns would be of the greatest consequence. Moreover, on these tramways could go specially constructed cess-vans, conveying at night the muck of the towns on the line of railway. The value of muck for the growth of vegetable is well known from experience by many market gardeners even in England, and by every peasant proprietor on the Continent. Without its profuse use, of little avail would be the incessant toil of these small landowners. But they use it for their cereal crops no less than for their root crops and vegetables. Even in Scotland the use of this invaluable manure for cereals is not unknown: for by it the late Rev. Mr. Jeffreys, Dunbar, Haddingtonshire, used to get every year, for nearly thirty years, from his glebe land his extraordinary crops of wheat.

However, of this muck, of tramways, and of other matters connected with a co-operative farm, more will be said in the last chapters of the book, when treating of these subjects more in detail and in order of arrangement for their being better understood. The above brief sketch of the plan has been given mainly as an introduction to the chapters more immediately following.

CHAPTER V.

THE PLAN SUITABLE FOR IRELAND.

Cottier system and Ulster custom—Land League and its aims—Small Farms and their results—Employer of labour farmer in Ireland—Co-operation of Tillers into Large Farms—Members of Co-operative Farms, Irish or English?—Large families of Tillers of small Farms—Indebtedness of Owners of small Farms—Migration of Farmers on a small scale—Irish Landowners—State help.

So far the subject of inquiry has been the suitability of the plan of co-operative farms for superseding the system of large farms carried on by individual capitalists employing wage-paid labour, hitherto so prevalent in England. It will now be shown that co-operative farms would be equally suitable for superseding the rack-rent cottier system of Ireland, and also the small farming under the Ulster custom of the same island. The latter of these two systems is probably better than the former; but this is pretty much all that can be said in its favour. It possesses some of the advantages of peasant proprietorship on the Continent, and also its disadvantages. Mr. Tuke, in the report of his inspection of the farms in what are called the distressed districts, says that the small proprietors cultivating their own land—presumably land held for the most part under the Ulster custom—he found in a no better condition either in respect to their intelligence, their habit of living, or to their mode of cultivation, than the cottier tenants at a rack-rent, and in some cases in even a worse, for they have to pay a still higher rent to a still more exacting person than the harshest of landlords—the money-lender; and that the only thing in which the holder of a tenant-right evinces a superiority over the cottier-tenant is in having the conscious-

ness that in the land he cultivates he owns a share. It is not easy to see how the country profits by such consciousness, if the part-owner and part-tenant cultivator does not. Certainly, the inexorable laws of supply and demand of political economy ridicule it.

All that Mr. Tuke had asserted of the many evil effects of the cottier and Ulster custom tenant-right system has since been supported by a writer on political economy in letters which appeared not long ago in the *Times*. If there had been anything to praise in the latter system, resembling as it does to some extent the peasant proprietorship of his own country, it would hardly have been overlooked by such a person. Instead, however, of praising it, he condemns it in as about as strong language as could well be used. Indeed, he goes so far as to attribute to the Ulster custom no less than to the cottier system the wretched condition into which Ireland has been brought. With such a conclusion must most unbiassed persons coincide; for it has been the poverty and prevalent dissatisfaction resulting from these two systems that have put the victims of them under the malignant influence of democratic agitators.

If a minute subdivision into small farms be the best solution of the land question in every country, as certain writers on political economy make out, Ireland, with its nearly 600,000 small farms, ought surely not to be in the condition bordering on rebellion it now is. The majority of these small farmers are, it is true, not owners of the land they cultivate, and have in consequence to pay a rent for it. But this is an obligation not to be evaded, except by practically taking wrongful possession of the land, as the leaders of the Land League are now inciting tenants to do. Even if the tenants were allowed by the State to place themselves in the enviable position of owning the land they till without paying anything for it, even then it is questionable whether they would be after

a few years any better off, or their land better cultivated. M. Molinari distinctly hazards the opinion, from what he saw of the farms in the north and west of Ireland, and above all in Donegal, that there would be no improvement in either respect.

Let it be supposed that all the aims of the Land League be fully realised, so that not one of the old race of landowners should be left in Ireland, what would result from this change? Unless the land of Ireland were to revert to a wild, barren state not worth an owner, it would be owned by somebody, whether this somebody be the actual cultivator himself, or the person to whom he has to pay a rent. If the cultivator himself, what is to prevent his selling it to a person not intending to cultivate it himself, but to let it to another man who would? Unless that *imperium in imperio*, the Land League, be allowed to begin another round by confiscation, affairs would only leave off where they began. That the small farmers of Ireland have very little compunction about parting with their land, when once they can get a good price for it, is proved every day by their readiness to sell their tenant-right interest under the Ulster custom. Probably many of the large estates in Ireland, as in England, were acquired by the accumulated purchases during the course of generations of the small properties of yeomen-farmers. What has happened before is likely to happen again, unless hindered by the State action so distasteful to certain political economists.

As the leaders of the Land League must be cognisant of the above results of their agitation, one is led to believe that their object in getting rid of the landowners is anything but to benefit the tenants. For centuries has it been the fate of that unhappy country for the cultivators of its soil to allow themselves, partly through ignorance, and partly through a natural warmth of heart and liveliness of imagination, to be led by agitators professing to have their interests at heart.

But, what has ever exposed these cultivators of the soil to this evil influence? It has been the isolation of life which the system of small farms has brought about. It is this isolation that produces the ignorance which exposes the small cultivators to become a prey to those who think it worth their while to gain them over to their side. When these small cultivators do act in co-operation, as at present under the leaders of the Land League, the sensation feels so strange to them that they become wild with frenzy, and as such ready to commit any outrageous act suggested to them. Unfortunately, when the cultivators on a small scale are in this state, it is when they have been brought to it by those influencing them in their state of isolation to act in antagonism to those neglecting, from some cause or other, to adopt the same kind of tactics. This will account for the extraordinary influence now possessed over the minds, or rather the hearts, of the small isolated peasant cultivators by Land Leaguers, Home-rulers, and many Roman Catholic priests, and the extreme powerlessness to counteract this influence of all the well-disposed and law-abiding in Ireland.

A remedy has been applied for this state of things, but it has completely collapsed in the hands of those using it. It has been for the landowners to clear their estates as much as possible of these small cultivators, and to let the land thus cleared to large tenant-farmers employing wage-paid labour. Most of these farmers have been Scotchmen, others Englishmen. There is no difficulty in assigning the reasons for the failure of these attempts. In the first place, as tenant-farming on a large scale with wage-paid labour has been a failure in a country like England, with its many markets for supplying with land produce a multitude of consumers, it was not likely to succeed in Ireland, separated as it is by a sea and other obstacles from these markets; and not being a manufacturing country herself, she has no markets of her own,

except a few seaports, worth speaking of. Moreover, not only was there likely to be the same difficulty in Ireland as in England about labourers, but this difficulty has been augmented by the hostile feeling among the labourers, engendered by agitators, against what they call serving under Saxon taskmasters. The Irish labourers employed by a tenant-farmer, whether Scotch or English, having the notion put into their heads by these agitators that the land that they were tilling was by right their own, were not likely to give the honest amount of work necessary to make their labour remunerative to their employers. On the other hand, English labourers, if enticed over by liberal offers, would hardly remain in a country where their life would be in danger. What extreme steps the small cultivators are prepared to take against those condemned by the Land League and other secret societies, the columns of the newspapers have lately made manifest.

Beyond all question, what is wanted to save Ireland from the state of anarchy into which she is fast drifting, is a system of cultivating the land that would allow of several of its small cultivators co-operating together for their own benefit, and at the same time of resisting all outside influences at all likely to prove injurious to the harmony necessary for the success of the co-operation. The system of tenant-farming on a large scale by an employer of labour, introduced into Ireland to supersede the cottier and Ulster custom systems, has broken down simply because it has not had this co-operating effect: for the Scotch or English employer, instead of co-operating with his Irish labourers, has ever been acting in antagonism to them and they to him. The system has consequently always been a source of weakness for the purpose wanted of it, and not of strength. Co-operative farming by labourers as here suggested would have quite the contrary effect. The co-operative farms would form barriers for the defence of the

interests, not only of the co-operators engaged on them but of society and of the institutions of the country, against which the intrigues and the seditious language of Land Leaguers, etc., would be powerless to contend. These latter, in dealing with the co-operators of a farm, would not deal with forty-five isolated individuals who could be talked over or intimidated one by one into acting seditiously against a particular class, but with forty-five men constantly co-operating together to get the most for their own advantage out of the land lent them at a fixed and moderate rental by a member of that class. As soon as twenty of these co-operative farms, with, in the aggregate, their nearly 1,000 industrious, thrifty, law-abiding, yet resolute co-operators, had been started in every county in Ireland, the whole face of that country would be changed to a marvellous extent in the direction of peace, order, and prosperity. Then, for the first time would that fair island in reality, as well as in name, form a part of the United Kingdom, and this part by no means an unworthy one.

The effectiveness of the system of co-operative farms for keeping at a distance seditious demagogues would greatly depend upon the action of the landowners of these farms. How this is to be brought about will be best understood, when further on mention will be made of the part landowners are to play in the scheme of co-operation. At present it will be merely repeated in respect to Ireland what has already been said in regard to England, that the landowners of one as well as of the other should make the co-operative farmers as independent as possible of all outside influences detrimental to their own interests, so that they may be able to give their whole attention to the cultivation of the land, to increase the profits to be shared among themselves at the end of the year. The first step in this self-containing direction would be the erection of all the necessary farm-buildings and the cottages for the dwellings of the co-operators already alluded to, which, as in England,

should be as nearly as possible in the centre and not on the outskirts of the farm. The next step should be the construction of tramways, as in England, connecting each farm with the nearest railway station, to enable the co-operators to send their produce to the towns and seaports, and to bring away the manure of these towns.

So much for the business part. As to the mental, the clubhouse with its reading-room, in which the co-operative labourers could get to see English as well as Irish papers not saturated with the language of sedition, would connect them with the outside world in its least pernicious form. All these steps for benefiting the co-operative tenants, both physically and mentally, the landowners could take without exposing themselves to either their envy or suspicion: since, owing to their having granted a sufficiency of fixity of tenure, their action in the matter could not be deemed otherwise than disinterested.

Who are to be the men, it may be asked, who would in Ireland form the labouring tenants of a co-operative farm? Are they to be English labourers brought over for the purpose, or natives of the country? Most decidedly, a trial should be made first of all of the latter; for it is anticipated they would come out of it with credit to themselves no less than to the plan of co-operation itself. Irishmen certainly have a character for quarrelsomeness, a characteristic unfavourable to the harmony that ought to exist among the members of a co-operative undertaking. But this disposition to quarrel amongst one another exists chiefly, if not wholly, in their own country, and may be easily accounted for. In the first place, the Irish are a very prolific race, and owing to their means of living depending almost entirely on agriculture, and, moreover, owing to this interest being greatly impoverished through the action of free trade, they have consequently had but little wealth to share among their ever-increasing numbers. Again, the fact of this scarcity of wealth having to be divided among so many Irish

men has been taken advantage of by some of the educated among them to use as a lever for stirring up class against class—the labourers on the land against the capitalists owning it. But the setting up of co-operative farms throughout Ireland would soon put an end to the bones of contention so long devastating that country, by increasing its wealth, by which contentment would take the place of its opposite, and by proving in the most practical way that prosperity and happiness are to be gained for the labourers on these farms only by their harmoniously co-operating with one another, and with the owner of the land they are cultivating. Both the cottier tenant and the part landowner under the Ulster custom would be greatly deficient in Irish 'cuteness, did they not quickly see the advantages they would gain from joining a co-operative farm established on principles here set forth. Nay more, it is within the bounds of possibility that when Irishmen in America hear of the success in so many different ways of these farms, they will return to the "ould counthry" with as much eagerness as they displayed on leaving it, and bring with them the necessary capital for enabling them to become members of the different classes of shareholders.

There would, however, be one difficulty attending the starting of co-operative farms in Ireland, to which it would not be prudent to shut one's eyes. This would consist in the forcing back the wedge of hostility now unhappily thrust in between the cultivators and owners of the soil by agitators classified under the different names of Land Leaguers, Home-rulers, Nationalists, Fenians, etc. But this difficulty would not be of long continuance; for when the present small tenant-farmers and small capitalist tenant-righters in Ireland once saw the advantages to be gained from joining a co-operative farm, they would soon push aside those attempting to stand in their way, however great might be their eloquence. Even as it is, the chief argument swaying them in their present attitude of sedition is

the alternative set before them by agitators, of starvation and the competency to be obtained by taking land from its present owners. But when their eyes have been opened to the delusion practised on them by these agitators, through finding that the country will not allow of this short cut to a competency, and when they at the same time behold presented to them an opportunity of obtaining a competency, equally great, by means of honesty, industry and thrift, they would be no quick-witted Irishmen were they to reject the offer.

Amongst the many evils to which the system of small farms in Ireland has given rise, perhaps not the least is that it has caused an undue increase of the population. This is perhaps more true of the cottier system, pure and simple, than of the modified form of tenant-right under the Ulster custom. This can hardly be wondered at, if we examine the working of the cottier system. Where the amount of rent of a farm is ruled by competition alone, it is found that, owing to a longing of the poorer classes to get a living out of the land, especially in a country like Ireland, where from a dearth of factories there is a scarcity of employment, these classes will eagerly compete against one another for the tenancy of a farm, without caring in the least whether the profits from its cultivation would allow of their paying the stipulated rent. Many were the instances brought in evidence of this recklessness before a Land Commission held some years ago. In one case a tenant undertook to pay a rent of £450 a year for a farm that was not worth more than £50 a year. There can be but one result to such criminal heedlessness: a failure in the performance of the contract. The same indifference to consequences that would impel a man to undertake to pay a rent of £450 when he could scarcely afford to pay £50, would cause him to disregard the mischief he is doing by having a dozen children when he had not the means of keeping one. The evil, however, of such a bargain

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does not end in the landlord losing his rent, who in such a case as here given deserves no commiseration. The whole district, and perhaps the whole county, if not the whole island, suffers more or less from it. At first, the loss falls upon the tradesmen of the district, who, relying upon the credit given the impostor by his landlord, give him credit as well. It is upon such people, and eventually upon the parish and the county, that the burden lies of maintaining the usually very large families of men who, under the competition engendered by the cottier and, perhaps to a less extent, Ulster custom systems, undertake to pay a manifold times higher rent for land than they are capable of doing. It is now seen how it has come to pass that, in spite of the vast annual emigration of the Irish population to America, to the Colonies, and to England and Scotland, the country is still found to be over-burdened with people who are every now and then brought, as at present, into a starving condition.

With what has just been said of the effects of the cottier and Ulster tenant-right forms of land tenure, in respect of prudential restraints against having large families, or, in other words, too early marriages, the results likely to ensue from the system of co-operative farming by labourers will now be compared. First of all, the £5,000 capital for working a co-operative farm must be actual money. No member would be allowed to enter the fourth class of shareholders, and subsequently the other classes, unless he not only produces the requisite amount of capital, but he must give a guarantee that none of this money has been borrowed. In addition to the reasons already given for the enforcement of this rule, there is this: that the co-operating labourer by not borrowing remains a free agent, and as such acquires a proper pride and self-respect, which he is reluctant to throw away for the remainder of his life by an imprudent marriage made at too early a period at the beginning.

The practical working of a co-operative farm respecting the prudential conduct of its members in regard to marriage would in the course of time be probably this. Most of the young men would deem it prudent to defer marriage till they had a prospect of being a member of the third class of shareholders, partly by means of their savings and partly of the few pounds to be supplied by the wife. These young labourers ought to be able to get together the necessary £80 for this class by the time they are twenty-four years of age. As a third class shareholder at twenty-four, they would each of them have as income to keep a wife upon (1), £1 a week wages all the year round; (2), interest at five per cent. at least on the £80 capital; (3), sixteen parts out of a thousand in the division of profits at the end of the year; and (4), what the wife would earn at harvest time. A young man with the least claim to prudence ought not to want to marry before he is twenty-four years old. Up to that age his time would be wholly taken up during daylight, and this too all the year round, in the constant round of work on the farm, and in the long winter evenings he could either join the social gatherings of the married co-operators, or read the books and newspapers at the co-operative clubhouse. Moreover, as women would not do field-work on a co-operative farm, except at harvest time, there would be no inducement for a young man to provide himself as early as possible in life with a farm-labourer in the form of a female drudge to be called a wife, as is the case with the small farmers of Ireland and the peasant proprietors on the Continent. The outcome of the early marriages of these small farmers is, that they are most of them fathers of not a few children at the age the labourer of a co-operative farm would marry.

It is noteworthy that, wherever the system of small farms prevails, there prevails too an excessive indebtedness of the cultivators of the soil under it. Instances taken from the writings of a political economist of this excessive indebtedness

among the peasant proprietors on the Continent have already been given. Fortunately for the United Kingdom, there is only one portion of it where this system, or a modification of it, does obtain to any extent, and this is in Ireland, and in Ireland the amount of indebtedness of the cultivators of small farms is, as in Switzerland and elsewhere, something appalling. Mr. Cowen, M.P. for Newcastle, who by the way attributes no little of the bad condition of the cultivators of the soil in Ireland to this excessive indebtedness, stated in a speech made lately before his constituents that the local money-lenders, called "Gombeen men," charged 15 and 20 per cent., and not seldom as much as 40 and 45 per cent., on their loans. One of these Gombeen men, he stated, held in his possession no fewer than 500 I. O. U's., each for £1 19s. 11d., an amount seemingly favoured by this class of money-lenders, on account possibly of its easy recovery at a small charge.

This excessive indebtedness it appears, obtains no less among the holders of a tenant-right under the Ulster custom than among the cottier tenants. This is easily accounted for. There is usually as great a competition among the purchasers of a tenant-right to a farm as among those competing for a mere tenancy, and in this competition far more is given for most tenant-rights than they are worth. If the purchaser pays with his own capital, not so much harm is effected through his recklessness, provided he has enough capital over of his own for working the farm. But, in nine cases out of ten, this is the very reverse of being the case, the greater part of the capital being borrowed for both purchasing the tenant-right and working the farm; and this most likely at a high rate of interest of one of the Gombeen men Mr. Cowen spoke of.

The system of tenant-farming on a large scale by employers of labour in Great Britain has had no little to do with the poverty-stricken condition of the farming classes in Ireland, and, as a consequence, with the very unsatisfactory state of

things now taking place in that island. These employers of labour farmers have been dependent for many years for the ingathering of their harvests on the annual influx into their respective counties of labourers from Ireland, and since the starting of labourers' unions this has been more than ever the case. These migratory labourers have come mostly from the parts of Ireland in which small farms obtain, and in which the present reign of terror instituted by the Land League began and is still rampant. No one attempts to deny the fact that these small farmers in the West of Ireland do not even pay the rent of their patch of unkindly land out of the sale of the crops from it, much less support themselves and their large families. For procuring the money for these purposes there are two other resources open, upon which they have been for many years in the habit of relying. One is on remittances from relations in America. According to Dr. Hancock, an authority on the subject, these remittances have amounted altogether to no less a sum than £15,000,000, besides the millions remitted through other sources, of which no account has been kept.

The second resource on which the small farmers of Ireland have been wont to rely, has been the harvest money made every summer in England and Scotland. This, it is superfluous to say, amounts to many times more than the other, and it has been the failure of this last resource through the bad harvests in Great Britain of late years, and especially that of 1879, that has brought a chronic state of poverty into its present acute condition. If the small farmers of the West of Ireland had not had this harvest money to rely on, they could not have existed, above all with their large families, on their small patches of land. They would consequently have had to exercise prudential restraints in regard to marriage to a much greater degree than they have been doing, or to leave their country for good.

Now, this is precisely the dilemma into which the substitution of co-operative farms for the farms of employers of labour in Great Britain would put these small farmers in Ireland, since it would effectually cut off their reliance on supplementing their scanty crops with the harvest money earned elsewhere. On the co-operative farms in Great Britain there would be no harvest work which their forty labourers, with their women and children, could not get through. Besides, on a co-operative farm, with its many labourers and with its plentiful supply of manure, there would not be as now on English farms one great harvest in the year. On the contrary, there would be an ingathering of crops of some kind or other, on some portion or other of the 1,000 acres, pretty well all the year round, as on the little farm of a peasant proprietor on the Continent.

It must be admitted that it would not be a satisfactory result of the setting-up of co-operative farms in Great Britain, if it should cause the expatriation of the Irish race from the West of Ireland, and leave the counties therein bare of population. Extreme as this remedy would prove in its effects, it would not be anything like so much so as the "heroic" treatment proposed some thirty years since of putting the whole island under water for twenty-four hours. There would be no necessity, however, for the depopulation of the island in any form, if the plan of co-operative farms here recommended were adopted therein. The forty labourers of these farms would no more want to go to England and Scotland to earn harvest wages, than the forty labourers of a co-operative farm in England would want to go to Ireland for the same purpose. As far as the labourers and the land would be concerned, co-operative farms would be as successful in one country as in the other. The only doubt about their success would be in the disposition and capacity of Irish landowners to co-operate among themselves to perform the part assigned them in working out the plan. In respect to this point, it is to be

borne in mind that some of these landowners are also large owners of land in England, and if they would be able to co-operate together in one island, it is only reasonable to expect they would be able to do so in the other.

In all the remedies for the settlement of the land question in Ireland an appeal is made, more or less, to State help. If State help is to be given, why may it not be given to help the landowners of Ireland to fulfil the part in the plan set them? Through this channel, with less money, far greater results for the benefit of the country at large ought to be obtained than by any other plan yet placed before the public. But whatever State help is given, it must be only on the condition that the landowners co-operate together for the establishment and subsequent management of co-operative farms through land committees, the members of which should be chosen from the most capable among themselves. As to the duties of these committees, they will be treated of more at length in the chapter on "The Landowners of the United Kingdom." No State help should be given but through these land committees. If the landowners of Ireland cannot be induced to co-operate together to rescue their country from its present state of anarchy, which if allowed to go on much longer must lead to a civil war, and perhaps to separation from Great Britain, the Imperial Government will have to do the work that the landowners of Ireland ought to have done themselves, and this through the agency of a Land Department of State for that island.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PLAN SUITABLE FOR INDIA.

Indian Government as Owner of Land.—Indian Government as Owner of Railway, Roads, etc.—Co-operative Farms as Educators of Natives.—Plan altered to suit Ryot Cultivators.—Land Department of State.—Marquis of Cornwallis' Settlement.—Work of the Land Department.—Trees, Canals, Wells, etc.—Land Department and English Capitalists.—Amount of Capital probably required.—Capital lost through Joint Stock Companies.—Debts of England and France.

Not only in Great Britain and Ireland is it that the plan of tenant-farming by co-operation among labourers ought to be adopted for the benefit of these tillers of the land, and so of the whole community in these countries. Equally suitable is it to benefit the ryot cultivators, and so the whole community of India. Fortunately for the successful carrying out of the plan in India, most of the land of that dependency is in the possession of its Government; and, what is scarcely less useful for the purpose, it has also possession of all its means of communication.

After all, no little of the success of farming under any system and in any country depends upon the facilities, whether in respect to speed or cost, with which the produce of farms is taken to markets, and the manures and farming implements are taken to the farms. The success farmers have met with in the western States of America has been in a great measure dependent on the cheap railway carriage of their produce to the eastern shipping ports; for without this cheap railway carriage of little avail would have been their rich prairie lands. There is hardly a doubt that some relief from the burdens oppressing agriculture in the United Kingdom would be afforded by its railways being in the hands of the State or in those of land-

owners, could they but be got to co-operate together to manage them. Under the present management it is not easy to say for whose benefit they are worked. They certainly are not for the benefit of the agricultural interest, or else every village in the country would ere this have been connected by a tramway with some railway or other leading to the large towns, more facilities even on the existing lines would have been provided for the carriage of farm produce, and the charges for this carriage would be much lower. Fortunately, however, for India, as the control of its railways is all in the hands of its Government, all these drawbacks to the success of agriculture in general and co-operative farming in particular in that dependency can be obviated.

With the land and its railways and other means of communication in the hands of the Government of India, the work is greatly facilitated for the introduction into that country of the plan of peasant tenant-farming by co-operation. In no way could the rule of Englishmen produce greater results in benefiting the natives of India than by the introduction among them of this system of cultivating their land. India is essentially an agricultural country, far more so than England, and even perhaps Ireland; consequently, any plan that would benefit the farming interests in India would benefit by far the largest number of its inhabitants. The Indian Government is doing a great work throughout the rural districts of India by means of its schools, but the result of its work in educating the ryot cultivators would be much greater were it supplemented by the institution of co-operative farms. These farms would be so many helps to these cultivators towards educating themselves in the quality of self-reliance, in which the Hindoos have for centuries been so deficient. No education will be of much use among the Hindoos, until this feeling of self-reliance has been instilled into them. Having been oppressed for many centuries by the savage hordes that have in all ages come from the

regions in Central Asia now occupied by Russia, they are tainted with all the failings and vices that can only be expected from a people thus treated, and no greater service can Englishmen perform than by extricating the 200 millions of India from so abject a state. Instead of thinking of withdrawing from the performance of such a task as a few faint-hearted ones among them are advocating, they should be only too thankful that the opportunity has been put in their way of benefiting so many millions of the human species become through the valour and sacrifices of their countrymen fellow-subjects of the same Empire.

For explaining how this self-reliance is to be instilled into the natives of India, no readier step can be taken than by throwing some light on the working out of the plan of co-operative farms as to be applied in India. The reader will then be able to form some idea how by degrees the members of a co-operative farm would become self-reliant. Indeed, there is no reason why they should not be equally so with the members of a co-operative farm in England or Ireland. The same chances of pecuniary success would be open to them, and the same qualities of industry and thrift would be required of the co-operators to enable them to make the most of these chances.

First of all, then, it is proposed that each farm, instead of being made up of 1,000 acres, as in England and Ireland, should consist of only 500 acres. Though the farm is to be thus reduced in size by one half, yet it is to have the same number of co-operators—forty shareholders and five supernumeraries—as those in the United Kingdom. The reason for lessening the number of acres to each man in the co-operation by one half is that the soil of India being in a tropical climate and in consequence more productive, would require far more labour in preparing it for crops, and in reaping, gathering, and garnering these crops; while the Indian labourer would be physically less able to give this extra labour. Five hundred

acres divided among forty members would give $12\frac{1}{2}$ acres to each—a quantity of land larger than what now falls to the majority of ryots to cultivate. But, the $12\frac{1}{2}$ acres to a man in a co-operative farm would produce quite twice as much produce as now do $12\frac{1}{2}$ acres. Consequently a correspondingly greater amount of labour would be required, an amount of labour, indeed, that could not be given by a man of the physical stamina of a Hindoo, were he not greatly helped by the combination of hands, heads, and hearts peculiar to the system of co-operation, and by the use of machinery which that system would allow of. Hitherto the ryot cultivator has done but little more than scratch the ground with the trunk of a tree, a form of plough that Brahma might have blessed for his ancestors. The same ryot, on the other hand, when partner in a co-operative farm, would use steel ploughs making deep furrows, and other forms of labour-saving machines for producing heavy crops at a low cost.

A word or two respecting the capital to be employed in cultivating a farm of 500 acres. To begin with, the style of Indian farming would require the employment of a very much less amount of capital than would be required on a co-operative farm of the same size in England. For one thing, there would be no very great outlay needed for the purchase of cattle, the Hindoos not being a meat-eating people. Taking these and other differences into consideration, the amount of capital wanted for working a co-operative farm of 500 acres in India has been fixed at £1,000 or 10,000 rupees. It is proposed that this £1,000 should be divided into 1,000 £1 or ten-rupees shares, and that these 1,000 shares should be distributed among the forty members by means of four classes of shareholders, in the same proportions as the shares of co-operative farms in England. The co-operatives would thus hold the same number of shares in the one as in the other, the only difference being that the value of these shares would be £1 each instead of £5.

Should, however, the £1,000 prove not to be enough capital for working a co-operative farm of 500 acres, the Government of India—through a Department of State, to be treated of presently—would have to lend, at a sufficiently remunerative rate of interest, the sum wanted to make up the deficiency. But it is not anticipated there would be any need for this. Much as the farming in India would be improved by the working of the co-operative system, it would be some years before the land would get into as high a state of cultivation as would the land in England under the same system; and by the time that these years had come, the co-operating ryots would be themselves possessed of sufficient capital to increase the capital account of their undertaking to the amount rendered necessary by the extension of farming operations.

It is not proposed that co-operative farming should be immediately introduced throughout India, and this, too, in the most complete manner at which the system is capable of arriving. Even in the United Kingdom it would be a work taking up many years, and in India the progress would necessarily be much slower still—not merely from the much greater size of the country, but from the much lower scale of civilisation and poverty of its people. At the outset the progress in the setting-up of these farms would be exceedingly slow, as no doubt they would have to encounter the narrow-minded prejudices of the agricultural brain in India, in addition to those of caste. But when once these prejudices have been overcome, and a few co-operative farms in several districts scattered throughout the country set on foot, it is anticipated that the results of their working will turn out to be so palpably beneficial to the co-operators—mentally, morally, and physically, no less than financially—that there will be quite a rivalry between the ryots of India and their Government in taking steps to have more of them started in other districts as soon as possible. The contrast between the condition of the ryot cultivators in co-

operation, and that of those still working in isolation on their small farms, would be so marked as to make the latter insupportable. At present a great deal of the contentment of the ryot cultivators springs from their not knowing of a better state of things. That this ignorance on the part of so large a class as the cultivators of the soil is felt by the Government of India not to be a solid basis for the dominion of England over that dependency to rest on, is demonstrated by its efforts to enlighten the ignorance by the establishment of schools throughout the rural districts. But what more practical instructors could these cultivators have than the co-operative farms set up among them? These farms would more than teach them a higher standard to aim at; they would actually put them in the way of reaching it.

It is not unlikely that the plan for co-operative farms may have to be modified from that employed in England in other ways than that just suggested, to suit the character of the people, and the conditions of climate under which they work. It is advisable that the farms started at first, to be examples of success for the encouragement of the Government to establish others, should have as many natural advantages in their favour as possible; and that, therefore, they should be commenced where, for one thing, artificial water could be obtained easily in dry seasons. When prejudices have to be overcome, no vantage-ground should be lost through a want of sufficient forethought.

For the plan of co-operative farms to have anything like justice done to it when carried out in India, it is above all things necessary that there should be a Land Department of State in that dependency. This Department, as owner of all the land in the country, should have the management of everything connected with its cultivation. This is now the case to some extent, but not sufficiently so. Former rulers of India, unfortunately for the prospects of farming in that dependency,

made over an interest in the land, that they ought to have kept in their own hands, to a class of tax-collectors existing at the time. These tax-collectors were turned into a sort of intermediate owners of land, receiving rent from the ryot cultivators of the soil, and paying a nominal rent to their overlord the State. The object of Lord Cornwallis in giving away the interest in the land owned by the State under the form of a permanent settlement, was to create a class of landowners similar to that existing in England. That is just what he did not do. The landlords of England, notwithstanding the outcry now made against them, and the attempts of a large section of the Liberal party to supersede them by the introduction of a peasant proprietary, or a farmer's tenant-right, do live close to the land they own—do take a deep interest in all matters relating to the improvement of agriculture—and do show this interest oftentimes by the expenditure of a large portion of their rents. But the Zemindar class of landowners set up by Lord Cornwallis have done, with rare exceptions, none of these things. All that they have been doing in return for the concession has been to collect the rents made over to them, and to spend these rents, for the most part, in luxurious ease or barbaric magnificence in the large cities.

It may be objected that, as the Marquis of Cornwallis gave over the interest of the State in perpetuity to these Zemindar landowners of his creation, the deed cannot, with any show of justice, be recalled. But surely if, through a want of sufficient information, the State has done a wrong in behalf of a particular class to all the other classes, and this class a limited one that has done no great service to the country, it can make amends for the wrong done to the majority by retracing its steps. In the case of India it is all the more necessary that the State should do this, since the majority thus injured not having a representative assembly to appeal to for the redress of its wrongs, has only the State. For the State to undo what it

has once done may be considered by some a sign of weakness; but surely it is a greater sign of weakness to continue a wrong for fear of the taunts provoked by a change.

Again, it is argued by some that for a State to draw back from an undertaking when once entered upon, is for it to do an irreparable injury, by destroying the confidence which ought to exist between it and its people. As a rule, this principle in statecraft is, beyond question, sound. But in this case the present or a future Indian Government would be fully exonerated from a charge of breaking off an undertaking made by a former Indian Government to the Zemindar class of its own creation, by the fact that this class had years ago broken the contract itself. In fact, it may with truth be said it never fulfilled it; for it cannot for a moment be imagined that Lord Cornwallis meant the class he created to be merely a recipient of rents. Not only did this class not fulfil its contract—it has almost ceased to exist. Through the extravagant living of these mere rent-receivers, they have nearly become extinct as a landowning class, their place as such being taken by lenders of money at an exorbitantly high rate of interest, to whom in the end they have been obliged to give up the property in the land made over to them by the State, and whose existence the State never could have contemplated when it granted the permanent settlement. It is possible that the Indian Government would not have allowed any fine-spun scruples of conscience to stand in its way of backing out of what cannot but be called a foolish grant, if it had known of a better way of disposing of the land for the benefit of its cultivators, and for the security of its position in the country.

The system of tenant-farming by co-operation among labourers would amply justify the Indian Government in any high-handed procedure it may take. Into so bad a state, indeed, has agriculture in India got, that its Government would be justified in upsetting an arrangement made nearly 100 years

ago, even if a much less efficient remedy than that of co-operative farms were established. There can be no stronger proof of the inefficient way in which the land of India has been managed than the constantly recurring famines which take place in that country, and by which every now and then millions of lives are lost ; and the fact that its Government obtains no more than £20,000,000 a year as revenue from it, when, as will be pointed out by-and-by, it ought to get from it ten times that amount.

It is on the way in which the land of India is to be managed in the future that will depend the problem as to whether England will be able to retain her hold on that country. The retention of this hold, on the old lines of management, becomes every year more difficult, the nearer India with her famines and annual financial deficit is brought under the eyes of Europe by more rapid means of communication, and, above all, by the nearer approach of Russia to her north-western boundary. Russia may be a worse-governed country than India, yet invaders of neighbours' territories have not very strong scruples of conscience on this score. Where the chief source of revenue comes from the land, and this land is so badly managed as to produce not more than one-tenth of what it ought to do, there must prevail in such a country a great deal of discontent, ready to be fomented into insurrection, and to actually break out into one on the approach of the invading army of the abettors of such on its frontiers.

If the Land Department of State is to be successful in creating the great increase in its revenues spoken of, and in improving at the same time the condition of its co-operative farmers, from whom most of these revenues would be derived, it must have control over all the finances connected with the land, as well in the expenditure as in the receipts. The Land Department's accounts would have, therefore to be kept quite distinct from those of any of the other departments of State,

and the whole of the revenues received from the land, after, of course, the expenses attending their collection had been met, would have to be laid out in the development of its natural resources. In this development would be included the planting of forests on high table-lands, and on the slopes of mountains and hills, the forming plantations of trees pretty freely round and about the co-operative farms, the making of underground tanks, and the sinking of wells, and other works connected with irrigating the land ; and, lastly, in increasing the mileage of railways, and in connecting the co-operative farms by means of tramways with the stations on these railways.

As to canals in India, it is beginning to be the general opinion, founded on experience, that the millions sterling hitherto spent in making these canals for irrigation purposes have been worse than thrown away; for their water, instead of fertilising the land, seems to make it after a time only the more barren. This has been attributed to the excessive evaporation caused by a tropical sun on stagnant water, which, on drying up, leaves a deposit of saline efflorescence injurious to the land. Another objection made to these canals is that their water is the cause of the epidemics so prevalent among the people living near them. It is possible that these evils from canal water irrigation may be counteracted to a great extent by a plentiful planting of trees along the banks of the canals, as in Belgium, only much more freely, since a greater protection against the more powerful rays of the sun in India would be required.

Upon the necessity of planting trees, not only on the tops and slopes of mountains wherever at all practicable, but here and there in the valleys, and on plains, for climatic and other like purposes, most practical and scientific people are agreed. Among the many benefits that would accrue to the Land Department from an abundance of trees over the country would be these. Trees would prevent the floods, by which the crops

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of many millions of acres are now devastated. In preventing floods, they would preserve the hundreds of railway and other bridges belonging to the Department from being swept away, and would hinder the highly-manured soil of the co-operative farms from being washed into brooks and rivers. Again, trees planted pretty plentifully, as here suggested, would not only prevent floods, but would actually bring rain, and when brought, would store it up under the earth away from the sun's rays. Indeed, trees are Nature's channel for conveying the rain water from the clouds deep down into the earth, the proper place for its storage, above all in a tropical country like India, the trees themselves contributing not a little protection to both water and earth by their foliage.

If every available spot between the farms, and even on them, that could be spared from cultivation were planted with trees, the members of these farms would ever have close at hand an underground reservoir of life-giving water. This reservoir they could tap by means of wells, and from it draw the water necessary for irrigating their land. Mr. Caird, the writer on agricultural subjects, in his notes on his recent official visit to India, speaks of the wells he saw on the farms in the Punjab as being sufficient for irrigating the land. They were, he says, made by the farmers themselves, and were wide, deep, and fairly substantial. The condition of the crops on the ground showed him at once whether a well was near or not. If the small farmers of the Punjab could make their own wells, those on the co-operative farms might surely be made by the co-operative farmers, especially under the superintendence of an engineer of the Land Department. Totally, irrespective of the question of rent, the co-operative farms ought to be periodically inspected by a competent inspector of the Land Department, and among the things this official would have to see to would be the condition of the wells on the farms, and of the trees around and on them.

It is needless to say that all these undertakings so indispensable for successful farming in India would have to be carried out by the Land Department of State by means of borrowed money. The cultivators of the soil are much too poor to contribute any capital themselves, and the Indian Government is too hopelessly involved in financial straits to help them. At present nearly the whole weight of governing the country, with its enormous annual military expenditure, is thrown upon the shoulders of those in the country the least able to bear it—the poor ryot cultivators. Without the £20,000,000 annually derived from this source, the Indian Government would have a very small revenue indeed for meeting its vast expenditure, and even of this comparatively small revenue, the £8,000,000 got from the opium duty indirectly comes from the land. If the agricultural interest is ever to be dragged out of its present state of depression, all of this £28,000,000 should go to the Land Department, to be expended by it in developing the natural resources of the land for the creation of fresh sources of wealth to India of vast extent.

One of the most alarming features of the present crisis in India is the resistance its Government meets with in levying a tax on the income and property of the wealthy classes of towns. The necessary money for meeting expenses must be got somehow, and so it is levied upon those unable to resist the importunities of the tax-collectors. In thickly-populated towns weapons of defence can be more easily procured and stored up than among the thinly-scattered population of the country. If this act of injustice on the part of the Indian Government has been committed through fear of doing what is just, the prospects of England retaining her hold on India are very shadowy indeed; and these gloomy prospects show more than ever the necessity there is to establish as soon as possible a Land Department, to look after and defend the interests of the ryot cultivators.

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The first need for India's new department of State, the Land, is to be able to borrow in the English market on as large a scale as possible, in order to get its land, by the ways just alluded to, into a condition suitable for starting co-operative farms. There is only one way by which the Land Department would be able to do this, and this is by being in a position to offer a sufficient amount of security to considerably cover the interest on the loans. But for this to be accomplished the Department must have all the revenues of the land it owns at its own disposal, so that none should on any account be diverted to meet the deficits of any of the other departments of State. In short, the preservation of British rule in India, and therefore the prevention of more than 200 millions of human beings from lapsing into a state of anarchy and barbarism, depends upon English capital going into that country by hundreds of millions; and the possibility of these hundreds of millions going to India for investment in its land would depend on the administrators of its Land Department to make provision to secure to the bondholders primarily the regular payment of the interest on their capital, and ultimately the paying off of the capital itself.

How many hundreds of millions would be required, only time, and the working of the Land Department that has to spend them, can reveal. For the sake of argument and round numbers, the amount to be borrowed shall be fixed at £1,000,000,000. Of course, the time during which a debt of this magnitude would be run up would be extended over very many years, perhaps a century. This would depend greatly upon the manner in which the money thus borrowed would be laid out. If it is laid out in the profitable ways here suggested, the whole thousand millions could be borrowed with advantage in the course of, say, fifty years. This would average £20,000,000 a year, and this is really not more than a country so extensive, so naturally fertile, and so populous

as India could absorb for fifty years with the greatest advantage in the development of its land resources. Besides planting the forests on mountains, and groups of trees in valleys and on plains, constructing tanks and wells on the co-operative farms, constructing more railways, connecting the farms by tramways with the stations on the railways made and to be made, and other ways of developing the country already alluded to, a great deal of the £1,000,000,000 would have to be spent in buying out the interests of the middlemen created by the Cornwallis Government, whether these be zemindars or money-lenders.

If the co-operative system applied to the land of India is to produce the vast beneficial results it is capable of, there must be no third interest in the land to stand between the State and the co-operative cultivators. It would never do for the usurers, for instance, who got their interest in the land for a trifle, comparatively speaking, to reap the benefit of the many millions to be spent upon the land to make it more productive. The benefit of that expenditure ought to be shared exclusively between the two interests that ought never to be separated, the State getting as low a rent on its co-operative farms as possible, consistent with meeting its obligations to the English bondholders, and with its being in a position to introduce the system of co-operative farms throughout India, while all the rest of the profits from these farms should go to their co-operating members, the tillers of the land.

Possibly the reader may throw up his eyebrows in astonishment at the mention of so large a sum as £1,000,000,000 being required by the Land Department for the purposes stated. First of all, it is not positively asserted that so large a sum would be required. As time goes on, it may be found that all the things mentioned as being necessary may be procured at a lower cost than now seems possible. For instance, the interests of the middlemen may be bought out at a much lower

figure than here contemplated; the public works for carrying out all these objects might, perhaps, by an arrangement between the Department and the labourers, by which the latter would be paid part of their wages prospectively through the co-operative farms, be done at a lower cost; and it is not unlikely that in a constant round of the same kind of work, labour-saving machines may be thought of, tending to reduce considerably the outlay on public works. Again, the capital to be lent to the co-operative farmers may not amount to so much as calculated on. In the second place, as the Land Department would take over to itself all the railways, £100,000,000 out of the £1,000,000,000 would have been already borrowed.

But even supposing that, allowing for all these deductions, the amount required to be borrowed be a thousand millions sterling, there is really nothing in that amount to startle one. Everything must be judged by comparison. The debt, after all, would not be larger than, in the aggregate, the sums the English investing classes have been losing during the last thirty years by their loans to foreign governments, and in carrying on public works by means of joint-stock companies in well-nigh every quarter of the globe. There is no need to give the details as to how these hundreds of millions have vanished as completely, as regards the investors, as if they had been thrown into mid ocean. The evidence brought out before Viscount Sherbrooke's committee on the subject throws light enough on the point; and if that were not enough, the war between Chili and Peru will give some idea as to the way in which have gone the hundreds of millions sterling kindly lent by English investors to the constantly-changing governments of the many autonomous republics in South America. There is nothing to prevent the rising generation from throwing away another £1,000,000,000 in reckless speculations, as the present has been, and, it is to be feared, is still doing, but the having provided for them an opening for the safe investment

of their capital as would be that offered by the Land Department of India.

The debt of £750,000,000 owed by England is not so very much smaller than the £1,000,000,000 it is here supposed the Land Department of India would run up in the course of fifty years. But no parallel can be drawn between these two debts, for the simple reason that, in the sense in which the £750,000,000 owed by the people of England is a debt, the £1,000,000,000 to be owed by the Land Department of India would be no debt at all. With the exception of two or three millions sterling surplus from the Post Office, the revenues for the payment of the interest on the debt of England are derived from taxation, while not one farthing of the debt of the Land Department of India would be raised in that way. The £35,000,000, or £40,000,000, as the case may be, to be paid yearly by way of interest to the English holders of the Department's bonds, would all come from the rents of its co-operative farms, and the profits made by its railways, and other means of communication.

Thus, the £1,000,000,000 borrowed capital on which either of the above sums of interest would annually paid, according as the rate would be $3\frac{1}{2}$ or 4 per cent., would be laid out in such a manner as to create the sources from which this income would accrue. Of these sources of income the two main ones would be the co-operative farms and the railways, tramways, and other means of communication. From these two sources, created by the outlay of the money forming its debt, the Land Department could, in time, bring into a high state of cultivation all the cultivable land of India; could afford facilities for taking to market the heavy crops produced by this high state of cultivation, and could thus put it into the power of the share-holding labourers of the co-operative farms to pay the greater part of the interest on the debt in the form of rent with the greatest ease.

The debt of France would afford a better parallel still, since it not only amounts to £1,000,000,000, but the yearly interest on it amounts to £40,000,000. The interest on this debt, like that in England, is paid out of taxes, owing to none of the debt having been spent for reproductive purposes. The Government of France owns none of the land, not even the cultivable portion, leaving out of account the building land of its towns and cities. It has not even possession of its railways. In short, it has not any revenue in the proper sense of the term. The only revenue it has is the precarious one from taxation—a taxation levied by the proletariat majority, in a country of universal suffrage, on the property classes.

Besides the actually existing debt of a thousand millions, France has a prospective one in carrying on the campaign in her war of revenge, which may possibly cost her half as much again, and this whether she emerges from the contest a victress or vanquished. More even than this. A ministry under M. Freycinet, and of which, by-the-by, that well-known political economist M. Leon Say, was a member, has committed France to the expenditure of £200,000,000 during the next ten years on public works, not all of which are to be productive. Thus the debt of France, instead of being confined to £1,000,000,000, promises, at no very remote period, to reach a sum nearer £2,000,000,000. France, it is true, is a larger and more fertile country than England, and, therefore, can presumably bear a much heavier debt, but she is not more than one-fifth the size of India, and has only about one-seventh the population. Fertile as France is, her soil is nothing so fertile by nature as that of India, and when the cultivators of the Indian soil are made as energetic, through the establishment among them of co-operative farms, it ought to be nothing like so productive.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PLAN SUITABLE FOR INDIA—(*continued*).

Probable Revenues of Land Department.—Rental of Co-operative Farms.—Capacity of Co-operators to Pay Rent.—Other Sources of Revenue of Department.—Ground Rents in Towns of India.—India a vast Landed Estate.—Officials of Land Department.—Land Department and Maintenance of Army.—Owners of Land in Towns as Taxpayers.—Co-operative Farms and a small Army.—Co-operative Farms and Defence of India.—Effect of Co-operative Farms on Cultivators.

THE next business to be taken in hand is to see what prospect the Land Department in India would have at the end, say, of fifty years, of collecting a revenue of £40,000,000 a year for paying interest on the £1,000,000,000 capital lent by the English bondholders, supposing that to be the amount the Department had laid itself under an obligation to pay. Now, India consists of 900,000 square miles, or 576,000,000 acres. In most countries one-third of their acreage, consisting of mountains, forests, and water, is usually reckoned as incapable of cultivation. Possibly this is the proportion that ought to be assigned to India; for though that country is bordered by mountainous regions on its northern side, yet its plains are very extensive. Assuming, then, one-third of 576,000,000 acres as naturally waste in respect to cultivation, there would remain the two-thirds of the country, amounting to 384,000,000 acres. But some millions of acres of this number must be deducted as being artificially waste in respect to agriculture, they being taken up in railroads, common roads, tanks, sites of towns, &c. For this artificial waste it is proposed to deduct, for the sake of round numbers, the odd 84,000,000. This number is far more likely to be less than more than the real number of acres.

There would thus be left for portioning out into co-operative farms 300,000,000 acres. This number would, of course, include what are now the deserts of Scinde and Rajpootana. But by means of co-operative farms every kind of soil could be cultivated at a profit, provided the members could have easy access to markets, and a plentiful supply of water and manure. The co-operators would no doubt have to encounter more difficulties in their undertaking than those cultivating land a long time in cultivation; but these difficulties would be surmounted in time, and even at first would be greatly smoothed by a considerable remission of rent, and by extra pecuniary aid.

Moreover, the Land Department would not attempt to start co-operative farms in regions become deserts, till their climate had been brought back to an approach to their original state of moisture by the presence of trees and water, and not many perhaps even then, till the more kindly soils of India had been taken up by these farms. If the co-operative farms on these latter soils turn out to be anything like as profitable to the cultivators as it is anticipated they will be, there will be no lack of small capitalists coming forward to farm, on co-operative principles, the less genial soils of the Land Department. Most likely the greater part of the applicants would be the younger sons of the co-operative farmers in other parts of India, pushed out of the parental nest by the pressure of an ever-increasing multiplication of the species. The co-operative farms would prove even more suitable for converting a sandy soil into a fertile one than the peasant proprietary of Flanders and Holland has done, since, through the co-operation in them of capital as well as labour, the conversion would be effected in a much shorter time. But even these farms must have for help in their uphill work the further co-operation of a Land Department, to prepare the foundation, in the ways just mentioned, for the co-operators in them to work upon.

Let it be assumed that the whole of the 300,000,000 acres of cultivable land in India were parcelled out into co-operative farms of 500 acres, there would then be not fewer than 600,000 of such farms; and if it be assumed, further, that to each co-operative farm there are to be forty-five male members, including the five supernumeraries, the male cultivators of the soil under the system of co-operation would number 27,000,000. Statistics say there are in India 37,462,000 "devoted to agriculture," whatever that may mean. Let it be supposed, again, that the Land Department should get, on an average, as the sole owner of the soil, a rent of 15s. an acre, it ought, at the end of forty years from the starting of a co-operative farm, even on the worst of soils, to be £1 an acre, at which it would remain, unless reduced by the enrichment of the co-operating tenants, and on account of a plethora of income of the Department—there would then be a total annual income of £225,000,000 that the Land Department would get from its co-operative farms alone. On the assumption that the cost for collecting this revenue would amount to 7 per cent. of the total, there would then be at the disposal of the Department a net sum of £200,000,000. But really the cost of the collection of rent from co-operative farms being so small, it ought not to exceed the amount of the revenues to be received by the Department from its forests and minerals. However, to make the calculation at all consistent with the state of things that ought to and would exist, the income has been put at, say, £200,000,000.

The possibility of the co-operative farmers, or ryots, of India being able to pay an average annual rental of 15s. an acre—or, for their whole farm of 500 acres, £375—may be considered by some as open to doubt; but to our mind it is quite feasible. It is freely admitted that most of the land is now let to ryots by the Government at a much lower rental. On the other hand, it is well known that not a little of the land

is let at 10 rupees, or £1, an acre. The latter is certainly very good land ; but what is here maintained is that, owing to the facilities the co-operative farmers would have of getting, through the Land Department, an abundance of water and manure, and of good farming implements, all the land of their farms would get to be very good—or good enough, at all events, to allow the co-operators to pay with ease a rental on it of £1 an acre. The Department would make the land of co-operative farms still more valuable by bringing it all, in the ways already pointed out, closer to markets for the sale of its produce, whether these markets be foreign or home.

Though 15s. an acre be fixed on as the average rental for the assumed 600,000 co-operative farms in India, it is not meant that this should be the rental of all these farms from the very commencement of their starting. On the contrary, it is proposed to make a sort of sliding scale in respect to the amount of rent to be paid by these farms at the outset, with a view to bring it ultimately up to 15s. an acre for all of them. For this purpose the farms might be conveniently divided into three classes, according to the capacities of each for paying rent:—1, those on a good soil, and near to markets ; 2, those on a soil not so good, and less accessible to markets ; and 3, those on a sandy soil. The farms of the first of these classes would be honestly worth the full rent of 15s., or even £1, an acre at once. Those in the second class should be charged 10s. an acre ; but this rental is to be increased by 3d. an acre per annum till the fixed rental of 15s. or £1 an acre, as the case may be, had come. The rental of the third class it is proposed to begin at only 5s. an acre, with an advance of 3d. an acre up to the 15s. or £1 an acre fixed rental, as in the case of the others. The advance of 3d. an acre every year would give to the co-operating cultivators all the security for their capital and labour that fixity of tenure at once would give, provided that there is a limit to this advance, and that,

when once this limit is reached, whether it be 15s. or £1 an acre, it would be fixed in perpetuity. Again, the advance of 3d. an acre would be so trifling as to be scarcely perceptible; for it would involve an addition to the rent on the whole 500 acres of a farm of only £6 5s. a year, or about 3s. a year for each co-operator. At this slow rate of progress, the full rent of 15s. an acre would not be reached, from the starting-point of 5s. an acre, before forty years—a time more than long enough for allowing the sandiest of soils to be brought, through co-operative farming, into a state as productive as any soil; provided, as said before, the co-operative farmers have placed at their disposal, through the agency of the Land Department, a sufficiency of water and town manure. But a sufficiency of town manure implies easy access to towns by rail and tramways, and this implies, again, easy access to markets for the disposal of the produce of these farms.

The difference between 15s. an acre, on which the calculations here made have been based, and £1 an acre, which, it is contended, the ryot partners of all the co-operative farms would be in a condition to pay with ease in the course of forty years, may not seem much when only one farm is taken into account. But when this difference of £1 25 is multiplied by the 600,000 co-operative farms of India, it means a total difference of £75,000,000 a year. This extra annual income of £75,000,000 would be pure gain, for it would be collected without extra cost to the department. Now, what does a yearly income of £75,000,000 mean? It means a power of borrowing a capital of £2,000,000,000 at 3 per cent., and a balance over of nearly £15,000,000 a year to be employed in paying off the principal as the bonds become due.

It is not now suggested that the £2,000,000,000 capital above mentioned should be borrowed, or that the rent of the 600,000 co-operative farms should be raised from 15s. an acre to £1, to pay the interest on this extra sum. The idea has been

throw it out merely to show that, however bold may seem the proposals here made, they are in reality very timid in comparison with the financial capacity of so naturally rich, so extensive, and so populous a country as India. In fact, all that is here asked for is to borrow £1,000,000,000 on a huge landed property, that ought, through the judicious laying out of this borrowed capital, and through the extraordinary wealth-producing machinery of co-operative farms, to ultimately produce an income of £300,000,000 a year. Now, an annual rental of £300,000,000 would pay interest at 3 per cent. on a borrowed capital of £10,000,000,000 instead of the £1,000,000,000 asked for; and even at 4 per cent. such an income would pay the interest on £7,000,000,000, leaving a large annual surplus over for paying off some of the capital every year.

The above statement relates entirely to the co-operative farms; but with the £1,000,000,000 to be borrowed by the Land Department it is to acquire all the railroads and tramways to the farms, and other means of communication. It would therefore have the monopoly of conveying to markets the enormous produce of these 600,000 farms. The income to be derived from this source would probably amount to scores of millions a year, which would have to be added to the supposed £300,000,000 a year rental of the co-operative farms.

In considering the capacity of the co-operative farmers to pay a rental of 15s. an acre to the Land Department, it has to be borne in mind that they would have only this one rent to pay; they would have no rent to pay to either a middleman, zemindar, or to a money-lender. In respect to the latter class of middlemen, none of the £1,000 capital to be supplied by the co-operators is, as said before, to be borrowed. Before admission to the partnership, each applicant must make a declaration that the capital he furnishes for buying the shares

of the class into which he intends to enter is really his own; and if it is afterwards found out that the declaration made is false, he is to be forthwith expelled. The guarantee that this declaration would not be a farce would be that it would be to the interests of the shareholders themselves to see it properly carried out. The fear of this expulsion constantly hanging over their heads would force them to keep their money matters pretty straight, by exercising economy and thrift.

For the encouragement of this thrift there is no reason why the Post-office Department, as in England, or the Land Department itself, should not establish savings-banks over the country, having a branch at each co-operative farm, the community of which would not fall very far short of 200 persons. At any rate, if neither the Post-office nor the Land Department should see its way to start a branch savings-bank among each co-operative community, it could set up one in the small towns that would be sure to spring up at the junctions of the tramways from the farms with the stations on the railways. These banks might lend out a part of the money deposited by some to others in small amounts on the security of their shares, and at a moderate rate of interest. Moreover, if the shareholders' capital of £1,000 should not prove to be enough, the Land Department would lend to the co-operation what more would be required, also at a moderate rate.

By the exercise of the above and other like precautions the department would leave no opening in the working of a co-operative farm for a middleman money-lender, with his demands of twenty-five and thirty per cent. interest, to squeeze himself in. Any one who has made himself at all acquainted with the way in which agriculture is carried out in India, must have observed how much the extortions of these money-lenders have had to do with the depressed condition into which the cultivators of its lands have fallen. It is no uncommon occurrence for these men to have to part with all

their little property, including their interest in the soil they have been cultivating, to satisfy the claims of these men, though they may have received two or three times over in interest the amount of the original debt. If only to be placed in a position not requiring the aid of these cormorants, it would answer the purpose of the members of a co-operative farm to pay a rental of even twice 15s. an acre.

One of the many advantages of co-operative farming on a large scale by peasant tenants over the system now in use would lie in the very much greater ease with which the rents of whole districts would be collected. For a Land Department having every year to collect rent from 300,000,000 acres this is an important consideration. Indeed, it would be hardly practicable for the Department to do it without the aid of its 600,000 co-operative farms.

The member of the first class, who would have the financial management of a co-operative farm, would make it his first business that the rent should be paid with regularity, for on the punctual payment of the rent would depend in India, as in England, the members' charter of freedom from interference of any kind. It would be equally to their interest, and for the same reason, to take care that every acre of the farm was cultivated in the most profitable manner. An individual farming 500 acres may neglect the proper cultivation of his land, and thereby fail to pay his rent from various causes, such as the diversion of his capital to speculations unconnected with his farm, or from falling ill; but it is hardly likely that the forty shareholders of a co-operative farm would allow its land to go out of cultivation, and thus fail to pay its rent, from the same or even other reasons. Even if the managing five of the first class of shareholders should show themselves remiss in the performance of their duties, it could only be for the brief period between the two quarterly meetings of all the members, when they would have at the coming one to render an account

of their sins of omission before their brother shareholders, most probably only too willing to take their place.

So great, is it anticipated, would be the ease with which the rent of a co-operative farm would be collected, that it is hardly going too far to say that a lady might collect the rent of all the land of a province, if it were all parcelled out into co-operative farms of 500 acres, as in India, and more especially of 1,000 acres, as in England and Ireland. Indeed, were India parcelled out into co-operative farms of 500 acres each, there can be no hesitation in predicting that its Government would have far less difficulty in collecting the rents, in its new position of underlord as well as overlord, than it now has as superior lord alone, and with a far less acreage to collect from.

The £200,000,000 a year just now reckoned as coming from the rents of its 600,000 co-operative farms would be far from being the whole of the income the Land Department would receive on account of the expenditure of the £1,000,000,000 to be borrowed from the English investing public. Its ownership of all the forests planted and minerals developed by means of it, has been already slightly touched on. Allusion has been also made to its ownership of all the railways of the country. In fact, £100,000,000 of the £1,000,000,000 have been already appropriated in imagination for the purchase of the existing lines. As the Land Department would own all these railways, and the land through which they go, it would also own all the land on and about which the stations on these railways are built. The same may be said of the railways to be constructed out of its borrowed capital. In the course of time these stations would not fail to become towns, and some of them very large towns, the building sites of which would become a very valuable asset and source of income to the Land Department. Again, the Land Department would have, for the expenditure of some of the £1,000,000,000 the ownership of all the capital lent to the co-operation, in

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case the £1,000 owned by its members should prove not to be enough, the ownership of all the tramways leading from its railway stations to its farms, and of all the farm-buildings and dwelling-houses of the co-operators, and of the wells and tanks on the farms.

With respect to these latter, it would be advisable not to make a special charge, as the 15s. an acre charged as rent for the land would probably cover it. It is the practice for the Indian Government to make a separate charge for the water from its canals and tanks used in irrigating the land, but it is one not to be commended. In a tropical country there should be not even an approach to a restraint in the application of water to the land.

As to the farm-buildings and the dwelling-houses of the co-operators just alluded to, which by-the-by ought, as in England, to be in the very centre of the farm, it is not proposed that they should be erected at first on anything like the scientific principles they would be on the co-operative farms in Great Britain and Ireland. It would take the native cultivators a generation or two to be educated up to such a standard of proficiency in farming as such buildings would imply. Until such times arrive, the best course, probably, for the Department to take would be to get the farm-cultivators themselves to run up the farm-buildings, &c., under the direction of a person in its pay with some pretensions to constructural knowledge of the kind required. If such official had a native foreman under him at each of the farms, upon whom he could rely, he could superintend the construction of several farm-buildings scattered over the country at the same time. Possibly nothing but sheds having their walls of mud, with thatched roof, such as the ryot cultivators live in now, would be all that would be required, until, through the education the Government schools and the working of the co-operative farms would give them, they would attain to a

higher stage of civilisation to appreciate better ones. It would not be very many years before the real requirements of farming in a tropical country, and suitable to the habits of the natives working in co-operation, would become known to the Land Department, and when they are so, the old buildings could be at once removed for new ones, erected in conformity with the experience thus gained. The temporary buildings would be run up at a comparatively small cost, but those erected in a substantial manner to supply their place would require a considerable outlay. Fortunately labour is cheap in India, and in the circumstances the materials could hardly be dear; and as the tenants of the co-operative farms would have to pay an additional rent on these buildings, by way of interest on the money borrowed for the purpose, they would be glad to have them done at as low a cost as possible.

Mention was made just now of the sites for buildings in the towns at the stations on the railways that the Land Department would have for increasing its revenues. This naturally leads to the question how it has come to pass that the acts which made the Indian Government supreme lord of the cultivated land throughout India did not make it also supreme lord of the land in its towns and cities. Outsiders, uninitiated in the mysteries of Indian finance, and who have been having a vague impression that the Government of India is lord paramount of the soil of that dependency, can only surmise that it has not the ownership of these building sites in towns and cities, or else its revenues would be many times larger than the paltry £20,000,000 a year, the statistical amount of its land revenue. If the Indian Government does not get a revenue from these sources, who does? If the Indian Government of the past have made over these sources of immense revenues to others, the country ruled by an universal suffrage Parliament may some day insist on knowing to whom they were made over, and for what consideration. It is worthy of notice that the ground

rents of houses in towns and cities would have been collected by the Indian Government with much greater certainty and at a far less cost than the same amount of rents from its tenants, the ryot cultivators, living over an extensive tract of country, and earning a precarious subsistence.

It may possibly be alleged, that it would not have been good policy for the Government to have retained in its hands the ground rents of the houses, etc., in the towns and cities of India; but surely it would not have been bad policy to have sold them to the highest bidder, and if the different Indian Governments have been selling them, what, may one ask, has become of the money thus realised? The railways built at the charge of the Government must alone have increased the value of land in the towns they touch or go near very considerably. This increase in the value at all events the Government ought to have had. If the increase in the value of the land in the towns and cities of India has been anything like the increase in the towns of England and Scotland since the introduction into these countries of railways, it must have been extremely large. Onlookers are tempted to ask whether this vast difference between possibility and actuality is in any way connected with the fabulously large fortunes they read of as having been made two or three generations since by the retired "nabobs" of the Civil Service of India.

It may be that two or three generations ago the rulers and official classes of India were so engrossed in keeping their military position in the country, and in earning a sufficient dividend for their employers the stockholders of the East India Company, that they could not afford to give much heed to the proper management of the land and to the preservation of their rights over its ownership, so essential for promoting the well-being of the scores of millions of its cultivators over whom with their conquest they usurped the rule. Unquestionably, in those troublesome times India was not anything like so easily

governed as it is now. It was, for one thing, farther from the mother-country by a voyage of months. There were, again, no railroads and telegraphs to knit the remotely distant parts of India to one common centre, and no telegraphs to bind this common centre to England. What would have seemed to Lord Cornwallis and his contemporaries, supposing they had ever thought of it, an impracticable undertaking, the establishment of a distinct Land Department of State, and under it a system of tenant-farming on a large scale by co-operation among ryot cultivators, would now with all these facilities be a work of easy accomplishment. It is casting no reflection on the former rulers of India to say that in throwing on the Zemindar class the responsibilities attending the management of the land, of which by virtue of their succession by conquest they were supreme lords, instead of undertaking them themselves, they committed what with our new lights appears to have been an unfortunate error in judgment. At the time such error was committed, it was probably the most expedient course to take ; but because it may have been so then, it does not follow it would be so now. "Circumstances alter cases," and never were cases altered more by circumstances than they are now in respect to the management of the land of India.

After what has been stated respecting the vast resources of the Land Department available to enable it to pay the £35,000,000 or £40,000,000 a year interest on the £1,000,000,000 capital to be lent by the investing classes of the United Kingdom, should these classes still have doubts about the security the Department would be in a position to offer them, they would most unmistakably prove themselves to be made up of very timid mortals, and of a totally different race of beings from those who have been losing during the last quarter of a century in the aggregate not less than £1,000,000,000 by lending their money to the Governments and public companies of countries in which there has been no Land Depart-

ment of State to look after its expenditure in the most remunerative ways.

If these investors should ever have any foundation for their misgivings in the matter, it would be as to whether their capital of £1,000,000,000 would be large enough to allow of the Land Department to bring about all the results here spoken of. Even on this point there would be no occasion for any doubt. The main object of the Department in laying out all these millions on its vast landed estate would be to improve the condition of the cultivators of its soil, and the natural result of such improvement would be to put these cultivators into a financial position strong enough to pay with ease by way of rents on land, buildings, etc., and of railway fares, freights, etc., sufficient revenues for the Department to make a fair profit on the outlay. As the Department would not have thousands of families to maintain, as would the same huge estate divided among thousands of landowners, it could afford to lay out again these profits in remuneratively improving more of its estate, and this year after year, till it would be filled up with co-operative farms, and through them brought into the condition of producing the enormous yearly revenues here pointed out. Possibly, by the end of twenty years after the last payment of the £1,000,000,000 had been made to the Land Department, not less than £500,000,000 would be laid out from the yearly surplus profits made during these seventy years. This sum would have to be added to the £1,000,000,000 also remuneratively laid out, and therefore would form an additional security to that amount to the lenders of the latter sum.

In the financial management of its huge landed estate the main point the Land Department would have constantly to keep in view would be to get its annual revenues from its co-operative farms to exceed, at an as early date as possible, the interest paid yearly to the holders of its bonds on the capital borrowed for setting these farms on foot. It should, therefore,

at first avoid as much as possible every outlay not contributing to the establishment of these farms in such a way that the co-operators should be able to afford to pay with ease the rent required of them. When once this corner had been turned, every excess of revenue beyond this interest laid out again in making the proper provisions for starting more co-operative farms would be pretty well all profit re-invested in a most profitable way, for no interest would have to be paid on it. With this profit could be made some outlays, not directly contributing to the productive capacities of the farms, but more to the convenience, comforts, and intellectual improvement of the co-operators; such as more suitable farm-buildings, dwelling-houses, etc., and a club-house. What the margin of profit is likely to be, as time goes on, for enabling all these things to be accomplished, has been already shown. It would be the difference between the interest to be paid on £1,000,000,000 and the rents received annually from co-operative farms, increasing in number every year till the full complement of 600,000 had been reached, or in brief, between £40,000,000 and £200,000,000 a year. Besides these farms there would be the railways, tramways, and other sources of income to swell by a similar process the net annual profits of the Land Department.

Owing to the extremely effective machinery of these co-operative farms, the work of the Land Department would be comparatively easy, if only its officials keep the points above mentioned constantly in view. It need hardly be said that these officials should be sufficiently well educated, and what would be of equal importance, endowed with sufficient energy and probity. There is no reason why all these indispensable qualities for the task should not be found among the natives as well as among Englishmen. The supreme direction of the Land Department would, of course, remain in the hands of a Council of Englishmen in London as well as in Calcutta, until,

at any rate, the greater part of the borrowed capital had been paid off. When that had been done, then a few of the most deserving of the native officials might be received into the Council in Calcutta as a reward for past services, and as a stimulus to the future ones of others.

It may be objected that if the whole of the revenues of the Land Department were spent in improving the land and the condition of its cultivators, there would be no revenue left sufficiently large for the Indian Government as a whole to pay for the maintenance of its army, police force, etc. The answer to this is, that to make the Land Department pay for the maintenance of the army, etc., as is now practically done, is to mix up two things that ought to be kept apart. India will never be governed properly in the interests of the governors and the governed until it has come to be generally recognised that its Government has two distinct functions—the one as a supreme ruler over the whole of India, including everything in and connected with it, and the other as lord paramount over all the land. It has been the inability to recognise this distinction between the two functions of the Indian Government that has made its government of the country so little a success. Had this distinction been always kept in view, the interests of the land would not have been sacrificed to all other interests, with their natural consequences—ever-recurring droughts, floods, and famines, and a deeply-indebted peasantry ever on the verge of starvation. Indeed, the functions of an Indian Government are something more than to be the collector of taxes, the administrator of justice, and the maintainer of the peace and order, and the defender of the country. It has duties apart from these, though most necessary ones, as a landowner on an enormous scale; and having this huge landed estate to manage, it is to its interest that nothing should interfere with the profitable management of this estate. The Indian Government should no more have the disposal of the revenues and

funds of its properly-constituted Land Department, for the general purposes of that Government, than it should have those of a Calcutta or Bombay bank. Just as these banks and kindred institutions do or ought to contribute their quota of taxation towards the maintenance of the army and police force, so ought the Land Department.

What this quota ought to be would be a matter of calculation. Possibly one half of the military charge would be a fair apportionment. The wealthy classes of the cities and towns, to whom the Indian Government not wisely made over the building sites without compensation, and others of them, who have made large fortunes by their exorbitant exactions on the cultivators of the soil, should be the persons made to contribute by means of an income and property tax the remaining half. Should these wealthy classes still refuse to pay, as they have hitherto been doing, the Indian Government would have to weather the crisis, till the Land Department could come more effectively to its aid by borrowing to make up the deficits. Fortunately, the debt of the Indian Government is at present but little over £200,000,000, and of this the Land Department would take over to itself one half along with the existing railways, which cost to construct about £100,000,000. The £100,000,000 the Indian Government would still owe would only be a debt per head of the population of eight shillings—a mere bagatelle compared with the £50 per head of population the New Zealand Government already owes to its English bondholders.

It must be borne in mind that with a properly-constituted Land Department that would greatly improve the value of the soil, and as a result, the wealth of its cultivators, there would be reared up, irrespective of itself, contributors towards the maintenance of the army and police force. Not only would everything connected with the rural districts of India indicate a greatly-increased prosperity, but this improvement would act

in time equally beneficially on the in-dwellers of its towns and cities. As the co-operative farmers become better off, they would aspire to obtain some luxuries. It may be taken for granted they would desire a cotton dress of some sort in lieu of a waistcloth only, and that they would aim at something more luxurious in the way of furniture to their newly-built cottages than what they now possess in their mud cabins—a tiny mat laid down in the centre of a mud floor, and a small wooden box for a bench, the two costing about six shillings. These new demands would be supplied by the neighbouring Indian towns, and would give employment to Indian mechanics, who would, in consequence, be able to consume a large quantity of goods, taxed by the Indian Government.

Not only would a well-regulated Land Department be the means of causing, both directly and indirectly, large contributions to the exchequer of the Indian Government, in its capacity of supreme tax-collector, towards the maintenance of its large army, but it would more than by any other means diminish the necessity of having so large an army. It may be safely said that, wherever the co-operative farms are established, there will there be no need for the services of an army, and that the Indian Government, by allowing its Land Department to extend the number of its co-operative farms through not depriving it of the legitimate resources with which it can be done, takes at the same time steps to diminish its army. When the whole country has been covered with these farms, pretty much the only use for an army in India would be to keep garrisons in its cities and guard over its frontiers.

In all countries, at all ages, rebellions that have eventually overthrown dynasties have for the most part taken their rise, and had their root, in rural districts. History is crowded with the enumeration of riots and disturbances caused by a revolted peasantry. They have all arisen from a peasantry discontented with the hardships of its condition without hope of alleviation,

and with minds prone to superstition in some cases, and to the treasonable harangues of demagogues in others. Take Ireland as a case in point. How seldom has this unhappy country been free from the rebellion of its peasant cultivators ! Its present sad condition is owing to its outrages, which require the presence in the island of a constabulary force of several thousand men, and an army of regular troops nearly as large. When disturbances do take place in towns, they mostly proceed from an influx into them of a rural population greater than work can be permanently found for it, and this migration into towns of a rural population is generally the result of a mis-managed state of things in connection with the land, by which employment on it has been curtailed. Often the manual cultivators of the soil are placed in a position of hardship, which cannot well be made worse, and the prospect of no escape from which holds out no inducement to practise the prudential restraints which would limit the number of those ever seeking for work in towns.

In respect to the military defence of India, a Land Department could render most valuable assistance to the general Government in another way, and this by means of its co-operative farms. These farms would form excellent organisations for a volunteer force, as a supplement to the regular army. Whenever the contest takes place for the maintenance of England's rule over India, it will most likely be decided by numbers. Whichever of the two rival European empires in Asia will be able to bring the greatest number of well-armed and well-drilled men into the field at that decisive contest will most probably gain the day. Should England lose it, the result could be no other than her expulsion from India. Against so fatal a contingency there could be no greater preservative than the co-operative farms. When the country has been filled up with its assumed complement of farms, there are to be, be it remembered, 600,000 of them. If we were to suppose that

each of these farms sent forth only one volunteer from its five supernumeraries, there would be at once an army of 600,000 men, and if all five supernumeraries of each farm were enrolled, there would be an army of 3,000,000 volunteers as a support to the regular army, without having recourse to a single shareholder.

Situated as India is, with so warlike and aggressive a neighbour as Russia on its northern frontier, and considering the fact that India has been so many times invaded and overrun by large armies from the very regions now occupied by such a neighbour, it would be exercising only common prudence for its Government to make use of the machinery for keeping on a permanent footing the large army of volunteers the co-operative farms would offer. All the expenses, which need not be great, connected with keeping up this large army of volunteers in an ample state of efficiency would be met by the Land Department out of its own revenues. To this end, the volunteers should undergo a drilling in masses every year after the harvest for a fortnight or so. The tramway to every farm would enable enough of them to form a whole army corps to assemble in a few hours for manœuvres in the severally-appointed districts over the country.

This volunteer movement would effect another good in the same direction, by its keeping up a martial spirit throughout the country, that would prove most serviceable in the event of its invasion; and this martial feeling would make the co-operative farms a ready field for the supply of recruits for the regular army. Depôts for the storage of the arms delivered up at the end of the autumn manœuvres of each year, could be established in each district assigned for a corps of volunteers. Beyond avoiding accidents by firearms, this would be a superfluous precaution; for the Government need not fear the retention of its firearms by the thoroughly contented peasantry of the co-operative farms.

At the inevitable crisis hinted at, neither numbers nor discipline would be of much use unless the material forming these numbers, and subject to this discipline, is good in respect no less to willingness to fight than to stamina for undergoing the fatigues of a campaign. Now, the millions of well-disciplined volunteers to be turned out ultimately by the 600,000 co-operative farms in India for the defence of their country and these farms—even those from the rich lands of the deltas—would be a very different stamp of men from those that composed the Bombay native army all but annihilated at Maiwand, and most of whom, it appears, were drawn from the offscourings of thickly-peopled towns and cities. In no respect would the young co-operative farmers prove themselves inferior to the best of troops that would be brought from Central Asia against them. It is true they would not be maddened for the contest by a prospect of loot. But they would be inspirited by a determination equally as effective to defend from annihilation the system of co-operative farms, from which they had been deriving so much prosperity and happiness. In an era of co-operative farms over the country, a would-be invader of India, whoever he may be, would have to make provision to encounter, not merely a regular army of English and native troops, but an army in reserve that could number, on a pinch, 20 millions of well-fed sturdy volunteers, well drilled to arms, and inured to discipline by the working of the system of farming at which they would be getting their living, and all ready to fight in defence of their beloved Land Department; for they would know that, in defending its interests they would be only defending their own.

A few remarks will now be made respecting the influence peasant farming by co-operation would have on the peasantry of India. It is not going too far to say it would be the means far more likely than any other that has been, or perhaps could be, used of spreading Western ideas, and the results of Western

civilisation, among the masses of India. For one thing, it would have a similar effect on the Indian field-labourer to what it would have on the English, Scotch, or Irish field-labourer, of teaching him to exercise his mental faculties without making his manual field work at all distasteful. The true secret, however, of its success would lie in its possessing all the advantages of peasant proprietorship without its drawbacks, of which, perhaps, the greatest is an indifference to every motive to work but a sordidness of a most degrading type. Even if the labouring members of a co-operative farm never so much as opened a book, or even read a newspaper, to say nothing of having a club-house, with its reading-room and library, the very fact of their acting together for their own gain, without external interference, would be a most effective education for them, tending to prevent their falling into that look of mental vacuity so painful for one desirous of the advancement of his species in intelligence to behold—not less in the peasant proprietor of the Continent than in the agricultural labourers of England, and in the ryot cultivators of India.

Yet this deplorable state of things can hardly be attributed altogether to field labour. However monotonous that kind of work may be, it cannot be more so than the labour of mechanics of towns—such, for instance, as the labour of the thousands in Birmingham, whose time is exclusively taken up in making, may-be, the twentieth part of a pin, or the tenth part of a steel pen. Yet these men have at all times a sharp enough look about them, which must proceed from some other cause than their work. It comes, in truth, from that very cause which co-operative farms would so develop among the labouring cultivators of the soil—the working together of many minds for the carrying out in common of one object. More is meant in this unity of action than the fact of a dozen wage-paid labourers hoeing together in a turnip-field. It means forty men putting their heads and interests and sympathies together,

as well as their hands, and this in consultation over many things, irrespective of field work, connected with the carrying on successfully of a co-operative farm of 1,000 acres.

If field work has this deadening effect in temperate climates like England and Ireland, what must it have in a tropical climate like India? It can hardly be doubted that it is in no little degree owing to this that agriculture in general is in so backward a condition in all hot climates, though the farmers in them possess some natural advantages over those in countries with temperate and cold climates. The truth of this position can be made clearer by contrasting the difference between farming in the Southern and North-western States of America. The farmer in these latter States, by dint of giving in his own person the labour of two or three English farm-labourers, by dint of all exclusion from social intercourse with his fellow-men, and by dint of many hardships, in which he allows his wife and daughters freely to participate, does somehow contrive to get a living by cultivating the land. In the Southern States the American has not been able to do even this, but has been obliged to hand over the cultivation of the land to an inferior race, whom for a century he held in bondage, and whose condition even now, according to all accounts, is still but little better than that of slavery. It is asserted by many that the white race is unfitted to cultivate the land of the enervating tropics. But the Southern States are not within the tropics at all, and certainly very many degrees further from the Equator than India, where neither slavery nor any modification of it exists.

The truth is that the reason why the tillage of the soil is in so backward a state in tropical countries, and why the tillers are consequently in so impoverished a condition, is that the native races of these countries have either had to work in a condition of slavery for foreign masters, or if they have worked for themselves they have done so in a state of isolation, and not in combination with their fellow-

cultivators, and, consequently, without the employment of anything like sufficient capital, and varied experience. Moreover, they have had the misfortune to be conquered by hardier races, from more temperate climates, who have deprived them of their little accumulations of wealth, and oppressed them to such an extent as to prevent their getting together more. In short, it has been the fate of the real tillers of the land, in all countries, in all ages, to have their interest neglected, if not preyed upon, by all other classes. This never would have happened had there been in these countries a Land Department of State, whose especial duty it is to take care of these interests by bringing the capital of the investing classes to their help at a low rate of interest, and to see that this capital is laid out to much greater advantage than could possibly be done by the cultivators themselves, scattered about and without experience as they are, and compelled to be so constantly absorbed in the cultivation of their little plots of land. Such a Land Department is more especially needed in tropical countries, where the forces of nature, either for assisting or hindering the work of agriculturists, are so much greater than in countries in a temperate climate.

If, then, the land cultivators of India are to have their condition in every respect made better than it now is—and better, indeed, than has hitherto been that of those in all ages cultivating the land in hot countries like their own, they must have a Land Department fulfilling the functions treated of. Their tenour will now be briefly recalled to mind. This Department should employ the money to be borrowed of English capitalists in making the climate of India more suitable for field labour, by bringing it as near as possible to the conditions under which field labour in temperate climates is carried on. The first step in this direction to be taken is to plant Nature's shield for protecting the soil against the rays of the scorching sun of the tropics. With forests of trees planted on

the mountains, and plantations of trees wherever practicable without interfering with cultivation in the plains, a drought—that obstacle to farming in hot countries—would seldom, perhaps never, take place; for, with an abundance of trees, there would be plenty of rain equally distributed every year over the country; and the waters thus discharged from the clouds would remain much longer in it, whether they passed into the earth by trees, or more sluggishly into the sea in brooks and rivers. Even with the climate thus made more temperate, and with the soil thus brought into a better state to be worked, even with the facilities for conveying the manure of towns to the land, and for conveying the heavy crops produced through this manure to the towns, there would be one thing left still for the Land Department of the Indian Government to do to insure the well-being and happiness of the cultivators of its land, and this would be to get them to work together in co-operation, by which they would obtain the benefit of an united capital, and the united skill got by an united labour and an united experience.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PLAN SUITABLE FOR THE COLONIES.

Land Department in Colonies.—Labour Difficulty in Present Colonies.—Land Department and English Investors.—Towns, Railways, etc., of Land Department.—Financial Embarrassments of Present Colonies.—Co-operative Farms in Colonies.—Co-operative Farms Suitable for English Mechanics.—Co-operative Farms Suitable for Wives of Emigrants.—The Rowdy Class in Colonial Towns.—Free Trade Colonies through Co-operative Farms.

GREAT as would be the results in India of a Land Department distinct from, yet subordinate to, the supreme Government, scarcely less so would they be in any of the dependencies of England colonised by her own people. These colonists, whether in America, Africa or Australia have, it is true, done a great deal, considering the enormous difficulties they have had to encounter through the absence of a Land Department of State; but they would have done many times more had they but had the invaluable aid of such a Department. The mistake made by the first pioneers to these colonies was that made by the first rulers of India, in not handing over all the land of their country, and everything connected with it, such as the making of roads, railways, etc., to such a separately-constituted Department. Instead of doing this, they most unwisely handed it over for a very small consideration to a class of land-speculators or land-jobbers, who have been using the land with no other object in view than to suit their own immediate ends, and of whom many are absentees: just as the first rulers of India handed over the land of that dependency to the Zemindar collectors, who have proved themselves to be quite as worthless to have so great a trust confided to them.

In both cases the outcome has been, for one thing, that there has been no unity of action in the treatment of the land, on a sufficiently large scale to be of use in bringing the poor lands into a high state of cultivation, and in preventing the exhaustion of the once fertile lands.

Again, had a Land Department been established in these colonies, and had its land been let out in co-operative farms of 1,000 acres to be cultivated by batches of labourers working in co-operation for their own profit, as here set forth, the land question in these colonies would have been settled for all time, which is very far from being the case at present. The time for this final settlement may be staved off for a while, by the setting-up of factories to give employment to the unemployed of towns debarred from getting a living by the cultivation of the land: but even this expedient must fail before very many years. The example of England could tell these colonists that the existence of factories will not for ever find sufficient employment for a constantly-increasing working-class population.

The Land Department of an English colony would have to shape its course above all on this one principle: to strive in every way to gain the continued confidence of the investing public in England. To this end would everything else have to be subordinated, for without the capital obtained from this source, and this too in large quantities, it would be powerless to do much. Now, the only way in which the Land Department could retain the confidence of the English investing public would be to show itself in their point of view worthy of it. This would be by making indisputably evident to the most sceptical amongst them, that it not only earns every year all the money paid by way of interest on their loans, but a great deal more, which itself is laid out again in the same profitable manner. Such confidence the Land Department could inspire in no more effective way than by filling up as fast as possible

with co-operative farms the country through which would run its railways. It would soon be getting a fair rent for the land and buildings let to its co-operative tenants, and the money thus collected would be employed in bringing the produce raised by these tenants nearer to markets, and in starting more co-operative farms to be treated in the same way. Should at first the traffic on the railways not be enough to pay the interest—say, four per cent.—on the money borrowed to make them, the deficiency could be more than made up by the rents from the co-operative farms, till the traffic had become sufficiently large. The farther away from the main line would on each side extend the co-operative farms, the greater must be the amount of traffic on it from these additional feeders.

For increasing the traffic on its railways, the Land Department would have another agency at its disposal, scarcely less effective than its co-operative farms. At every five miles or so, especially on the main lines, would be a station, the land of which would of course belong to the Land Department equally as much as would the land of the co-operative farms all around. On this reserved space, large enough for a town with its well-treed and shrubbed central park, through the centre of which would go the railway in question, would soon spring up houses, the inhabitants of which would for the most part be in the various professions and branches of trade needed to supply the wants of the co-operative farmers. The foundations of these towns would be laid out by the Department's engineer on hygienic principles, so that their refuse could be carried off every night by cess-vans on a low-level tramway running at the end of the yard or garden, as the case may be, at the backs of all the houses, and delivered, undeprived by a water carriage of all its fertilising properties, at the co-operative farms at a small cost to the farmers and townspeople.

By the Land Department having the sites of all the towns in a colony, it would be put in possession of large annual

revenues continually on the increase, and these revenues it would devote to laying foundations for a constant succession of new towns along all its railways, which, in course of time, would themselves yield equally large revenues. These towns, though extremely healthy and pleasant to live in, from their foundations being well laid beforehand, ought yet to be so built as to be adapted for a large trade being carried on in them with the co-operative farms connected with them on both sides of the railway by tramways. As it would be owing to the trade created by the existence of co-operative farms that it could be carried on in these towns on a scale large enough to bring a population to fill them, it would be only just that the agency that gave rise to these farms should have the gain to be derived from owning the land on which the towns thus created should stand. Hitherto in English colonies this has been far from being the case. It is well-known that the readiest way of making a fortune in a new country is to job in townlots. It too often happens, however, that, while townlot jobbers are making fabulous fortunes, the shareholders of the railways that made these townlands of any value by going near them are getting no dividends, and the cultivators of the land around, whose demands for goods helped to bring a population to the towns, have a difficulty in getting a living. The millions sterling that in the aggregate the townlot jobbers in a colony without a Land Department make and spend in luxuries, and in respect to this latter oftener than not out of the colony, the Land Department would expend in laying in the colony foundations for the development of a vast deal more wealth in such a way that the working classes, and above all the labouring agricultural population, should—the latter through their co-operative farms—have a due proportion of it. Moreover, the portion of this increased wealth going to the inhabitants of the Land Department's well-laid-out towns, would be productive of a vast deal more delight and health than the

money now spent in the vilely-laid-out towns owned by land-jobbers.

The ground rents from all the houses and buildings of every kind in these towns going, as they would, to swell the revenues of the Land Department just as had been, and were still doing the rents from the co-operative farms, would make the security of the English investor all the greater, and so induce him to lend more and more of his savings to a Department that had already laid out in so profitable a manner what it had previously borrowed of him. By this reciprocity of confidence, so well earned and so well bestowed, the Land Department would contrive to cover no little ground in the course of fifty years. Although its progress would be rather slow at first, yet when it had once fairly gained the confidence of the English investing public, it would advance with great rapidity. It is possible that under a Land Department the colonies would not so soon have covered over so extensive an area as they have done without one. But it must be admitted, even by their inhabitants, that they would have been better off had their area increased more in accordance with the increase of their population. Nothing is gained by absorbing a vast area without a population, however fertile may be its land. On the contrary, it must involve a continual drain on the limited resources of an infant community, which the existence of a Land Department would have prevented.

The financial and other difficulties in which the Governments of all the colonies are more or less floundering, may be nearly all traced to the absence in them of a properly constituted Land Department of State with duties corresponding to those here enunciated. Some of them, to extricate themselves from these difficulties, have had recourse to levying heavy duties on the manufactured goods of the countries of Europe, and even of their mother-country. With respect to the latter, when the rulers of a nation, and that one still

in swaddling-clothes, are in great straits for money, such things as the affection and gratitude of an offspring towards a parent must be very embarrassing. The constant borrowing by the Government of a colony only makes matters worse, if there is no Land Department to turn the money thus borrowed to the best account. The truth of this position is shown by the condition of the finances of the New Zealand Government, and the downward-tending course to a like goal of the Government of some of the Australian colonies. The Government of New Zealand has continued to borrow money till it now owes a debt of more than £25,000,000, though the population is under half a million; and all the resources the Government has for paying the interest on this debt are from sales of land, the traffic on the comparatively few miles of railway built out of the borrowed money, and finally taxes levied on the whole community. But the first item, sales of land, is becoming a rapidly-diminishing quantity every year. In fact, most of the best land in the islands has already been disposed of to land-speculators, and has therefore passed out of the hands of the Government, and most of the forest lands at all accessible have been already cleared. Consequently, at no very distant date, all the Government of New Zealand will have to rely on for the payment of the interest on its comparatively huge debt, will be what it will get from the traffic on its railways passing through thinly-peopled districts, and from general taxation. Under such statesmanship as this implies, every million borrowed can only land the Government of the colony in greater financial difficulties, instead of extricating it out of those already pressing it.

The highest aim of not only the Government of New Zealand, but of all the English colonies, has been to beget as large a tax-paying community capable of bearing as great an amount of taxation as possible. Even judged in this light,

a colony with a Land Department will bear favourable comparison with colonies without one. Though the co-operative farmers would pay rent to it, this would not prevent their paying taxes both direct and indirect to the general Government. They would certainly be in a position to do so, the more so that from their being numerous, and all having a vote, they would be able to prevent a disproportionate share of the taxes being laid on themselves by the people of the towns. The rent they would have to pay the Land Department being fixed and low, considering the great facilities put in their way enabling them to pay it, could never be looked upon by the co-operative farmers as a Government tax. They would know only too well what had been done with the capital, the interest for which in the name of rent they would be called on to pay, and be too satisfied with the manner of disposal of what they did pay, ever to confound the claims of the Land Department with those of the general Government, should they ever be disposed to dispute these latter, which is never likely to be the case. The Government of a colony having a Land Department would be more likely to find among the readiest contributors to its taxes the co-operative farmers of that Department. Besides, one of the advantages to be gained by a colony having a Land Department is that this Department would be the means of keeping the taxation of the general Government at as low a point as possible. For one thing, in such a colony there could be no destitute classes, for there would be no dearth of employment in a colony in which there would be constant openings in the co-operative farms for labourers with sufficient capital, and plenty of work for labourers and workmen without capital, in the new towns constantly springing up on the railways, leaving out of account the vast field of employment on the public works of the Department, in making these railways and in laying the foundations of these towns.

But for a Government to have no revenues to depend on but the taxation of the community for paying interests on its debts, as is practically the case with colonies without a Land Department, is surely not the way to succeed in securing that great desideratum in the successful formation of a new country—the confidence of the capitalists of an old one; and this lack of confidence is more likely to be increased than lessened by the fact that in all these colonies universal suffrage prevails, which means that the country is practically ruled by the masses who are excluded from gaining a livelihood by the cultivation of the soil in any other way than as wage-paid labourers. Now, it is to these ruling masses thus made discontented that the English bondholding creditors of the colonies have to look for the punctual payment of the interest on their loans, and their eventual liquidation in full. To give the masses votes without at the same time providing facilities for their satisfactory settlement on the land as their own masters—masters of their own labour and not of the land is here meant—is simply to give them stones to throw at the heads of the givers, instead of giving them loaves to be devoured in peace and quietness—an act of folly a colony having a Land Department of the kind here suggested would avoid committing by means of its co-operative farms.

From what has been said it will be observed that the secret of the rapid advance of the Land Department of an English colony in its no less profitable than beneficent work, would be primarily owing to the economic management of the land in its possession. But it is the system of peasant tenant-farming by co-operation that would alone make this economic management possible. The co-operative farms, though each of 1,000 acres, when once fairly started would give the Department no further trouble, so that its energies would be set free to start similar farms farther away from the main line of railway, or further in the interior along the line and away from the

starting-point on the coast. Beyond paying a stipulated rent, at first low, but rising gradually by 6d. an acre every year till it reached its maximum fixity of moderateness, the members of a co-operative farm would be as free to do what they liked with the land as if it were their own. The Land Department would be only too glad to be spared the necessity of interference in the affairs of a farm it had once set afloat. Its attention would be taken up too much in making all the necessary preparations for floating more farms of the like nature, to wish to meddle with the carrying on of those it had already floated. Beyond the punctual payment of the rent, and sending in to the Department a copy of the accounts, and especially of the balance-sheet annually made out by the five managers of the first class of shareholders for distribution among the remaining shareholders, the Department would make no further claim upon the co-operators. The members of the co-operation would not be likely to neglect the cultivation of the land, knowing that, if they did, they would be far greater sufferers than would be the Department. The accounts from each co-operative farm of each year's doings the Department would receive, it would publish in a pamphlet, and a copy of this pamphlet, thus containing a summary of the work done on each farm in a district, would be sent to all the farms in that district. This would produce a spirit of emulation among the co-operative farms, causing each to vie with the others as to which of them should make the most profit during the year, and as their rent would be fixed there would be no inducement to conceal the truth from the Department.

A colony in which would exist the co-operative farms of a Land Department, would be especially sought after by the mechanics of the large towns of England and Scotland, who had saved up a few pounds to pay for their passage out and to purchase the four £5 shares necessary for admittance into the fourth class of shareholders of a co-operative farm. In such a

colony the emigrant could begin farming operations at once, however unskilled he might be in them, without losing his little capital, since he would profit by the experience of the older members, and would gradually become better acquainted with farming matters himself, in proportion as his own stake in the partnership increased.

Nothing is more common in the colonies without a Land Department than for mechanics from England to lose all their with difficulty saved-up capital in an attempt at farming. Some soon lose their all ; while others, after struggling for years, have after all to give in and sell their land, upon which they have spent years of unceasing toil of the most laborious kind, for a comparatively small sum, to the money-lender of whom they borrowed the capital at a high rate of interest to enable them to procure the requisites for cultivating it, or by auction at the instance of the Government surveyor for overdue rates. Such colonies swarm with vultures ever ready to pounce upon a luckless immigrant possessed of a little capital, but without experience in farming suitable to the country. But the mechanic who had joined the co-operative farm of a Land Department could never get into this helpless condition. He would be not only linked in partnership with men possessed of capital, but of experience in those matters in which this capital would be laid out.

Some of the mechanics, having thus lost their honestly-acquired money, begin with a brave heart their life again at their old trade. But these are, alas ! few, in comparison with the many who under their loss lose heart, give way to drink, and thus finally drop into and help to form that large class of shiftless, destitute, ne'er-do-weels to be found in all the towns of the colonies, however extensive and rich may be the uncultivated lands of these colonies. Others, again, profiting by the experience gained under vultures' claws, turn vultures themselves, to prey upon the inexperience of the newly-arrived

immigrants into the colony bent on following a farming career. In the eyes of political economists hating State interference, this may be all in strict accordance with the "inexorable laws of supply and demand," with *caveat emptor*, and other such-like heartless dogmatisms. But even these, in their moments of humanity, must acknowledge that the final results of such a state of things cannot be altogether satisfactory.

For a mechanic with a wife and family accustomed to a decent home in England, the advantages to be derived from emigrating to such a colony would be incontestable, for it is upon the female portion of an emigrant's family that the hardships incident to an emigrant's life press so heavily. Instead of having to go into the dreary backwoods, or to the lonely prairie, there to lead their toilsome life, cut off from all comfort-producing tokens of civilisation, to which they had been more or less habituated, and from association with their fellow-creatures, as most farmers settling in a colony now have to do, the new settlers in a colony having a Land Department would find a comfortable home at once, in the midst of associates having the same pursuits in life and so moving in the same social position as themselves. They would meet with a comfortable cottage ready for them, farm-buildings already put up, etc., and all these connected by a tramway to a well-laid-out town not far off, from which they could have all their wants supplied as easily as if they had settled down instead on a co-operative farm in England, Scotland or Ireland.

It is possible that when the wives and daughters of the working and labouring classes get the franchise, they may have some influence in bringing about a change for the better in the hard lot which their sister-emigrants are fated to bear as wives and daughters of those going out to farm in the colonies, and under which so many of them, though once lusty and strong, prematurely die. All the more ought the newly-enfranchised women of England to give their attention to this

subject, since by the establishment of co-operative farms in the colonies under a Land Department there would be no necessity for all this cruel waste of female life. The drudgery of farm work, except at the harvests, would at any rate not fall upon the wives of the co-operators, and even in respect to the duties inseparable from the house, wifedom and maternity, these would be helped in many ways through the agency of co-operative farms, and their ready communication with good towns.

Of Lancashire and Yorkshire manufacturers, such a colony as here described ought to have the especial good will. It is not likely for many a year, if ever, to start as a rival to themselves, and not being a rival there would be no inducement to shut out their fabrics by the imposition of a high tariff. All necessity for imposing such a tariff would be obviated by the Land Department holding all the land itself, since it would thus prevent its getting into the hands of land-jobbers. When the land of a colony is extensively held by such men they soon become wealthy, and like most wealthy men, not satisfied with what they have already got, seek to get more, and no surer way presents itself to their minds for this purpose than to set up factories. But their factories would be of no use unless they could get operatives to work in them. In a colony of land-speculators, in which most of the working classes are shut out from getting a living by cultivating the land, these are only too glad to get work in towns as factory hands. In a colony not of land-speculators, but with a Land Department, this Department would step in to thwart the starting of factories, and for their support the levying of a high tariff on English-made goods, by absorbing at once the greater part of the emigrating working population from the mother-country into its co-operative farms.

CHAPTER IX.

THE PLAN SUITABLE FOR THE COLONIES—(*continued*).

Necessity for a Land Department.—Co-operative farms and English capital.—United States without a Land Department.—Civil war from absence of a Land Department.—Labour difficulty in United States.—Land Department and tenant occupancy.—Public works of Land Department.—Officials of Land Department.—Importance of question to human race.—Land Department and coloured natives.—Co-operative farming by natives in Africa.—Autonomous States and English capital.

THOUGH co-operative farms are necessary to the success of a Land Department, it is not by any means to be inferred, as will be shown in the next chapter, that a Land Department is in every instance necessary to the success of co-operative farms. In old and populous countries already possessing plenty of capital, and in which the land is still in the hands of a highly-educated, liberal-minded class of landowners, there is no need whatever for a Land Department. Such a Department is only wanted either in new countries still unpeopled, and with vast natural resources still undeveloped, as the colonies of English people, or in an old and populous country like India, which, though possessed of immense natural resources, has an agricultural population too steeped in poverty and ignorance to turn them to a profitable account. In neither of these countries could co-operative farms be established without the agency of a Land Department, for in them is lacking the capital to do it with, and this capital is to be obtained mostly from the investing classes of other countries, who could not be induced to part with it except through the confidence inspired by a Land Department. At present the Governments of these countries are in the helpless position of a owner of a large landed estate,

who from not having capital to work it profitably himself, is obliged either to let it to a most unsatisfactory class of tenants, as are the ryot cultivators of India in their present state, or to enable him to go on living from hand to mouth, is forced to sell it piecemeal for sums ridiculously below its value to land-speculators, as are most of the buyers of the Government land in the colonies.

The advantage of a Land Department in the English colonies is that it would not only bring the capital of old countries to the development of their wealth, and lay out the capital thus brought to the best advantage, but in this development it would from the very outset use a form of land tenure, to which all nations must have recourse in the end, if their wealth is not to be destroyed in the anarchy begotten of attempts to carry out in them the doctrines of Socialism, Communism and Nihilism. This form of tenure would be tenant-farming on a large scale by co-operation among labourers. Through these co-operative farms, a Land Department in its work of opening out new countries would at once bring on to its land the working and labouring classes in them, and this in such a way that none of the co-operating labourers could develop into a "boss" over the other labourers, at any rate on his own account. What is more, through the practical working of the plan here proposed, the prevention of this development would not be of temporary but lasting effect. That co-operative farms should be established to this end in the colonies of English is rendered the more necessary, that the labouring and artisan classes, who would be the ones to profit by them, would soon sway, if they do not already, the policy of their Governments by their numerical preponderance of votes. As will be shown more at length further on, the only satisfactory way of cultivating the land in a country in which the labouring and working classes exercise the franchise, and which is therefore practically ruled by the masses, is by means of co-operative farms; and this

popular form of tenure, which could be brought about in no other way, could be granted with benefit to all classes in the Colonies by a Land Department.

In short, the practical working of the system of co-operative farms in English colonies would be to bring the surplus capital of England seeking investment to the cultivation of the land in these colonies in such a way, that the profits to be gained from such cultivation would be shared between the actual cultivators themselves and the Land Department, and in the latter case only to allow of its bringing more cultivators on to its uncultivated lands on the same advantageous terms. The capital brought into these colonies, through the confidence inspired by these proceedings of the Land Department, would not then be used to foster a system of cultivation of the land by which, from an insufficiency of labour being bestowed on it, it soon becomes exhausted, or a system that would allow the profits to fall into the hands mainly of land-speculators and money-lenders, who would do nothing with the money thus made towards preparing more uncultivated waste for cultivation, and in opening out these newly-cultivated districts by railways and other means of communication, as it would be the especial business of a Land Department to do.

In respect to all this it will naturally be asked—How has it come to pass that the United States have grown into so large a country without a Land Department? In an answer to such a question there is nothing to detract from the necessity of the existence of a Land Department in either India or the colonies still remaining to England, above all, those in Africa. First of all, is humanity ready to stand by approvingly to see the 250 million natives of India, and the perhaps fifty million natives of South Africa killed off, as have been the millions of the Red Indian natives of America? If it is, then of course one reason for the existence of a Land Department to prevent so wholesale a massacre is done away with. Again, are the

other nations of the globe prepared to look on unconcernedly, while millions of Hindoos are held in bondage for a century or more in order to supply the world with raw cotton, as have been the blacks of the Southern States, and whose condition is still so unsatisfactory that there are hundreds of thousands of them, it is said, who would be only too glad to leave that portion of the republic of "bossdom," could they but find another country to go to and the means to take them. Now, it is not going too far to say that, had there been a Land Department of State, there would have been no occasion for any slavery, no occasion for an expenditure of £600,000,000 in a five years' war to put an end to it, and no need for the existence of four millions of black labourers still discontented with their position, and on whose labour one of the greatest staple industries of the United States is dependent.

"Ah! these are the Southern States alluded to," it may be said. "Let it be granted that a Land Department would have avoided all these evils in them. But what about the Northern States? Look at that magnificent city of New York. No Land Department had anything to do with the building-up of that city." Granted. But the immense cotton industry based on the rickety foundation just pointed out had. That the shortcomings of the Southern States through not having had a Land Department are not to be set aside so very easily by the people of the Northern States, is manifest from the great sacrifices they have been making to pay off the debt incurred through these Southern States. To pay off this debt, run up to preserve the Union of all the States, which most probably under a Land Department would never have been endangered, the people of the Northern States had first of all to sacrifice their honour by repudiating a great portion of it under the pretext of punishing the rebellious States and their abettors; and then their taste for foreign goods, by placing an almost prohibitory tariff on the importation of the goods of other

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countries, to enable them to pay off the portion of the debt of the whole republic they chose to acknowledge.

If it be retorted that Chicago has, at all events, nothing to do with the cotton industry of the Southern States, that here at any rate has been built up a fine city without the aid of a Land Department, the answer is, that the prosperity of the Western States that has created Chicago and the other large cities in them, does not rest on the absence of a Land Department in those States, but on the absence of a Land Department, or a machinery corresponding to it, in the United Kingdom, in the other colonies, and above all in India. Besides, what has contributed so largely to the prosperity of these Western States but the railways built for the most part with capital got from English investors, on which for many years no dividends were paid, and on which they may any day cease again to be paid? The Land Departments of India and the colonies will not undertake to pay a high interest on their bonds, but what they would undertake to pay there would be no question as to their being able to carry out without the default of a single half-year's interest.

But the greatest evil resulting from the Government of the United States not having a Land Department has yet to be mentioned. The consequences may not come for years, but they will come, unless steps be taken beforehand to prevent them. This evil consists in not having made provision for the labouring and artisan classes to get upon the land to cultivate it, as they would do under a system of co-operation. But this system could not be established without the agency of a Land Department in a country in which does not exist a class of intelligent, highly-educated landowners on a large scale, endowed with business qualities to enable them to perform the functions of a well-constituted Land Department. Unfortunately for the future of the United States, not even the germ of such a substitute for a Land Department has any existence. In fact, so

deficient are the materials in these States for the formation of a landed gentry capable of performing such functions, that it would be an easier task for their people to set on foot a Land Department at once. The evils of not having a Land Department, or such a substitute for one as above suggested, must increase in intensity as the population of the States increases in numbers. The aggregation of the population into the cities of the Western States, which, strangely enough, the people of the Union now contemplate with pride, instead of spreading over the country, as they would have done by means of co-operative farms and small towns under a Land Department, is a sign of future troubles that cannot be mistaken by any one possessed of the least foresight. The wealthy classes of these cities may stave off for a time the evils thus predicted, by winking at the setting-up of Tammany Halls, through which the rowdy class may levy a black-mail on their wealth. But even palliatives like these will not put off for ever the inevitable crisis. Meanwhile the already huge cities of the United States go on increasing in size, and with this increase a vast increase of the proletariat class in them, unable to get upon the land as masters of their own labour, or as possessors of an amount of capital larger than they are ever likely to get. Thus will come to pass, in comparatively new countries as in old, the well-worn tale of the land going out of cultivation for the want of the labour lying idle in the cities being put into it, while a part of the inhabitants of these cities are starving from the absence of the fruits of labour so applied.

In respect to a Land Department in a colony, the next point to be considered is, whether an undertaking so vast is not more than human beings could accomplish. In the first place, a Land Department would form only one branch of the proper duties of a Government. As men are found to conduct the affairs of a whole Government, it is to be presumed that others can be found able to perform the duties of a part of one.

There are other reasons why the duties of a Land Department, apparently so formidable, would prove in practice not to be beyond the power of human agency. The great helper-on, however, of the work of the Department, would be the system of co-operative farms. Indeed, were it not for these farms it is possible the undertaking would be impracticable.

The essence of a Land Department is that it should have all the land of the colony; for without such possession it would be powerless for the action required of it. If, then, it has all the land, it is obvious that neither a system of small peasant landowners nor of large landowners can exist under it. There must be a tenant form of occupancy of some sort held under the Department. But experience has proved that no form of tenant-farming as yet tried is likely to last for any time in a country having universal suffrage, as is the case with well-nigh all the English colonies. If, then, tenant-occupancy is to succeed in them, it can only be in the form of co-operative farms on the plan here given. Why co-operative farms, though under a tenant-occupancy, would succeed, abundant reasons have been already given, the most important of which are that the land by means of them would be worked in the most profitable manner for both the cultivators and the country at large, and that they would form by far the readiest means by which the labouring cultivators could partake in the profits of their labour upon the land. Now, these two qualities in the co-operative farms would alone be enough to commend them strongly to the mass of voters in a colony. As to the members of these farms being tenants, with the fixity of tenure the Land Department would give them for the better securing to them the fruits of their labour, these would hardly be treated as tenants. If they should ever have to suffer from any dictation, it would not be from the Land Department, but from those of their own members whom they had set over themselves. Each co-operative farm would be internally ruled rather by the

despotism of a republic than the gentle authority of a limited monarchy. Under such a despotic rule as this implies, the farms, however numerous they may be, would give little trouble to the Land Department, which in regard to receiving the annual rents and yearly reports from each would deal with its ruling managers and not with each of its members. With all this trouble taken off its hands, there would be comparatively little more work for the Department to have under its care a million farms than a thousand.

Another great advantage attending co-operative farms would be in their leaving little scope for the officers of the Land Department to become dishonest in all money matters relating to these farms. It would be easy for the heads of the Department to know the annual gross rental of all the farms in the colony. As the rents would vary but little, if at all, and would be no more than moderate in amount, and as the variation, whenever it should occur, would be shown in the annual statement of accounts sent in to the Department by each farm, there could be no embezzlement to any extent that would not be found out. If any misappropriation should take place in respect to co-operative farms, it would not be in receiving the rents after they had once been prepared and set going, but in laying out the money for their preparation.

We are now brought to the subject of the public works that would be carried on by the Land Department in order to bring the land of a colony into a condition fit for the carrying on therein of the co-operative farms. As the subject of public works in new countries may be treated of at much greater length in another work, it is intended here to do no more than make a passing allusion thereto. That the scheme here laid before the reader, of settling the land question in colonies as well as in the mother-country will meet with some stronger handling than fair criticism, is more than probable. Should, however, it meet with such treatment, there is no difficulty in

guessing from what quarter it would come. It would come from those who believe their interests would be endangered by a Land Department, prominent among whom would possibly be colonial capitalists imbued with a spirit of speculation too great to be satisfied with the sweet simplicity of the 4 per cent. bonds of the Department. Fortunately, the men of this class would be very few in comparison with the many to be benefited by the action of a Land Department. Possibly, against every ill word the Department would be able to score a thousand blessings.

If a weak point should ever arise in the working of a Land Department, it would be in this very subject of public works ; and the reason of this would be in the large outlays of capital that would have to be made, and,—as the critics of the scheme will probably say,—in the openings for the misapplication of this capital such outlays would create. Granted, that experience has, alas ! proved that in very many undertakings, joint-stock as well as departmental, requiring engineering skill and conducted with the money of the public, the frailty of human nature has caused a great waste in this respect. But does it follow that such misappropriations are always to take place ? If they are, what becomes of the boasting by some about each generation of the human race reaching to a still higher degree of civilisation, which ought to mean a higher stage of morality ; and of the evolution theory, the new religion of others, which in denying the existence of a God implies the perfectibility of man ? Is the half of the land on this globe to remain for ever as it is now, the abode of savages and wild beasts, when through the operations of the public works of a Land Department it might be covered with co-operative farms, well-laid-out towns, railways, etc., because a few thousand educated men cannot be obtained of sufficient honesty to be satisfied with the pay, presumably liberal, they would receive from such a Department ? The imputation all

this implies must be rejected with scorn. Though no believers in the doctrine of evolution, we have too much faith in the future of the English race to think for a moment that well-educated men of scientific attainments, yet of the strictest probity, would not be found if sought for in the right direction.

On the assumption, then, that the educated officials of the Land Department, who would have the handling of the money, the direction of its outlay, and the keeping the accounts of such outlay would be all men of probity, there is nothing in a large undertaking like that of such a Department to make any one think it would not be economically managed in every respect. On the contrary, there can hardly be a doubt that it would be the immensity of the scale on which it would be conducted, that would more than anything else contribute to its unparalleled success. Possibly at first blunders would be committed entailing unnecessary outlays, but every year, as the engineers would gain more experience, they would avoid them in future, and the future of a Land Department in a large colony, even in respect to its public works, would last perhaps for centuries. The very sameness of the operations carried on by the public works branch of a Land Department would lead to their being executed at as low a cost as possible. After all, the foundations of a thousand towns would each vary but little from those of the first laid out by these works. The same may be said of the railways, tramways, and the buildings on the co-operative farms, etc. This uniformity in the objects on which the Department's money would be laid out would create an uniformity in its expenditure, and so render its misappropriation less easy of accomplishment.

The subject of England's colonies cannot well be dismissed without some allusion being made to the effect a Land Department with its co-operative farms would have upon the native races in these colonies. As to her colonies in America

and the islands of Australasia, so few are the natives left in them that they may be said to be virtually exterminated already ; and even of the few thousand Maoris of New Zealand still living, disease, it is said, is yearly carrying off great numbers. But with her colonies in South Africa the case is different. Here the native races are numerous and still in their vigour. Is England to go on spending millions of her taxpayers' money and thousands of British lives to assist colonies of land-speculators to exterminate the different native races inhabiting South Africa? Yet she must continue to do this, or adopt the only other alternative, of taking the rule of this immense region out of the hands of the land-speculating colonists now holding it, and hand it over to the rule of a Government having a Land Department one of whose duties would be to look after the interests of the native races therein.

In these native tribes there is the material for building-up as extensive, as populous, and as thriving a dependency of England in Africa as in Asia, and this through the same agency of a Land Department, aided by its two great auxiliaries, the capital of English investors and co-operative farming. This process would, no doubt, be much slower in the former dependency than in the latter. But this drawback would have to be got over by the exercise of a greater amount of patience ; and would not this patience be well repaid by such a result as the civilisation, and most likely conversion to Christianity, of the hundreds of millions of natives, that would, before many centuries had elapsed, be living in plenty and happiness in that huge continent, under the régime of a Land Department of State? For causing these native savages to settle down gradually to till the land with profit to themselves, and to spend the proceeds in a manner having some approach to civilisation, it is hardly possible to make use of a system more suitable than that of co-operation, by which the most would be made of their labour and their little capital to their own advantage.

Under no other system could that great difficulty in dealing with savage tribes be overcome—the getting them accustomed to the restraints of civilisation, and at the same time to thrive and multiply. In fact, by the aid of the co-operative farms and the many other helps a Land Department would put in their way, they would become civilised without being aware of the process.

The system would have to be altered at first so as to be more conformable to the habits of these untutored wild men. There is no reason to fear any difficulty on this point. Their habit of implicit obedience to the will of a chief might be made use of at first in carrying on the work of each co-operative farm. That the natives of Africa, even in their wild state, are capable of co-operating together under a resolute chief, the disaster to their army at Isandlana must have already taught Englishmen. Why should not this quality in them of co-operating together for a sought-for end be directed to farming instead of war, and thus be made use of by Englishmen for the profit of both? In the course of years, as the natives become better acquainted with the system of co-operation, the strict authority of the chief would become relaxed by degrees for the greater equality among all the members characteristic of such system. The principle of the system as to the payment in advance of weekly wages, and subsequent division of surplus profits at the end of the year, would also be gradually introduced. At first the Department would have to be very easy with the coloured co-operating farmers in the way of rents, for the payment of which it would look to their chief. As their prosperity increased, so would the demand of the Department for a higher rent become more urgent, until the moderate rent fixed on for a permanency will have been reached.

To enable the native co-operating farmers to pay their rent, the Department would have to bring their farms nearer to the markets in the parts of the colonies inhabited by the English

by means of railroads, and by the same means to the sea-ports, that some of their produce might be shipped to foreign markets. These railroads should be of the most inexpensive kind compatible with utility and durability, and as far as possible constructed by the labour of the natives, with Englishmen as superintendents and engineers. No attempt should be made at first at erecting on the co-operative farms farm-buildings and dwelling-houses of brick or stone. Huts of wood for themselves, and sheds of wood for their cattle, and storehouses of wood for their granaries would be enough, for at all events a generation or two. As the natives become possessed of more money to spend, and better acquainted with more civilising ways of spending it, they would of their own accord apply to the Department to help them in procuring a better class of habitations for themselves and buildings for carrying on their farming operations.

Just as in the parts inhabited by the English, there would spring up at the stations of its railways in the provinces of the coloured population the small towns of the Department, in which most of the tradesmen would probably be natives, and perhaps in time some of them would be professionals, with a diploma gained at an English university in the colony. It goes without saying that the Department would establish schools in these towns, to which the coloured children brought up in the co-operative farms would go, and through these schools the scores, perhaps hundreds, of millions of Africa would ultimately become an English-speaking people. In these schools besides the "three R's" could be taught the first rudiments of agriculture, and to hasten still more the progress of knowledge in this business among the coloured farmers, it would be advisable to send every year some of the sharpest of their lads, on leaving school, to be apprenticed for a few years at some of the English co-operative farms in the colony. There are other ways by which the raising up of the native

coloured farmers to a tolerable standard of civilisation could be effected, which would readily suggest themselves to a well-constituted Land Department. It could, for instance, give every year a prize in money, equal to half-a-year's rent of a co-operative farm, to the one in a wide district that would yield the most and best produce in the year. Why should not the natives of Africa exert themselves to excel one another in this way, as in a war dance, and in throwing the spear?

What has been said when treating of India as to the advantages of a Land Department, both on account of its affording a field of safe investment for English capitalists for hundreds of millions of their money, and of preventing these millions being lost by lending them to foreign countries not having a Land Department to see to their being laid out in a most profitable manner, is equally applicable to new countries colonised by English. In all countries, new no less than old, unless their capital, whether borrowed or not, is spread over them for the development of their land resources by means of a Land Department, or its substitute that is next to engage our attention, it either stagnates in large cities to be spent in luxuries, or vice, or in war, either of aggrandisement or defence. If the country enters on a war of aggrandisement, it is because a war of aggression forms the readiest means of warding off the effects of discontent caused by the proletariat of large towns being unable to settle upon the land so as to profit by their own toil; and if upon a war of defence, it is to resist the act of aggression of a neighbouring country, whose rulers are driven to commit such an act for the reason just given. Either way there is a war, and this war takes place because there is no Land Department, or its substitute, in any of these countries to prevent the cause of it springing into existence. In this way can be sufficiently accounted for the wars that have been constantly taking place between the what are called autonomous republics of South America, and in the carrying on

of which have been squandered the hundreds of millions lent by the investing public of England. No other result could follow the setting-up of autonomous States in the east of Europe, unless each of these States establishes a Land Department, for spreading the money borrowed from English investors over the country in a profitable manner by means of co-operative farms. But will these States do this, and, if they are willing, will they be allowed by a neighbour, the necessity of whose existence it deems to be its unceasing aggression on the territory of its helpless neighbours? If they will not or cannot establish such a Department, or its substitute, for the above purposes, then the millions of capital to be lent them by their sympathisers in England will most assuredly be as much thrown away as were the scores of millions lent by the English who had the misfortune to sympathise with the establishment of the republics in South America.

CHAPTER X.

THE LANDOWNERS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM.

A Land Department not needed in the United Kingdom—Qualities of Landowners as Substitutes—Raising of Capital by Landowners—Necessity for Co-operation among Landowners—Advantages to Landowners through Co-operation—Much of the work already done for them—Benefit and Insurance Societies—Land Boards or Committees—Work of Land Committees—House of Lords as Head Land Committee.

THOUGH a Land Department, as has been pointed out, would not fail to be of incalculable benefit to all engaged in the cultivation of the land in India and in the colonies, and through these to the community at large in these dependencies, yet it does not by any means follow that it would be a wise measure to establish one in the United Kingdom. One reason why a Land Department is so peculiarly well adapted for these dependencies is that in them the land is still, to a great extent, in the possession of their Governments, of which a Land Department would be only a branch. It is unhappily true that these Governments have parted with a great deal of the interest in the land they once possessed; but, luckily, several of them have the larger part still, and as they, in some cases, gave away without any compensation, and in others sold for a mere trifle, most of the rest, they would not be altogether unjustified in getting it back again at a moderate valuation, especially as most of the land has passed away from their hands at a comparatively recent period. But in the United Kingdom the Crown parted with its interest in the land, in most cases, centuries ago. All that the Crown now has are the comparatively few acres reserved for the maintenance of its proper dignity and functions. In these circumstances, for the State

to buy back the land would be preposterous, and to take it without paying for it iniquitous.

Fortunately for the financial condition and honour of the country, there is no need to take either of these courses, since there are already the elements of a machinery at hand capable of taking the place of the most efficient of Land Departments. These, it need hardly be said, are the present owners of the land.

Two great requisites for a Land Department in either India or the colonies, would be a staff of officials of sufficient ability to conduct its operations with benefit to the cultivators of the soil, and through these to the country at large, and a sufficiency of capital to allow of all this being done. It will now be shown that in both these requisites for successfully carrying on the undertaking here set them, the owners of land in the United Kingdom would possess considerable advantages over a Land Department.

First of all, in regard to the landowners themselves, who are to constitute the staff of management of all the land in the country, it is not going too far to say that in education, culture, liberal-mindedness, patriotism, and in general ability they would form a body of men having no superior, if an equal, in the country. It is from the class of landowners from which this body of managers would be selected for their capacity for fulfilling the duties here proposed to be entrusted to them that the whole country has been mainly governed for centuries, and it is therefore owing to this class that two comparatively insignificant islands in the Atlantic Ocean have become the largest and most populous empire this world has ever contained. In short, the history which records the progress of the United Kingdom to the unprecedented prosperity and high standing among nations to which it has arrived is the biography of its talented statesmen and brave soldiers, of whom the greater part by far were of the landowning class. If

the sons of the eminent statesmen and soldiers who have done so much to elevate their country to its present marvellous pitch of greatness are not able to manage the landed property inherited from these men in such a way as to be of benefit to their country as well as to themselves, all that can be said is there must have been a sad degeneracy among them in ability, energy, and patriotism. None, however, but a revolutionist determined to see no good in any existing institution could for a moment think that so great a degeneracy has taken place. It may with much greater truth be said that nothing but an opportunity prevents the present generation of landowners from performing for their country services equally as great as those performed by their ancestors. It has been this want of an opportunity that has had so much to do with the great amount of turf and club gambling that has been the cause of the financial embarrassments which have suddenly put an ignoble end to the once promising career of many a young landowner. Perhaps, not the least good to be obtained from having the land managed by its owners in the way here suggested, would be the openings such management would give for leading an honourable career of usefulness and good influence to the owners of land in expectation as well as in possession. In this new field of action, as will be shown further on, the owners of land of the present generation would have opportunities of being of service to their country as great as ever had the owners of land of any former one.

As to the capital required for carrying out the plan, the landowners of Great Britain at all events, if not of Ireland, would be more favourably placed than would be a Land Department. All the capital a Land Department in either India or the colonies would have would be the land, while all the capital required for starting its co-operative farms and providing means of communication from these farms to markets would have to be borrowed. This would not be so much the case with

the landowners of the United Kingdom. These would not only have the land, but very many of them would have other sources of income than the rents they are, or rather ought to be, getting from farms. Possibly, it would be no exaggeration to place the number of landowners in this category at nearly two-thirds, since land has been purchased more as an investment for surplus capital than as a medium of profit, the price usually given for it being much too high for the yearly income derived from it to allow of such profit. Even in those cases in which land has been inherited in the same family for many generations the same rule holds, but from a different cause. Some of the land held by these old families has been built over, and so produces a much larger income, and one, too, from a different source from that derived by them from their farm lands. The sums, then, necessary for the purposes for which a Land Department of State would have to borrow could be lent by the landowners themselves, and if they were not able or disposed to furnish all the capital required to be borrowed, they could appeal to the investing classes for loans to supply the remainder on very favourable terms, as they would have not only their land to offer as a security, but the capital they had been laying out on it at a remunerative rate of interest to improve its value. If the municipalities of the large towns are able to borrow millions at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., the landowners as a body, with the much sounder security they would have it in their power to offer, ought to be able to borrow at an equally low rate.

Of little avail, however, would be the ability, the education, the probity, the business aptitude, and the capital of the landowners of the United Kingdom, unless in addition to all these desirable qualities they prove themselves capable of co-operating together to perform the functions of a Land Department of State, to set up co-operative farms, and in managing afterwards the business relationship that would exist between themselves and the co-operators, and in providing sufficient means of

communication between the co-operative farms and the markets for the sale of their produce. In fact, the only hitch likely to arise in the whole plan of setting up co-operative farms in the United Kingdom, without the aid of a Land Department, is as to whether the landowners thereof can ever be brought¹ to set aside their differences in politics and other matters unconnected with the land sufficiently to enable them to co-operate together for the above-mentioned purposes.

A few observations will now be made with a view to impress on the landowners the necessity of their thus co-operating together, which it is hoped they will take in no unkindly spirit, since it is really as much on their account as on that of all the others connected with the tillage of the soil that they will be made. The risk of giving offence in stating the truth so boldly would not have been incurred, had there not been good grounds for suspecting that the landowners of the United Kingdom have never yet had placed before them how important it is to their own interests as well as to that of their country that they should make a serious effort to sink their political differences, without which no co-operation among them worth anything can be effected. They have, by their what cannot but be called insane dissensions, been making of themselves ladders for political ambition to use in mounting up to the pinnacle of fame. If these political divisions among landowners are not soon healed, so as to allow of their co-operating together in the manner and for the purposes already and to be pointed out, there can follow but one result, and this is, that they will have the mortification of experiencing the fate that ladders are credited with meeting with when they have answered the purposes for which they have been used.

Of these observations, the first is, that if well-nurtured, well-educated landowners cannot be got to co-operate together for an object only to be attained by such co-operation, how can it be expected that labourers and operatives who have received

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none of these advantages of training should be able to do so? The second is, that landowners have really no option left them other than co-operation or extinction. If they will not set aside their political differences so as to allow of their co-operation, their refusal to do so must sooner or later result in their land being taken from them by the nation, whatever may be the use made of it afterwards. Even if the State were to give for it what is supposed by them to be the present full value of the land, they would be great losers by being deprived of it, as will be sufficiently pointed out in the course of the following chapters. But the State is hardly likely to do that. The landowners of England and Scotland must by this time be aware, from the events now taking place in Ireland, that there is a way of lowering the value of their land to a very considerable extent. Why may not this somewhat circuitous mode of confiscation run a like course in England and Scotland? A year ago it would have been thought incredible that such a thing could have taken place in Ireland. Yet it is taking place. The enemies to landowners are probably not less numerous in one country than in the other; and through the weakness caused by their political dissensions, those in Great Britain would in an emergency probably not be better able to resist the effects of this enmity than their brethren in Ireland. It is true that in the former there does not exist that revolutionary element—small farms. But there is an element of the kind in the large manufacturing cities of the North, if not in London as well, that might prove equally as dangerous, not only to the landed property of landowners, but to their other kinds of property as well.

No attempt is here made to conceal the fact that some of the privileges landowners have been said to enjoy hitherto will, under the plan here submitted, be taken from them. But the question with them is, whether they had not better submit to

the loss of a part at once than lose the whole a little later on. They cannot be blind to the fact that of late years there has been cropping up a strong antagonistic feeling to landowners as a class. Even the movement for the Repeal of the Corn-laws was largely influenced by this feeling. Vast numbers supported it in order to lessen the wealth, and so the power and influence, of a class become distasteful to them, for reasons not creditable to the heart or mind of thinking beings. This discreditable jealousy has been going on ever since, till it has reached the present crisis, which threatens the existence of the whole class of landowners; for it cannot be questioned for a moment that this is what is aimed at under the specious pretext of establishing the system of a peasant proprietary. Whether the landowners are to be paid for their land, or whether it is to be taken from them without payment, they would be extinguished either way in the process as a class, with all their traditionary power and influence in the country.

On the other hand, by co-operating together to carry out the plan, instead of the landowners being extinguished as a class, their sphere of influence and usefulness in the country, as it will be the work of the following chapters to point out, would be largely augmented. Indeed, there is a work before them to accomplish in the adjustment of the relations between capital and labour on a satisfactory and therefore enduring footing that probably could be done only through their instrumentality—a work that, when done, will rank among the greatest ever achieved for the benefit of the human race. It is more than likely that in the working out of the plan the small stars will become dimmed, but the galaxy of the larger ones will shine out all the more brilliantly, for they will acquire the power and influence of these smaller ones in addition to their own. The millions of acres that are now managed by professionals of all kinds for minors, lunatics, gamblers, spend-thrifts, idiots, and so forth, would be managed by the

machinery here proposed as a substitute for a Land Department, and this would consist of a selection of the most capable of the landowners.

In case that the landowners of the United Kingdom should be appalled at the amount of work here set before them, it would be as well to state for their consolation that their work would not be anything like so heavy as would be that of a Land Department in either India or one of the colonies, since many of the benefits this Department would confer on its country have been already brought about in the United Kingdom through other agencies. For instance, its railways have been constructed by joint-stock enterprise, and, though they are not nearly so numerous as they ought to be, yet their deficiency has not been so much felt from the circumstance that the United Kingdom is composed of two rather narrow islands, the innermost land of neither of which is very far from the sea, as is the case in India and in the colonies. Had but a very much less sum than the £800,000,000 said to have been laid out in constructing these railways by joint-stock enterprise been laid out instead by a properly constituted Land Department, there would probably have been by this time scarcely a town or village in the United Kingdom not connected with the general system. Furthermore, had co-operative farms been established over the country, every one of these would probably also have been connected with the general system. However, the £800,000,000 have been spent through joint-stock agency, and all Englishmen have now to do in the matter is to profit by the sad experience thus gained.

Thus the existence of railways already in the United Kingdom proves the less need there is of a Land Department of State therein, one of whose functions would have been to make them.

Another reason why there is no need for a Land Department

of State in the United Kingdom to do the work which might well be done by its landowners, is that England and Scotland have both laid themselves out for developing trade and their mineral wealth rather than their agricultural. Possibly, this tendency has been brought about through an absence of a Land Department, which would have kept the latter more on an equality with the former. It would hardly be wise for every country to expect, and to place itself in a position, to manufacture for the whole world, nor to empty itself, so to speak, in order to supply the whole world with such unmanufactured materials as coal, iron, and salt.

It will have been seen from what has been said of the Land Department of India, that through its co-operative farms the principal development of the country would be in its agricultural wealth. This would be the case, though, perhaps, to a less extent, with a properly constituted Land Department in the colonies. Of course, the mineral wealth of these countries would be developed at the same time as their agricultural, though to a much less extent; for, unless it should be so developed, where would the millions of tons of coal and iron consumed every year through the existence and working of the co-operative farms come from? Even the coal and iron consumed in most of the thousands of towns in each country at the junctions of the railways and tramways would really be owing to the co-operative farms, and therefore to the Land Department; for without them these towns could not have come into existence. As for trade in countries having a Land Department, surely, with all these co-operative farms, with all these many towns originated through these farms, and with the many mines of coal, iron, salt, etc., constantly at work to supply both farms and towns, there needs not be the least fear of a slackness in trade ever taking place in such countries.

The colonies are all dutifully following in the footsteps made by their mother-country, and exactly from the same

cause, the absence of a Land Department, which would have turned their energies to a more enduring source of wealth, the better cultivation of the soil. These colonies want to supply with manufactured goods all their own people, at any rate, if not all the world as well; just as the people of the United States are now frantically attempting to do, and they are all just as eager to develop their mineral wealth, all from the same cause. This action of the new countries colonised by the English race must some day or other recoil on themselves, unless there be other countries having a Land Department to counteract it. If this policy is pursued for any continuance, the time will come when the people of all these countries will find themselves in the predicament of England, of having to depend for the greater part of their sustenance on the food grown in other countries; and if all the countries were to do the same, where would the food come from to supply the people of the mother-country and her no less improvident daughters? Not as the wasteful farmers of these colonies have ever been and are still doing, would the co-operative farmers in a country having a Land Department attempt to get out of their soil without returning an equivalent of the fertilising properties Nature has for centuries been putting into it. In a country having a Land Department and such farms there would be no exhaustion of any of its soil, and therefore no need for its cultivators to forsake it for fresh virgin land, so that Nature may begin again upon the land thus left her beneficent work of restoration lasting through centuries.

As, then, most of its railways have been constructed, and as the foundations for its towns and cities may be said to be laid, after a fashion, even if a Land Department of State were established in the United Kingdom, there would not be much for it to do beyond starting co-operative farms on the plan here suggested and providing everything needful connected with them, such as dwelling-houses, farm-buildings, the tramways connect-

ing them with the railways, &c. Now, all these the landowners ought to be able to do as well as a Land Department of State. Their task would be greatly facilitated in the management of their co-operative farms by the working of the system, which practically would be self-acting. As the members of a co-operative farm are not to be interfered with in carrying on their operations, provided they punctually pay their rent and send in to the landlord a copy of the annual statement of the financial position of the co-operation, made out for the guidance of each of the shareholders, the landowners would have scarcely any trouble; and, as all the farms would practically be of the same size, subject to the same conditions, and worked on the same model, with the same amount of capital and the same number of members, the management of all would not differ from that of one. Whatever trouble the co-operative farmers would entail on the landowners as a body would not lie so much in the farms themselves as in things exterior to them necessary to their more profitable and satisfactory working.

One of the most important of the matters necessary to the proper working of the system of co-operative farms to be undertaken by the landowners of the United Kingdom is the establishment of a Society for insuring the co-operators against losses in the event of an accident or illness, or such-like, and one in which the co-operators could also insure their lives. In India and the colonies the Land Department would take upon itself this necessary supplement to the system of co-operation. It would be to the interest of a Land Department that every member of a co-operative farm should make a provision against one or other of these contingencies, for the principle guiding its action would always be to distribute the greatest amount of prosperity among the greatest number of those connected with agriculture without doing an injustice to any. It would also be to the interest of the assured that this provision against adverse con-

tingencies should be made through the Land Department, for this department would be in a position to offer them far more liberal terms than they could get from any other quarter. In fact, the co-operators would have no option in the matter, as all of them would have to belong to the Benefit and Insurance Society of the Land Department. What the effect such compulsion would have on the amount of benefit the Department would be thereby put in a position to grant to the insured may be judged by taking, for example, the Land Department of India. It will be remembered that this Department is to have ultimately under its jurisdiction 600,000 co-operative farms, to each of which are to be 45 members, reckoning the supernumeraries, and therefore in all no fewer than 27,000,000 members to its Society.

There is no reason why the landowners of the United Kingdom should not start among themselves, for the benefit of their co-operating tenants, a Benefit and Insurance Society as well as a Land Department of State. It could not be that they would not be qualified for the management of such an undertaking, for many of them are already most efficient directors of Insurance Societies. Of so much use to the satisfactory working of the scheme of co-operative farms would be a well-organised Society insuring the members against the losses arising from accident, severe illness, and premature death, that it could hardly be dispensed with. The great advantage to be derived from such a Society would lie in its rendering more equal the chances in life of all the members made unequal through misfortune. The member compelled to retire from the co-operation through a severe accident or illness rendering him incapable of further work would, to some extent, be recouped for his loss in this way, by being benefited through the Society. On the other hand, the member lucky enough not to require the aid of the Society is compensated for the payment of his premiums by meeting with no hindrance through misfortune to

his reaching the membership of the first class of shareholders and, eventually, the management of the farm. For the sake of the members of the lower classes of shareholders in their early struggles, it would be preferable to keep the premiums of the Society as low as possible, to making large profits, to be distributed at the end of a certain number of years by way of bonus, as is the custom with some Insurance Societies.

However, on this and other points connected with the duties it is recommended that the landowners of the United Kingdom should take in hand, to insure the success of the co-operative system of farming, and which it would be impossible for the co-operators to do of themselves, if at all, anything like so effectually, more will be said in the course of the following chapters, when referring to these duties in their effects upon the co-operators themselves.

The next point for consideration is the constitution of the machinery which is to enable the landowners of the United Kingdom to perform the functions of an assumed Land Department of either India or the colonies. For the landowners to attain as nearly as possible to the efficiency of a Land Department they should co-operate together by means of Boards or Committees chosen from among themselves, several of the small owners being represented by a member or delegate on the Committee. By means of these Land Boards or Committees of Management would the money be raised for putting the co-operative farms into an efficient working condition, such as for erecting the farm-buildings, wherever necessary, suitable for such farms, and the cottages in which would live the members of the co-operation. Through these Committees, too, would the money be raised for laying down the tramways connecting the co-operative farms with the nearest railway station. These Committees or Boards of Management should not be satisfied with providing facilities for the produce of each farm reaching the large towns with expedition and at a small

cost. They would usefully extend their operations, if, in conjunction with the managers of each farm, they would provide facilities for their produce actually reaching the consumers through no intermediary agency with as little delay and cost as possible, so that these consumers and the co-operative farmers may be able to share between them the large profits now appropriated by the present go-between salesmen of markets.

With respect to the Boards or Committees of Management, it is proposed that there should be one for every county, for the management of everything connected with the land of that county. How many landowners should serve on each Land Committee, and what should be the qualification for a member to serve, would be matters of after-consideration. Of this, however, there can be no doubt, that none but those possessed of sufficient business qualifications should be on these County Land Boards, however great may be their landed estate in the county. The injunction of such a rule is not likely to create a difficulty. Fortunately, some of the largest landowners are the most gifted among the class, and have a well-deserved reputation for business habits throughout the country; and the working of the scheme is more likely to foster such habits among the landowners of the future than to weaken them. One of the most melancholy circumstances in connection with the present system of land-ownership is that, whilst some of the most able of landowners are pining to find an honourable vent for their abilities, and for making use of their business qualities, estates are going to rack and ruin for the want of such gifts on the part of their owners.

The manner of appointing landowners to the Land Board of Management of each county would probably be best by election. As the State is not to interfere, the method of this election would have to be settled among the landowners themselves. Owners of less than 500 acres should, for example, be represented by a delegate, while the other members would be

holders of land to a larger extent. Under the Board of Management, as here proposed, well-nigh all the objections made against the present form of ownership of land, especially that respecting the ownership of land on a large scale, would be removed, as will be shown more at length further on. With a County Land Board, provided it is not carried to too great an extent, the fewer hands the land of a county would get into, the nearer would this Board approach to the efficiency of a Land Department of State; for the fewer the landowners the less difficulty would there be in their co-operating together for carrying out that great work of bringing labour on to the land to cultivate it through co-operation among the givers of that labour for their own profit alone, and not through the agency of employers.

Besides the Land Boards or Committees, whichever they may be called, to manage the land of each county, there should be a Land Committee over these for each of the three kingdoms, to act as a Board of Reference or Arbitration, but mainly as a connecting bond in the co-operation of all the County Land Committees, for some things to be mentioned by-and-by would have to be done requiring the united action of all the Committees in each kingdom; if not in all three kingdoms.

As pretty well nine-tenths of the members of the House of Lords are landowners to a greater or less extent, it would form altogether the best nucleus for a supreme Land Committee for the whole of the United Kingdom. For this House to take upon itself, in addition to its ordinary legislative duties, the functions of a Land Committee would cause it to be more highly valued by the country at large—and this, too, in an era of universal suffrage—than even the House of Commons. Though in the usual sense it would not be a House of Representatives, yet in another it would, since it would represent a vast deal more than the ownership of the land of the

country. It would also represent the interests of co-operation to be carried on by the labouring classes connected with that land. Nay, more than this. It would be also the representative of co-operation as carried on on the same principles by the operatives of manufacturing towns, as will be shown in the chapter on that subject.

The House of Lords would thus represent the interests of labour to a much greater extent than it has ever yet been its lot to be represented in any House of Assembly in any country. Even in the House of Representatives of Republics labour is either represented by employers of labour, whose interests are necessarily antagonistic to those of the givers of labour, or by a few men sprung from the labouring classes, whose views are so radically subversive of the prevailing institutions of their country as to prevent their having any weight in its legislation. But when through the carrying out of the principles of co-operation labour is represented by the wealth and culture of the country through the House of Lords, its interests would be protected in such a way that it could reap the fruits of its toil without the least fear of ever being deprived of them. Labour thus protected, especially that connected with the tillage of the soil, would then rise to the dignity it ought to assume in every country, if that country is to be prosperous for a continuance. On what firmer ground could a House of Representatives rest than on that of the labour of a country, as would the House of Lords, were its members to carry out the principles of co-operation here laid down for co-operative farms?

CHAPTER XI.

UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE AND THE LAND QUESTION.

Near Approach of Universal Suffrage—Effects of such Extension on the Land Question—Workmen and Labourers future Masters of Country—How to meet this new state of things—Wage-earning Class a Capitalless Class—Need to make it a Class possessed of Capital—Kind of Settlement of Land Question Wanted—The Majority to have a Voice in Settlement—Three Forms of Settlement for Choice—Fixity of Tenure a Necessity for all three—Owner and Tiller in one Person Impracticable—Money-lender not Tiller Owner of Land.

EVERY person who has been attending at all to political subjects so as to watch their tendency during the last twenty years must have observed the advance that has been taking place towards a condition of things in this country putting into the hands of the masses the control of its affairs. In the latter part of those twenty years the advance has been much more rapid than in the former. This has been attributed by many to the setting-up of late years of a Republic in France, so that the United Kingdom now adjoins as it were two republics, with both of which it is in constant communication, and to both of which have its institutions a tendency every year to become more assimilated.

Whatever may be the cause of this advance of an era of universal suffrage, there can be no doubt of its near approach. Any doubt that may have existed on this point, the result of the late elections was sufficient to dispel. In short, we are now feeling the effects of the extension of the franchise to lodgers in towns and of the Ballot Act, which have in practice extended the suffrage to such a degree as to make it all but universal in towns, and when it has been extended to farm labourers, a measure agitated for by many Liberals other than delegates

from Labourers' Unions, and to women, also advocated by a large section of the Liberal party, some of whom are in the present Cabinet, it may be looked upon as universal in this country. When these events have taken place, the votes of the wage-paid labouring population in both towns and rural districts will unmistakably predominate over those of all the other classes combined.

When the Act was passed which practically extended the franchise to the working classes in towns, and is likely to lead to its further extension to rural districts, it was said that the then leader of the Conservatives had educated his party to take a leap in the dark. Whatever that figurative expression may mean, there is now no doubt that by the Act in question a dark shade was cast over the value of the landed property of this country, the full effects of which have yet to be experienced. What an extended suffrage has done to jeopardise their property, the landowners of Ireland must by this time be pretty well aware. Had it not been for this extended franchise, there would not have been returned to Parliament seditious delegates openly countenancing by their speeches at public meetings the refusal of tenant-farmers to pay rents, and the intimidation of those who had shown themselves guilty in their eyes of so unpardonable a crime. Through the same influences the landowners of England and Scotland are threatened with the loss of the absolute control over the possession of the land they have hitherto been enjoying. The new doctrines respecting land tenures advocated by the members of the Farmers' Alliance are intended to have this effect, and the influence of this Society among tenant-farmers seems to be spreading far and wide, so that even those upon whom the landowners have hitherto been relying to help them in keeping up the present system have turned against them—a foretaste of which they experienced at the late general election.

As then the time for the approach of universal suffrage can

hardly be much longer delayed, the only wise course to be pursued is to take steps to have the land brought into a state of cultivation, most in accordance with that condition of things. The first step in this direction must be to make the land more productive, in order that a new source of wealth may be created for distribution among the newly enfranchised classes. It may be relied upon that in no very long time after they have felt the influence their numbers will exercise in the direction of parliamentary tactics, these newly made voters will insist on some measure being passed that will improve their material condition. Their own natural instincts will force them to use their new power for their own advantage, however ignorant or devoid of experience they may be. If nothing is done to direct these instincts into a right channel, they will unhappily be directed into a wrong one by men more ambitious than scrupulous, using their dupes as vehicles for their own advancement in a political career.

The educated classes, who have been advocating the various steps leading to universal suffrage have, or ought to have, foreseen that the working classes of towns and labourers of farms would try to better their condition, in proportion as they had the political power to do it, and this power they will soon get, if they have not got it already. In the exercise of this power an attack has already been made on the interests of landowners, and this will most probably be succeeded by attacks on other interests, until they have been destroyed too. Why the first attacks by the masses exercising the suffrage have been on the interests of landowners, has been, perhaps, because the land is a more tangible object to grasp, or because it produces what uncultured people most need, or it may be because landowners stand most in the way of their leaders, anxious to usurp the place these landowners are now holding. From whatever cause they may proceed the attacks are being made, and the more the franchise is extended, the more are

they likely to increase, until either the objects have been gained for which the agitation has been set on foot, or the masses, in whom after all the strength of it lies, are conciliated.

It may be taken for granted that this conciliation will not be effected till the condition of the classes engaged in agricultural labour has been greatly improved, and the sooner the landowners realise this truth, the better will it be for themselves. What they have more especially to guard against is the putting-off of all attempts to conciliate the ruling masses, till all power of doing so has been taken from them through the tactics of the leaders of these masses. At present, the landowners have the power of instituting and controlling a movement, by which the working classes could be greatly benefited with the least amount of injury to their own interests. On the other hand, if they dally with the land question till they have lost all influence in solving it, not only may their property be confiscated, but this may be done without benefit to the masses. It would be but a poor consolation to the landowners when their landed property had been taken from them, to witness the masses turn round with rage upon their leaders for having deluded them into believing that their own condition could be improved only to the detriment of a class higher in the social scale than these leaders.

As it is intended by-and-by to show, these leaders have not yet hatched any scheme that is at all likely to benefit the masses, even though in their attempts to do so they have provided for the extinction of the interests of the present landowners. In fact, no scheme can benefit the masses that involves the extinction of this class, for the simple reason that the interests of the two ought to be indissolubly bound up together; and to show that this is the case, and how the two interests are to be blended together for the advantage of both, is one of the main objects of this work. In this harmony of

capital and labour—land being treated, as it really is, as one of the forms of capital—the advantage to the agricultural labourers would be immediate, while that to the landowners would lie in the security of their property through the contentment of the labouring classes.

If the newly enfranchised voters are to be conciliated in respect to the land question sufficiently to make it worth their while to act in opposition to the advice of their leaders to lay their hands on the property of the landowners, there must be some form of its settlement that would allow of a considerable number of these voters to cultivate the land as masters of their own labour and not as wage-paid labourers. It stands to reason that the more of these voters that could get on the land to cultivate it upon these terms, the greater would be the satisfaction such a manner of settlement of the land question would produce among the whole class. Now the characteristic of this class is want of capital. Those of it that do come into possession of a little capital either by the exercise of thrift or through a stroke of luck, take advantage of the circumstance to leave the class of wage-paid workmen or labourers to become their own masters in business or in some other way. Some of these succeed, but many more fail, lose all their little capital, and have to fall back to work again among their old "pals" for wages. The cause of such failure is usually either a want of sufficient capital or of sufficient experience for the enterprise taken in hand.

It is from such as these that the ranks of habitual drunkards are so constantly recruited. The hope that previously fluttered in the breast of these hapless men of being able to extricate themselves from the capitalless class of wage-paid labourers has become extinguished in their failure, and there is nothing for them to look forward to in their old age but the workhouse. As the self-restraint involved in constantly passing in front of a public-house without going into it did not lead to any perma-

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nent improvement in their condition, they this time yield to the temptation of passing through its easily-opened portals, taking their chance of whatever consequences may flow from their present desire to forget their disappointment in drink. Had these poor men been able to get upon some land with their little capital, not in the position from which they had been making so desperate a struggle to escape, but as masters of their own labour, instead of becoming worthless drunkards, a burden to their own selves, to every one ever connected with them, and ultimately to the ratepaying community as paupers, they would have been as cultivators of the soil a source of happiness to themselves and their belongings, and no mean contributors to the national wealth. From this it is clear there can be no settlement of the land question of any permanency that is not based on a system that would be able to hold out its hand to the class of men of small capital, alluded to as exerting themselves to rise from the capitalless class of wage-paid labourers. Moreover, such a system must allow of as many as possible of the working and labouring classes to get upon as much land as would enable them to make a living out of it as masters of their own labour.

What, then, the landowners will have to do in their work of conciliating the masses, ruling the country by their votes, is to seek a settlement of the land question that would make the land of their country very much more productive, in order that there may be a much greater amount of wealth in it to distribute among these masses, and that would bring on to the land to cultivate it as masters of their own labour as many of these masses as possible. But these masses belong to the capitalless class, and therefore the settlement that would bring the greatest number of the members of this class upon the land in the way sought for by them, must be one requiring the least amount of capital to start with. No settlement of the land question can be of lasting effect that does not keep this as well as the other

points in view, and for a settlement not to have a lasting effect is to periodically deliver the country over to Land League agitators, one result of which would most probably be that the only settlement arrived at at last would partake largely of confiscation.

For the bringing about a settlement of the land question that would gain the sympathy and votes of the working classes of towns, and of the labourers of farms, or, in other words, of the hundreds of thousands of members of trades' and labourers' unions, landowners have the choice of three alternatives: (1) that insisted on by certain writers on political economy, by agitators, and by the leaders of trades' and labourers' unions; (2) that insisted on by the Farmers' Alliance; and (3) that submitted in these pages for the benefit of the country at large through the agency of the actual tillers of the soil. Though differing so widely in many respects, above all in their ultimate aims, they yet all agree in this: that whichever the landowners select, they would under it have to give up some portion, more or less, of the absolute control they have hitherto been supposed to be enjoying in the possession of land. In the case of peasant ownership they would have to give up the land altogether, for those who advocate this form of settlement advocate the non-payment of rent to landowners, or the purchase of the land by the State, so as to bring it, as they say, within the reach of the small capitalists. Either of these ways means confiscation. Should the State buy the land with the above object, it must either give less than its value or be a loser. If the latter, the act of confiscation is committed on the property of the taxpaying community instead of upon the landowners.

As to the tenant-farmer employer of labour, landowners would have to give up a large portion of their interest in their land in conformity with the demands of their Farmers' Alliance, and this, too, without any compensation; for nowhere does

the Farmers' Alliance make known that the farmers intend to give anything for the interest to be made over to them, although, no doubt, they will not hesitate to sell it at a high price, as has constantly been done in Ireland in similar circumstances under the Ulster custom.

In the third case, here submitted, of co-operative farming by labourers, landowners will certainly have to give a great extent, as already shown, fixity of tenure. But the landowners' interests would be much more secure in this latter case, and, therefore, more valuable than in the other last alluded to; for under the system of co-operative farms there would never be two forms of landownership. If the land cannot bear even one on the top of the labourer who actually tills the soil, as certain writers on political economy make out, it will certainly not bear two.

Be it noted that it is the case of the tenant-farmer employer of labour, who has possessed himself, without payment, of a large slice of his landlord's interest, according to the demands of the Farmers' Alliance, and who no more works on the land himself than does his landlord, that is now being considered and compared with tenant-farming by co-operation among labourers. Is it not possible that when it is found that the profits from the land, under circumstances becoming every year still more unfavourable consequent on the ever-increasing supplies of land produce from America, will not bear the burden of two landowners, that of the original one, and that of the employer of labour tenant, under the concessions insisted on by the Farmers' Alliance, the original landowner will have to go to the wall as being the least fit to survive? It may be relied on that this would be the case if the question has to be submitted for decision to a House of Commons whose members are returned by universal suffrage. In fact, even without this ordeal, there is already more than a tendency that way in Ireland.

Whether landowners part with their land altogether, or retain a diminished interest in it, no change, it may safely be said, would be satisfactory to a country ruled by universal suffrage, unless the actual cultivator can reap the reward of his toil through being made secure against the arbitrary exactions of all capitalists other than himself, whether in the form of landowner or money-lender. When the landowner and the actual cultivator are one person, as in peasant ownership, the difficulty is removed with respect to the landowning capitalist, but only to make way for a still greater difficulty in the capitalist money-lender.

How great this latter difficulty is, the impoverished condition of the peasant proprietors on the Continent, except in favoured localities, bears witness. This is the case, no less in the French Republic than in the German Empire. In both countries, in spite of the unremitting toil devoted to the cultivation of their land, and in spite of having their produce protected against foreign competition, most of the peasant proprietors have the greatest difficulty in meeting the exactions of money-lenders. Very many, if not most, of these money-lenders, it is well known, are Jews, especially in Germany, and this fact probably accounts for not a little of the enormous wealth of this race in those countries, and the hatred consequent thereon in which it is held by the Teuton. With the introduction of a peasant proprietary into the United Kingdom would follow as a matter of course the condition of things existing in France and Germany. Surely it would hardly be satisfactory to the classes ruling under universal suffrage the United Kingdom for those of them engaged in the tillage of the soil to be oppressed by the yoke of money-lenders. Even to the minority of the highly educated and capitalist classes at such a period it would hardly be satisfactory to have to contribute to the maintenance of a large army composed of the vigour of the country to keep from insurrection a peasantry

oppressed by the exactions of money-lenders, even though these be Jews.

With respect to the smaller difficulty, the land-lender capitalist of a tenant occupancy, when this capitalist is not bought out and so retained, it would be only on the condition that for the greater security of the cultivator's capital invested in the land in the form of labour, this cultivator should not be subject to an increase of rent, on account of the improvement in the fertility of the land created by this labour capital. This, in short, is what is usually implied in the term fixity of tenure. Unless there be some sort of fixity of tenure for the reasons just given, the land of the country, owing to the conditions under which it can be cultivated having become so much altered for the worse, through the abolition of the laws for the protection of its cultivators, must in no long time go out of cultivation. As this would reduce the whole country to the lowest depths of poverty, it is not likely to be submitted to by the masses living in towns, and able, by the exercise of the franchise, to prevent it.

Whatever may be the form of holding the land, whether on a large or small scale, there must be some one having an interest in the land besides the man who actually tills it. In England the custom has been for three different classes to be interested and take part in the cultivation of the land, the land-owning, the farming, and the labouring. It is the dream of writers on political economy that these three functions should be centred in one person. But, like a great many other dreams of book-worms the idea sounds well enough in theory, but, whenever it has been attempted to be carried out, it has completely broken down in practice. The person in whom the three functions of landowner, capitalist, and labourer are to be concentrated, is of course the labourer, for it is not to be expected that either the landowner or the capitalist as such would do the work of a labourer. But not less unreasonable is it to suppose that the

labourer could furnish the land and the capital in sufficient quantities to enable him to turn his labour to a profitable account. If he could, would he care to be a labourer? Experience of the ways of such people, at all events in this country, tells us that a person so situated would prefer to get a labourer to do the work for him. He then becomes the capitalist landowner, differing from a landowner that had been superseded mainly in this, that he is a narrow-minded peasant instead of being trained by his surroundings to be a man of culture from his childhood.

In the attempt to combine all three functions in one person the result has been to oust the capitalist landowner only to admit the capitalist money-lender. It must be borne in mind that land and the farm buildings connected with it lent by the landowner are as much a part of a farmer's capital as agricultural implements or even hard cash, since he can no more do without the one than without the other. The exchange of the capitalist money-lender for the capitalist landowner can be beneficial neither to the cultivator of the soil nor to the country at large. The landowners of the United Kingdom are as a body men of education and culture as well as nurture, and not a few of them magistrates, all which render them especially fit to be rulers of their country. Of a money-lender, on the other hand, nothing more can be said in his favour than that he is a taxpayer. Beyond this, and of this as little as he can, he is an unmitigated evil, and yet it is for the behoof of such men political economists are ready to see the most useful person in the community—the peasant cultivator—made a toiling slave, deprived of well-nigh all remuneration for his labour. No step more retrograde in the advancement of the human race towards a higher state of civilisation could be taken than for a class like the landowners of England, which for centuries has been leading the van of civilisation in everything making up culture in all its branches, to be supplanted by money-lenders.

It does not require much penetration to discover why agitators, leaders of Trades' and Labourers' Unions, and all those who wish the disestablishment of some of the institutions of the country, and the total destruction of others, should bend all their energies to substitute a class of money-lenders for the present class of landowners. It is more difficult to discover why certain writers on political economy, who as teachers of that science are supposed to form their judgment from the high standpoint of seeking to improve the condition of the greatest number in a country, should lend their countenance to doctrines so injurious to the welfare of the masses. What good quality is there in a professional money-lender—a member of the class that is to take the place of that of landowners—that he should be thought so much of? Would he lend his money at 3 per cent., the average rate of per centage the landowners have been lending their capital, the land? Moreover, in the event of this low rate of interest proving too high, would he in bad seasons take 10 or 15 per cent. off even this low rate, and would he go on lending the money at this low rate, to gratify agitators and others, at a fixity of interest? On the contrary, is he not much more likely to take advantage of bad seasons to insist on his acceptances being of a shorter date, and upon the payment of a comparatively high premium for each renewal of these shorter dated bills, and all this to get the land upon which he has been lending his money into his own hands by means of a foreclosure.

It is by such a process as this that the land of India and the colonies is fast getting into the hands of money-lenders, and to prevent which would not be the least of the benefits the actual cultivator of the soil in those countries would derive from the establishment of a Land Department of State. What benefit, may one ask, would the manual cultivator of the soil in the United Kingdom gain from such a change of landowners? If money-lending is to be an essential quality in land-owning,

what need is there for a change at all, since the present landowners are lenders of capital in the form of land? Granted, there have been exacting landowners in the United Kingdom; but may not these have been men who have become possessed of their land in an underhand manner through usurious practices? Yet it is into the hands of men of this stamp, who now happily are few, that agitators and such-like wish for all the land of the country eventually to fall. But, exacting as these men were in renewing their short-dated bills, they have not yet ventured, in their new capacity of landowners, on letting their land on a three months' lease renewable on the payment of a heavy premium. This practice, however, may become prevalent when all the land of the country is in such hands.

Now that the country is on the threshold of universal suffrage, its land question will soon be brought for an ultimate decision before a new tribunal. It is the workmen of towns and labourers on farms, who by virtue of their numbers will soon bear rule in the country, that will have to decide as to which of the two classes of landowners would be most beneficial to the community at large and to themselves in particular, and whether the well-educated, broad-viewing, sympathetic classes, who now hold possession of the land, are to be displaced for the ultimate benefit of a narrow-minded, heart-hardened, and grasping class of professional money-lenders. This is practically what is meant, by the introduction into the United Kingdom of a peasant proprietary, for, while the peasant cultivators would be the nominal owners of the land of the country, the real ownership of it would fall into the hands of the possessors of the title-deeds, the class of money-lenders just alluded to, begotten, as on the Continent, of a peasant proprietary.

For their guidance, then, in their choice between these two forms of landownership, the three alternative systems of tenure and farming placed before the present landowners in this

chapter are now about to be placed in the three following chapters before the destined rulers of the United Kingdom, the working and labouring classes therein. These are :—

1. The system of a peasant proprietary.
2. The system of tenant farming by employers of labour.
3. The system of tenant farming by co-operation among labourers.

CHAPTER XII.

A PEASANT PROPRIETARY NO SETTLEMENT OF LAND
QUESTION.

The State as Purchaser of Land—Infringement of Laws of Political Economy—Is Land to be managed by the State?—Neither kind of Confiscation necessary—Too much Capital of Cultivators wanted—Too much Time of Cultivators taken up—Indebtedness of Peasant Proprietors—The Middleman Money-lender—Who Gainers by Confiscation?

WITH regard to the first of the three modes of settling the land question now to be treated of—a peasant proprietary—the attention of the reader has been already drawn to several objections, some of which are alone sufficiently fatal to condemn it in the eyes of those caring for the welfare of their country.

Of these objections the first that meets one on the threshold of the inquiry relates to the necessity of the State to purchase at the outset the land of the whole country from its present owners, in order that the workmen of towns and labourers of farms may get on it to cultivate it as masters of their own labour—the object professedly aimed at by those advocating the system of a peasant proprietary. The objection to this initiatory proceeding in carrying out the scheme is, be it remembered, that it cannot be done without resorting to confiscation, and this either of the capital of landowners by taking their land without any, or at all events sufficient, compensation, or of the capital of the whole community by means of taxation.

It is not intended here to lay down the dictum that the forcible taking possession of the land of a country from its lawful owners without giving an equivalent in value is in all

circumstances unjustifiable, nor that for the same objects the community at large should never be taxed. On the contrary, occasions may arise when a recourse to confiscation in either of these forms may be the only course open to the statesmen of a country. But such an expedient in either of the above forms should be had recourse to only in the last extremity, and only when every other not involving confiscation had been tried and had failed. Before, then, either the capitalist landowners are deprived of that portion of their capital invested in land, or the whole community of capitalists are heavily taxed to prevent the scandal to the whole nation caused by such a deprivation under the plea of increasing the produce of its land and of benefiting the condition of its labouring cultivators, the advocates of a peasant proprietary have to show that these most desirable objects cannot be brought about in other and far less objectionable ways.

It is superfluous to say that the transference of the capital of one class to another in a country does not necessarily increase the aggregate wealth of that country—a point that ought especially to be aimed at by writers on political economy now advocating a peasant proprietary, and who profess to follow in the footsteps of the author of "The Wealth of Nations." This axiom, however, in *Statecraft* they do not always lose sight of, above all when they insist on the injustice of the capital of the community at large being taxed for the benefit of the capital engaged in agriculture by a duty levied on the importation of the produce of foreign countries.

Even supposing that either the landowners are deprived of their land by an act practically amounting to confiscation, or that the taxpaying community to avoid this act of injustice are forced to give an equivalent, even then the difficulty respecting the introduction of a peasant proprietary into the country would be far from being done away with. Either act of confiscation would have to be enforced by the State, and this

means that the State would come into possession of all the land of the country, whether it keeps it or subsequently parts with it.

If the State keeps possession of the land of the country with the object of managing it, the State would have to create a special department for the purpose. Though this would be a far better solution of the difficulty than the other alternative of the State giving the land away at the expense of the taxpaying community to its future cultivators, yet it has this drawback, that there is absolutely no need for the State to undertake so great an addition to its already huge task of ruling an empire distributed over the four quarters of the globe. The objects for which a Land Department of State would be effective would be gained equally as well by the co-operation of the present owners of the land. The advice given to his countrymen by President Lincoln at the outset of the civil war between the Northern and Southern States "not to swop horses while fording a river," is equally applicable to the people of the United Kingdom in their search after the best settlement of the land question. At any rate they should not needlessly create obstacles for themselves. Their aim ought to be to effect the greatest amount of good with the least amount of change in the instruments used for bringing it about. If the landowners of the United Kingdom could be brought to co-operate together to manage the land of the country for the benefit therein of all classes, and of its actual tillers in particular, as effectively as a Land Department of State, it would surely be most unwise to make the wholly unnecessary swop or exchange of one for the other. But for the reasons given in the chapter on the subject, landowners ought as a body to be able to manage the land of the United Kingdom in such a way as to promote co-operation among its labouring tillers with even more success than a Land Department of State.

On the other hand, if the State after purchasing the land of

the country were to part with it to peasant tillers, either by giving it to them right out, or by selling it to them at a much lower price than what it had given for it, there cannot but accrue to it an enormous loss. Thus, either way the State would not only transgress against that fundamental law of political economy, that the community at large in a country are not to be injured for the benefit of a particular class, but it would ultimately create insuperable difficulties for itself by introducing into this country that obstacle to the stable government of a country—small farms. In the first chapter were pointed out from a political standpoint the ultimate evil results to a country of the small farms of a peasant proprietary. It was therein shown how wide-spread in such countries are the secret societies so hostile in their aims against capital, society, and the institutions of these countries, no less republican than imperial, and so extensively supported by the working and labouring classes, discontented with the manner and amount of the remuneration of their labour. Of course, contentment would be given for a time to those fortunate enough to partake of the State-distributed spoils of the slain, whether these be the capitalist landowners, or the members of the capitalist community of taxpayers. But, even this contentment, though so dearly bought, is for obvious reasons not likely to be of long duration—the chief point to be aimed at by those claiming to be statesmen.

Another evil of no little magnitude arising from the introduction into the country of the small farms of a peasant proprietary, would be the indebtedness of the owners of the land of these farms to a most objectionable class of money-lenders. Thus, the action of the State that would bring into existence these small farms, would be the means of eventually giving birth to a burden on the land much greater than the one from which the State is supposed to have bought up all the land to relieve it. How great a burden

these money-lenders are upon the land of a country divided into the small farms of a peasant proprietary is proved by the testimony of many writers, even those writers on political economy, who in every other respect are loud in their praises of that mode of land tenure. Curiously enough, these writers seem to be unaware of the fact, that in condemning the indebtedness of small proprietors, they condemn the whole system of a peasant proprietary in the most emphatic terms they could use. This indebtedness of the small proprietors, so prevalent and so deep, is no doubt one of the main reasons of the system under which they exist proving so little capable of allaying the discontent of labour in the countries of small farms.

It is not at all surprising that the peasant owners of small farms are in a constant state of indebtedness to a class of professional money-lenders. One of the unpleasant features connected with the dark side of human nature, is a disposition on the part of not a few people to hanker after the possession of the property of others. Wherever property is known to exist, this class of persons hang about to get hold of it by hook or by crook. Now, the peasant owners of small farms are especially exposed to the attacks of such men. In the first place, there is no way of hiding the fact that they are owners of property, or of concealing the nature of the property of which they are the owners. The very existence of their small farms proclaims aloud that they are owners not only of all the implements employed in cultivating them, but of the land composing them. There is no hiding the fact of the possession of property of this kind by putting it into the custody of a banker, or storing it away in a secret drawer. With so palpable an evidence of possessing a security for a loan, the peasant owners of small farms have no difficulty in procuring one. The straits such owners are put to in bringing up their families in even the roughest way out of the produce of a small plot of land, in spite

of the unremitting toil of all making up these families, must be so great as to necessitate their making frequent use of the facilities—the possession of a negotiable security in the form of land, and a local money-lender—are constantly putting in their way. Again, the isolated life that peasant owners lead may possibly have something to do with their borrowing so largely of money-lenders, for it must cause them to farm at a great disadvantage, both in respect to raising produce and to its disposal. The difficulties would naturally be increased in proportion to the distance of the farms of these owners from towns and their markets. Yet, Von Konan says the indebtedness of the peasant-proprietors of small farms close to the flourishing town of Zurich borders on the incredible.

Unfortunately for the peasant owners of small farms the loans they obtain are from the peculiar class of half lawyer and half money-lender living in their district, to which the system of small farms gives rise. These men are the fungoid growth of small farms. These are the men, the demands of whom for a high rate of interest prove so great a burden on the land in all countries in which the system of small farms prevails. In fact, these are the men into whose hands the legal possession of the title-deeds of the land of a country of small farms, if not of the land itself, ultimately falls. Is it for a class like this, which would most certainly spring up in this country on the conversion of its land into the small farms of a peasant proprietary, that either the present land-owners are to be deprived of their capital invested in land, or the whole community of capitalists are to be mulcted to enable the State to facilitate such conversion?

Another objection to the system of a peasant proprietary is its unceasing exaction upon the time of the cultivators of the small farms under it, leaving them scarcely time for either sleep or meals, much less for the improvement of their mind.

Of the three objections just mentioned out of many that might be made to the establishment of the system of a peasant proprietary in the United Kingdom—(1) confiscation by the State; (2) the almost universal indebtedness of the peasant cultivators; and (3), the exactions on the time of the cultivators and all the members of their family—the first two would be held by most classes in the country in common with the workmen of towns and labourers on farms. The latter objection, however, would more immediately concern the working and labouring classes wishing to become cultivators of the land, especially as masters of their own labour. Instances have already been given of the exactions on the time of the peasant proprietor which that form of cultivating the land causes, and more could be brought forward were it not that quite enough for the purpose has been already adduced. The leaders of Trades' and Labourers' Unions must either know very little about what they talk of to the members of these unions, or else they have been telling them what, in their inner consciousness, they must know to be very far from the whole truth. On this assumption only can it be that one can reconcile their advocating a peasant proprietary in the same breath, so to speak, with their advocating the right of a labourer to work only nine hours a day. If these men would only take the trouble to verify their assertions, as the author has done, by actual eyesight and enquiries, by going into the countries on the Continent in which peasant proprietorship is the system used in cultivating the land, they would find that their pet peasant proprietors are in the habit of working eighteen hours a day rather than their limited nine. They would then be in a position to coincide with the unbiassed opinion of William Howitt, that, "on the small farms of a peasant proprietary it is unceasing toil, morning, noon, and night"—in short, no respite from work.

Leaders of Trades' and Labourers' Unions allege as a reason

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for their striving to limit the day's work of their members to nine, if not eight hours, that the men should have sufficient time from their work to allow of their improving their minds. But what time would these same members have for improving their minds when they had been exalted to the nominal position of landowners? The very fact of their having to pay a high rate of interest on the money borrowed for working their little farms, leaving out of account their having to buy the land, would force them into being obliged to work pretty well twice as long as the eight or nine hours a day limit of their present unions. They would have about as much time for improving their minds as have the tillers of their own land on the Continent, and the result would be the like intense ignorance on every subject unconnected with their farms, and so the like proneness to become the dupes of Socialist agitators promising them relief from the hardships incident to the maintenance of their families from the produce of their small farms.

There would be another objection to a peasant proprietary in the eyes of workmen in towns and labourers on farms, that ought to cause them to pause before giving their votes for the introduction of this system into their country. It is the difficulty they would find in raising capital enough to enable them to buy the land which they are to own and to cultivate under the system. To be able to get a living out of a farm in such a climate as England, a workman or farm labourer wishing to become a peasant proprietor would have to buy at least ten acres of land, and he could hardly expect to get ten acres of land even from the State for less than £300. Moreover, when he had bought the land he would want farming implements to work it with, a cottage on or near it to live in, a store-shed, a cattle-shed, &c., to get all which would require an outlay of probably £200 more. This would involve the possession altogether of £500, and how is a workman or labourer to get together £500, or even the £200 required for

placing the owner in a condition to work the ten acres bought with the £300?

It is exceedingly questionable whether a farm labourer,—the man most suitable for undergoing the incessant toil of a peasant proprietor—could save up enough out of the wages he receives weekly from his farmer employer to enable him to furnish even the £200, were he even to exercise all the self-restraint possible compatible with being in a physical condition for performing the labour required in farming operations. His only chance of getting together the larger sum of £500 at an age warranting his beginning the hard and incessant work needed of a peasant proprietor would be by his being able to borrow about four-fifths of the amount, and, if he should succeed in accomplishing this, he would be no longer his own master, which we are told by the advocates of the system is its great charm. Under the mastership, on the other hand, of a professional money-lender he would have to work as a slave under a driving taskmaster all day, and often at night, and this for years, perhaps paying all the time in interest two or three times over the amount he had borrowed, and then after all only to find he has to part with it to the money-lender in liquidation of the original debt.

We are now brought into a position to consider what is perhaps the greatest objection of all to the system of a peasant proprietary; and this is that it is no settlement of the land question at all. There can be no settlement of the land question until the labouring classes have a chance to get upon the land to cultivate it as masters of their own labour in reality. This is only the natural result of the franchise being extended to these classes. But, to offer workmen and labourers a chance of getting upon the land in the way they want to do, and in the only way in fact to permanently content them, provided they can produce £500, is nothing else than to deride their poverty with a taunt more worthy of the

arbitrary bearing of a feudal lord in the middle ages than of the professed friends of the labouring classes of this civilised century, as the advocates of a peasant proprietary are wont to make themselves out to be.

In short, the system of a peasant proprietary in this country, at any rate, is altogether impracticable unless recourse be had through the State to confiscation in some form or other, so as to give a better chance to mechanics and farm labourers to get upon the land to cultivate it as their own masters. If through this confiscation a member of these classes could get the ten acres without paying anything for them, very probably £200 for the necessary buildings and for working the farm would in the circumstances be all the capital required. But the advocates for the introduction of a peasant proprietary into the United Kingdom have, strange to say, never made known how it is to be decided who are to become the fortunate owners of ten acres of land without paying for them. Among the millions of competitors for the boon there would naturally take place no little squabbling. By what means is the selection from the millions of candidates to be determined? Is it to be by lottery, or are the leaders of Trades' and Labourers' Unions to be the first favoured as a recompense for their untiring advocacy of the system of a peasant proprietary? If to each of these leaders a ten-acre allotment be made, what on earth would he do with it? Would he work from sunrise to sunset day after day without intermission throughout the year in a vain struggle to get a better living out of it; or would he sell it? Unless the whole class, of which he is a member, has been cruelly maligned, there can be no doubt as to which of the two courses he would take. If, then, he were to sell it, the transaction would hardly be a satisfactory settlement of the land question for the labouring classes, and therefore not a final one. It certainly would not be a satisfactory settlement for the capitalist classes, either those who

had had their capital in the form of land taken from them that workmen and labourers might have land without paying for it, or the tax-paying community who had taken on to their own shoulders what would have been a flagrant act of confiscation of the property of a class.

CHAPTER XIII.

TENANT FARMING BY EMPLOYER OF LABOUR NO SETTLEMENT.

Land in England going out of Cultivation—Uncleanness of Land on English Farms—Causes of Failure of Farmers in England—"Bad Seasons" peculiar to English Farmers—Deficiency of Labour on English Farms—Use of Muck by Peasant Owners—Farmers' Alliance—Farmers Borrowers of Land and Labour—Farm Labourers and "Farmers' Alliance"—More Labour not Machinery wanted—Farm Labourers on becoming Farmers—Farmers already too great Borrowers of Capital.

UNSUITABLE as a peasant proprietary would be for the United Kingdom, especially in the changed condition of things towards which its people are hastening, it will not be a difficult task to prove that tenant-farming on a large scale, by means of wage-paid labour, would be still more so. No stronger proof of the failure of the form of occupying land for its cultivation now under consideration could exist than the fact that under its working the land of the country is yearly going more and more out of cultivation. More than a year ago a well-known agricultural authority stated that it would require an outlay of £60,000,000 to put the land in a condition of what he called "cleanness" it was in only ten years before, and since then, as nearly every one knows, this condition has been getting worse at an even more rapid rate. If length of time for the trial of a system is the best test of its worth, surely tenant-farming by means of wage-paid labour has been tried long enough. It is true that for the many generations this system has been on trial it was not subjected to so great a strain as it has been of late, owing to the country being flooded with the produce of other countries admitted free of duty; yet it is on this point, as will be shown more at length further on, that the system has ex-

posed its utter weakness. Any system that cannot unite all engaged in agriculture for the protection of that interest, displays an inherent weakness that must in the long run cause its breakdown, and this has been especially the case with tenant-farming through wage-paid labour.

However unsuitable, as we believe, peasant proprietorship may be for this country, it cannot be brought against it that it has been throwing its land out of cultivation for the reason that therein it is still in the region of the untried. But, even in countries where the system has been on trial for generations, it is nowhere stated that it is causing the land of these countries to become a desert. The nominal owners of the little farms of the system continue to work from sunrise to sunset on them, though what profit the majority of them are able to make out of their farms goes for the most part to pay the high rate of interest charged on the money borrowed to buy them. If some do break down in their uphill efforts to get a living, and emigrate to America with the little capital saved from the wreck, there are others found ready to take their place. Anyhow, the land is not thereby being thrown out of cultivation, as is the case so extensively in England.

The severe competition cultivators of the soil in all old countries have had to encounter on account of the breaking up of the virgin soil of newly-peopled countries, more especially of those in America, has no doubt probed to the core whatever weakness may have been latent in every system of land-tenure. Experience has so far proved that in no one of these old countries is there a single system that has not been rudely shaken by this severe competition. But there has not been one in all the countries on the Continent of Europe that has not been shattered to pieces by it as the tenant-farming by wage-paid labour of England may be said to have been. The collapse of this kind of land-tenure in England is laid by the defenders of the system to bad seasons, just as if the peasant

proprietors of Germany, France, Belgium, Switzerland, etc., and the cultivators on the Metayer system in Italy do not meet with bad seasons. The cultivators of the land of the small farms in those countries may be freer from fogs and perhaps rain than are the farmers employing labourers in this, but they are subject to droughts and floods and the ravages of insects, of the severity of all of which the farmers of England, from the experience gained on their own farms can form no conception. Yet the land of all these countries of small farms still goes on producing its many varied crops, though its cultivators have in the majority of cases the greatest difficulty in getting a living out of it.

One is led to enquire what can possibly make it worth the while of the peasant proprietor to adhere so tenaciously to the cultivation of his few acres of land in spite of the well-nigh ruinous competition he has to meet with in the sale of its produce, and in spite of the high rate of interest on the money he has had to borrow to enable him to buy and cultivate his farm. It is to be attributed largely, if not altogether, to these two causes : first, the cheapness of his labour bill, and secondly, his free use of the night soil of towns. It is in these two respects that a peasant proprietary has shown itself to be so superior to tenant-farming by wage-paid labour, and why the former system has been able to withstand, in a way, a competition that is causing the complete collapse of the other. The labour of the peasant proprietor is at all times ungrudgingly given, being fettered by no Farm Labourers' Unions as to price or time. If on a fine day a storm is expected on the following one, everything lying out to be benefited by the sun's rays is all garnered and housed before the storm that would have destroyed it has made its appearance, even though to do so, the peasant proprietor and all the members of the family had to work all night. Had a Labourers' Union to be consulted as to whether the urgency of the case in point justified an infringement of the nine hours'

rule, the probability is that the produce in danger instead of being saved would have been destroyed by the storm, and then of course the loss would have been put down to the bad season.

What constitutes a bad season, on which the farmers of England have been wont to lay the blame of the unfavourable results of the system under which the land has been tilled, is really the absence of the fine weather wanted by them at a certain period of the year to ripen their crops. When the sun at this particular period is unpropitious, the system of tenant-farming by an employer of labour, never of late years very prosperous even with the best of seasons, utterly breaks down. The reason for this signal failure in a bad season is, that nearly everything connected with the farm under such a system is so worked as to depend on the fineness of the weather in a country like England, not blessed with the best of climates for the ripening of cereal crops. Under this system the farmers have been staking their chances of success in their occupation on the throw of the die. The farmers were protected from the evil results of this haphazard way of tilling their land, so long as the Corn Laws existed to greatly raise the price of their produce when scarce through the occurrence of a bad season. Thus, the loss due to this reckless mode of tillage fell, not on themselves, but on the consumers of their produce.

In respect of the climate of England for ripening the crops of farmers, it possibly never has been of the best, and it may possibly have been owing in no small measure to this circumstance, that her former statesmen deemed it necessary to have recourse to special laws favouring the protection of the agricultural interest of the country. As the cultivators of the land of England have no longer protective duties to rely on, there is nothing left for them in the future but to trust less to the chances of the seasons in this variable climate, and they must for the future so manage the cultivation of their land that,

whenever a season favourable to the ripening of their crops does appear, they may be in a condition of readiness to at once make the most of it.

As to the form of land tillage best adapted for making the most of bad seasons, the petite culture of a peasant-proprietary has advantages in its favour not possessed by the system of farming by an employer of labour. The peasant owner is therefore not obliged to stake his all on one harvest, which, if it should turn out unfavourable, would lay the seeds for his ultimate ruin. He contrives to have many harvests during the year of some crop or other. He consequently gives his attention more to the growth of root-crops, vegetables, and such like, to the rearing of cattle, sheep, and other animals, and of poultry, and to the making of butter and cheese, all of which are coming to maturity more or less all the year round. It is on account of this variety of farm produce that in the countries in the north of Europe having a climate even less favoured by the sun's rays than that of England, enough of this produce is grown, not only to supply the home demands for it, but for export. The produce of the small farms of these countries imported into England, such as that of the dairy and farmyard, is just that less dependent for its readiness for her markets on fine weather.

The owners of small farms in countries in northern latitudes would not be able to do so well without fine seasons, unless they had plenty of labour at command all the year round in their persons, and in those of all the members of their respective families. This, in short, is the true secret of their success. With such a command of willing labour always on the spot and ever ready at their disposal, they are able to take advantage to a greater extent of the little of the sun's rays their country is blessed with throughout the year. It is this ready command of efficient labour that is the one redeeming feature in the many evils connected with a peasant proprietary,

and it is more especially in countries in northern latitudes, in which the seasons for harvesting are short and most unreliable, this kind of labour is so essential. In such countries the large farms of employers of labour would no more succeed than they have done in England. There is nothing in the character of the tillers of the soil in these countries to make one think that their land would produce more than does the land of England under the same system. As now in England, so would it be in these countries under this system, that the land would not produce half the food required by its inhabitants, instead of growing as now a surplus for export. The employers of wage-paid labour would, in all probability, be just as chary of borrowing capital to lay out in hiring labour, and the wage-paid labourers themselves would none the less show their discontent at this form of remuneration for their labour, by forming themselves into Labourers' Unions. Thus, the land in these countries would get by degrees into as bad a state for want of labour being spent upon it, as is now that in England from the same causes; and when in this bad state and still stinted of labour by a vicious system, the seasons would have to be extremely fine, far more so indeed than usual in northern countries, for its crops to be at all remunerative to its cultivators.

So far as the amount of labour to be always ready at command is concerned the system of co-operation among labourers would not fall short in efficiency of that of a peasant proprietary. There would, however, be a case in which the former would have a great advantage over the latter, and would make it especially suitable for countries subject to bad seasons. This would consist in its power of concentrating a large mass of labour equally as ready at command at all times, and equally as efficient as that at the disposal of a small farmer on any given work to be done in a short space of time. For a work of this kind there would be always ready at hand on a farm of

1,000 acres not far short of 100 co-operators in labour, if he counted besides the forty partners and five supernumeraries; their wives and nearly grown-up children. By means of this vast reserve of willing labour always at hand on an emergency, the co-operative labourers could afford to run the risk of relying more on the production of cereals and other crops requiring fine weather for ripening than can the peasant owner of a small farm having only his own labour and that of his family to depend on. Suppose that out of the 1,000 acres of a co-operative farm 100 be laid out in the growth of wheat, for the ingathering of this crop of wheat the labour of nearly 100 persons at the disposal of the co-operation would be concentrated. The same may be said of other kinds of cereals, of hops, and other like crops requiring the short period of sunshine occurring in countries subject to bad seasons to ripen in. The extra labour supplied at harvest time by the members of the families of the labourers of co-operative farms would be quite as cheerfully given as that of the members of the family of a peasant owner. But not being the labour of persons exhausted by the unremitting toil of farm work all the year round, it is likely to be more efficacious in the emergency of catching the flitting sunshine in a country of bad seasons.

A bad season to a farmer is not unlike what a hostile army is to a general. Of little use would it be to a general for each of his soldiers to be of herculean strength and armed with weapons of precision, if they had not been taught to co-operate together in a body, by which co-operation this strength and these arms might be made far more effective for a coming contest. In the Peninsular war were instances of charges of large masses of the enemy's cavalry being successfully opposed by a single regiment of foot formed into a square possible only by the co-operation of its members. Had each of the men forming this regiment fought instead by himself, every one of them thus taken in detail would have been either slain or

taken prisoner in spite of his strength and efficient weapons. Just so in the war waged by the cultivators of the land against the inclemency of weather, to which in all countries they are liable, and in some, like England, especially so. These cultivators by co-operating together would succeed in their contest with a bad season; whereas, if they made the like attempt single-handed as in the case of a peasant proprietor they would most likely fail. Living as the extra co-operators for an emergency always would on the spot, they would form a sort of flying column in reserve ever ready to act together, and with the partners in the co-operation to make the most of every one of the few openings offered by the sun's rays for ripening their crops in a climate like England subject to "bad seasons."

It is, however, in the free use on his land of the muck of towns that a peasant proprietor is able to weather a storm that causes the tenant-farmer employer of labour to desert his farm through bankruptcy or the fear of it. The peasant proprietor shows by the care he uses to prevent any of this stuff from going to waste the great value he sets upon it as a fertilizer for his land. When on a pedestrian tour through that region of the small farms of a peasant proprietary, the Pays de Waes in Flanders, we have seen young girls, the daughters of these small landowners, use this kind of manure with anxious care for fear of losing any of it, which showed perhaps more than anything else could do the great store set upon it by the whole family. Fancy the daughters of an English tenant-farmer on a large scale doing this! Fancy even the farmer himself! But if these men are too fastidious to use this most essential fertilizer in the painstaking way it is used by the small owners of land on the Continent, how can they expect their wage-paid labourers to use it? These labourers are never likely to use it thus, unless the example of doing so is set them by their employer, and even then it is a question whether they

would care to do it without the stimulus of reaping the benefit to be derived from its use. This difficulty got over use would then become second nature. But to speak of wage-paid labourers reaping any of the profit to be derived from their painstaking application of the muck of towns to land, or from any other form of labour is to travel beyond the boundary of tenant-farming on a large scale by means of wage-paid labour.

Those tenant farmers who have not yet deserted their farms are hoping to be able to bear up against the adverse competition they are encountering from the free imported produce of America, by wringing concessions from the landowners through the organisation of the Farmers' Alliance. It is possible their position would be improved by gaining these concessions, for, unless they expected to gain something, it is to be presumed they would not have made war upon what has hitherto been considered the most influential class in the whole country; but the benefit they would thereby gain would be nothing so great or so lasting as they seem to think. There can now be no doubt that the purpose for which they want the concessions, is to be placed in a better position for borrowing capital. It is for this that the landowners are to be deprived of whatever privilege they may have been deriving from the Law of Distress, so that henceforth the money-lender can be put on a footing of equality with the land-lender in respect to getting the interest and return of the principal of their respective loans. This would, of course, lead to a deeply indebted farming class, the very evil alleged by some writers on political economy, as well as ourselves, against the peasant proprietorship system of the Continent. True, the tenant farmers are going to wring the concessions from the landowners by parliamentary force instead of paying for them, and on this account they would want to borrow less capital than do the peasant proprietors of the Continent, who purchase their interest in the land they cultivate.

On the other hand, the members of the Farmers' Alliance would want to borrow large sums for purposes for which the peasant proprietor does not need any money at all, because they would have to make up by the use of very expensive machinery for what the peasant farmer gives in the unremitting toil of himself, his wife, and children.

When the tenant-farmers will have become part owners of the land by the instrumentality of the Farmers' Alliance, they would, in one sense, have a greater security to offer to money-lenders and other creditors; but in another, it is questionable whether they would. In an era of universal suffrage it is not likely that the members of the Labourers' Unions would hold back from profiting by the lesson in confiscation set them by their employers. When, through the power of their numerical majority of votes, and the education picked up at National and Board schools, supplemented in after years by the teaching at their Unions, these get to know the full force of this power, what is to prevent their demanding of the members of the Farmers' Alliance the same kind of concessions these latter are now exacting from the landowners? Is it at all likely, that when farm labourers have an opportunity of bettering their condition at the expense of their employers, they will forego it? If these employers think so, they must give their labourers credit for the capacity of exercising greater forbearance than they possessed themselves.

Even if the labourers never succeeded in wresting from the farmers some of the spoil taken from the landowners, the many attempts that would be made to effect it must lessen the security the farmers would have to offer to lenders of capital. In fact, the capital employed on farms, whether borrowed or not, would be subjected to all the uncertainties connected with the existence of Labourers' Unions, to which the capital of the Lancashire and Yorkshire manufacturers are now liable through Trades' Unions, and which is causing so many of these employers of

labour to think seriously of transferring their capital to another country. The majority of farmers even now are not owners, but borrowers of capital, and this will be more than ever the case, now that they are going to lay so much of it out in patent manures and machinery. The outcome of all the uncertainties respecting their position with their labourers would be to prevent these farmers borrowing money except at a high rate of interest, for no one would lend money on any other terms, when there would be a probability of the farmer to whom he had lent it being any day made bankrupt through the action of his men, under the guidance of the leaders of Labourers' Unions. Moreover, having thus to borrow at a high rate of interest, he could borrow only of usurers—a class of men having no influence in the country, and no sympathy with agriculture beyond the high rate of interest gained in it for their capital.

With respect to the expensive machinery just alluded to, for the introduction of which into all the farms of the country its landowners are to be deprived of a portion of their interest in the land, it is noteworthy that England is already the most farm-machine using country with the exception of the United States; yet it is in England alone of civilised countries that the land is going out of cultivation. To be sure, not all the land of the hundreds of farms that have been deserted of late has as yet become a desert; for some of it has been turned into natural pasture, or what would perhaps be called in America prairie land, and some into woodland. But, in the acceptation of the term cultivated land as understood by the peasant proprietors of the Continent, they have all become waste land. One would have thought from this that the tenant farmers of England had been already sinking too much of their capital in the purchase of what is called labour-saving machinery. The motive for their doing so has been to be as independent as possible of hand labour, or, in other words,

of labourers' unions. If the farmers themselves had prospered there might have been something to say in its favour; but this is just what they have not done, as is shown by their desertion of the farms on which machine labour instead of human has been employed. Even if the farmers had prospered by the investment of their capital in labour-saving machinery, it is a question whether the farm labourers, who are soon to exercise the franchise, will suffer a system of farming to remain in the country by which they are to be machined off the land, so to speak, by employers of labour—a class, from being so very much fewer in numbers would be so much weaker in political influence than themselves.

Moreover, if the land of England is to produce double of what it has been producing, upon the necessity for which, if upon nothing else respecting the land, almost all classes in the country are agreed, it will not be done through labour-saving machinery unless the farmers can have made for them machinery that would restore the phosphorus, ammonia, and other fertilising properties taken out by the crops. It is the imparting the fertility to the soil in a manner that will cause it to bear heavy crops year after year without exhausting it that no machinery yet invented has been able to compass. Even the Americans, with all their ingenuity, have not yet succeeded in inventing such a machine, and the consequence is, that under the working of their farm machinery the land is becoming exhausted. This, however, does not so much signify in America, where the farmer, after exhausting the land in the Eastern States, can find millions of acres of virgin soil further West to be exhausted by his machinery in the same manner. But England has no western counties of her own containing millions of acres of land, that have been having fertilising properties accumulated on them for centuries, to be exhausted by machine labour. Her limited supply of land must therefore be made to produce all it can to meet the ever-

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increasing wants of her ever-increasing population, and this, it may be relied on, can be done only by human labour such as that given on the peasant proprietary farms on the Continent, or to be so on the co-operative farms, to which reference is now again to be made.

Though it is in seeming contradiction, the assertion that under the system of farming by employers of labour labourers are not able to cultivate the land as masters of their own labour, yet it cannot be denied that under the system they become not only masters of their own labour, but employers of labour as well. But such instances are not sufficiently common to have any influence on the whole class of labourers. Even if they were more numerous, the condition of the majority of these men is not such as to make the members of the class they have left very desirous to change places with them. The normal condition of such men is one long enduring struggle to overcome difficulties brought on by undertaking, with but little or no capital, a task requiring for its profitable working a considerable amount of it. In their efforts to extricate themselves from these difficulties, they have to make up for the want of capital required for hiring sufficient labour by their own and that of their family, and this, in spite of their unceasing toil, must fall immeasurably short of the amount needed by these farmers to work their land so as to enable them to meet the annual outgoings of rent, taxes, rates, and such like, the claims of which cannot be so easily disregarded as has been the need for labour.

In fact, a labourer become farmer is even in a worse position with respect to capital than the peasant proprietor of the Continent. Both labour under a great difficulty, the want of sufficient capital for cultivating their farms under their respective systems with profit. The one is crippled in his efforts by having to borrow of a money-lender by profession for the purchase of his land, and the other for the hire of labour needed to work more

land than he can profitably work by his own labour and that of his family. The position of the peasant owner is the less irksome of the two, because, having a sound security to offer, he can borrow money for buying his land; whereas the other, having nothing but the good pleasure of his landlord to offer—quite enough too for a man having little or no capital of his own—is unable to obtain a loan for enabling him to hire anything like the amount of labour the acreage of his farm renders necessary. It is no wonder, then, that the men who have taken upon themselves the conduct of a farm with a greatly insufficient capital are just those that a bad season so injuriously affects, and who of late have on that account contributed so largely to swell the list of insolvent farmers. Many of these poor men to get a living for themselves and family have had to fall back into the ranks of farm labourers, from which, no doubt, they fondly hoped they had once for all extricated themselves, and this through no fault of their own, beyond the folly of entering upon an undertaking having certain determinate outgoings with capital insufficient to provide the amount of labour necessary to work such undertaking with enough profit to enable them to meet these outgoings. Such examples as these are beacons for farm labourers to avoid rather than to follow in their efforts to better their condition. Yet, under the system of employer of labour farmer this way to an eventual insolvency is the only one open to farm labourers for getting upon the land to cultivate it as masters of their own labour.

The practice of letting farms to labourers possessed of no capital, or of capital insufficient to procure the amount of labour beyond their own required to work such farms with profit, is most injurious to the community at large as well as of no lasting benefit to the labourers themselves. It is through the shortcomings of such men in respect to the land of this country that so much of it has got into its

present deplorable condition of "uncleanness." The system that holds out no hope to workmen and labourers of permanently benefiting the position of many of them through the cultivation of the land is surely not one that in an era of universal suffrage would be deemed a final settlement of the land question by the masses, who would be the principal sufferers from its failure in this respect; nor would be satisfactory to any class in a country a system that was causing more and more every year the impoverishment of its land.

Impossible as it is to have a peasant proprietary in this country, still more so is it under the coming régime of universal suffrage to have a continuation of tenant farming by employers of wage-paid labour. This continuation is only possible by tenant farmers being in a position to comply with the demands of their labourers acting under the direction of the leaders of their Unions, and the object of these demands is to be put into a position to reap the fruits of their labour. But the farmers can do this only by being put into a position themselves to comply with these demands, and they can be put into this position only by one of two courses, either of depriving the landowners of a large portion of their right in the land, or by having a protective duty put upon the foreign produce entering this country to compete against their own. The farmers finding they have no chance of getting a protective measure passed in their behalf have united themselves together under the name of the "Farmers' Alliance" to insist on the other, and they have taken this course because the landowners are fewer than themselves, and rejected the other because they are exceedingly fewer than the consumers at large of their produce, that would be raised in price by the duty levied on all foreign produce competing with it.

Even if by either of the above means the tenant farmers were able to act more liberally towards their wage-paid labourers the question is—would they? When during the great

war at the end of the last century and at the beginning of this, corn was sold for 120s. a quarter, and tenant farmers were in consequence making large fortunes, did they allow their labourers to partake largely of this great prosperity? If they did, no instances of such liberality have been placed on record.

Luckily for the wealthy farmers of those days, not only was their produce well protected against the competition of foreign countries, but in those prosperous days for agriculture there were no Labourers' Unions and no Universal Suffrage, and therefore no demanding on the part of labourers privileged to exercise this suffrage, and members of these Unions, to have their condition changed from wage-paid labourers to peasant proprietors.

Finally, with respect to the part landowning part tenant farmer to be created by the Farmers' Alliance there would be no more helpless creature than he, when the franchise will have been extended to farm labourers. As an employer of labour he would be in an even more helpless condition than the cotton or woollen manufacturer. The only class in the country whose sympathies he has hitherto been having he will have alienated for those of professional money-lenders and makers of machines and patent manures, while his men, when they have obtained the power of out-voting him by their greater number, would through their Labourers' Unions have tenfold his influence in Parliament, which would be pretty sure to be used in their own interests, and therefore against his.

CHAPTER XIV.

TENANT FARMING BY CO-OPERATION OF LABOURERS ONLY
DURABLE SETTLEMENT.

Farming by Co-operation of Labourers only Durable Settlement—Land made Productive—Economy of Co-operative Labour—Co-operative Farms Financially Accessible to Labourers—Harmony among Co-operating Labourers—Satisfactory Position of Co-operators—The First Start only Difficulty about Co-operative Farms—Ways of Raising Capital at First Start—Management of Co-operative Farms at Outset—Usurers Excluded from Co-operative Farms—An Appeal to Landowners—Fixity of Tenure only concession wanted—Compensation in return for such concession.

THE claims of co-operative farming by labourers to be a final settlement of the tenure part of the land question will now be considered. As the greater part of this book is taken up in laying before the reader the many advantages of co-operation in agriculture over the present system of employer of labour and the system of a peasant proprietary recommended by a certain school of politicians to supersede it, there will be no need to repeat in this chapter what has been already alleged in support of these advantages. His attention will be drawn in this chapter merely to two or three main points of more than usual importance. Of these, the first is in respect of the productiveness of the land. This is put to the fore, as on the continued maintenance of the productive powers of the soil of the United Kingdom rest the continuance of its independence from the control of other nations, and so of its existence as a great empire having magnificent dependencies. On the productiveness of the soil of the United Kingdom depends also its greatest and most permanent source of wealth, and on the existence of this wealth depends the contentment of the masses now about to be placed in a position to control

the policy of the country. This leads to the second subject of the chapter, the greater suitability of the system of co-operation in farming to give content to workmen and labourers wishing to cultivate the land as masters of their own labour, than either of the two systems with which it has been all along compared.

First of all, in respect of the capacity of co-operative farming to get from the land the greatest amount of produce possible, and this no less in bad seasons than in good, it would be only fair to admit at once that the system of co-operative farming would claim no superiority in this respect over that of peasant ownership. A system that can raise enough produce to supply the wants of the people of the countries—and these countries extensively engaged in manufactures—in which it is in practice, and that can not only do this, but can export to England a very large surplus of this produce, can hardly be improved upon in respect to its capacity for causing land to be productive under its working. The superiority claimed for the co-operative farming system on this point would lie in the fact that, though it would cause the land to be equally as productive as does the system of peasant proprietors, yet the great productiveness of the land brought about by it would entail a far less expenditure of time, labour, and strain on the constitution of the cultivators, and would therefore be attended with far greater profit to them. This would be owing partly to a much greater use of machinery, but mainly to the advantage to be derived from the working in co-operation of many hands and heads. The machinery used would be of such a nature as to assist labour, and not to dispense with it. The work on a co-operative farm would be done thoroughly as on the little farm of a peasant proprietor, and not slurred over, as is the case on the broad acres of a tenant-farmer employing wage-paid labour.

There are to be in a co-operative farm of 1,000 acres, be it remembered, forty labourers, who would be at work on the farm all the year round at something or other, the five supernumeraries, or apprentices, taking the place in manual toil of the five managers otherwise engaged. On 1,000 acres, divided into, say, the ten-acre allotments of peasant proprietors, as on the Continent, there would be always at work not forty labourers, but the 100 peasant proprietors of these 100 allotments, to say nothing of the wives and children of these men, who spend the greater part of their time in field-work. The difference between forty and 100 labourers employed in the aggregate on the same number of acres being so great, it was at first deemed more advisable to fix the number of members at fifty instead of forty. This would have given a proportion of twenty acres to each labourer, instead of, as under the alteration, twenty-five acres. The lesser number of members was finally fixed on, in the expectation that the employment of suitable machinery would make up for the difference in the number of human hands; and, for another thing, the fewer the members the greater would be the profits to be divided at the end of the year, and the greater the profits, the greater would be the stimulus for the receivers of these profits to exert themselves in both mind and body.

It would be not only in the amount of labour laid out on the land that co-operative farming would make it as productive as the land of peasant proprietors, but it would also be in the means of fertilising it with the same kind of manure. While the small landowner on the Continent has to trundle his barrow, on which is placed his tub of precious manure, from the nearest town, perhaps some miles off, enough of the same kind of manure for 100 of the ten-acre allotments could be taken daily by perhaps a single muck-van, or at most two, on a tramway, from the nearest station of a railway to the receptacle on the co-operative farm for its

suitable preparation for subsequent use. In doing all this, which now takes up well-nigh all the day of each of the 100 peasant proprietors, only one, or at most two, of the co-operative labourers need be employed. This one circumstance will give some idea of the great saving to be effected in both time and labour by the power of combination; and there is no reason why both time and labour should not be saved to a well-nigh equal extent in other branches of the operations of a co-operative farm.

According to Mr. Giffen's last report, the imports of food into the United Kingdom have increased from £1. 9s. 1d. per head of population in 1860, to £2. 19s. 3d. in 1879; that is to say, in less than twenty years they have more than doubled. Of one item, that of eggs, the increase was from 167,695,000 in 1860, to 766,707,000 in 1879. Under co-operative farming there ought not to be any occasion for importing into the country a single egg, or any potatoes, or any green food capable of being grown in this country. Now, most of these imports, with the exception of wheat, bacon, cheese, and perhaps one or two others, were the surplus produce of the little farms of the peasant proprietors on the Continent. Nearly all the wine consumed in this country comes at all events from them, and the land taken up in vineyards cannot be growing other crops. Yet these little farms distributed over the Continent are able to supply the greater part of the immense quantity of wine consumed in this country, as well as the still larger consumed in the towns and cities of their own. Of course the co-operative labourers would not attempt anything in this way; but the land that would have been given to the growth of vines, had the climate of England been suitable for it, would be at their disposal for raising the many kinds of land produce that could be grown in this country, but are imported into it as well as the produce of vines.

We come now to a point of comparison in which the system

of co-operative farming would prove itself incontestably superior to that of peasant proprietorship, and this would be in its capacity to give satisfaction to the masses when possessed of the franchise. It has already been pointed out that for a mechanic or farm labourer to be able to become a peasant proprietor of sufficient land to get even a bare living out of it, he would require a capital of £500. This is a calculation rather under than over the mark, as land in countries in which peasant proprietorship obtains, fetches a much higher price than the £30 an acre of the estimate here given. Neither a mechanic nor a farm labourer is ever likely to save up anything like £500. He could come into possession of such a sum only by a great fluke that would fall to the lot of only one in a thousand in his class. We are now speaking of the masses as a whole, and not of one in a thousand.

For either the mechanic or farm labourer to be able to borrow enough to make up the £500 he would have to offer a security, which in most cases would amount to one half, and £250 is a larger sum than most men of these classes could save at any rate by an age that would allow of their entering upon the laborious life of cultivating a farm by means of their own labour. Even then he would not be what the men of his class want each to be, the master of his own labour. In all probability he would get into the hands of a money-lender more exacting by far in his demands than any landowner, and from such a man he is not likely to get either fixity of interest, or fair rate of interest, and possibly he would not be allowed the third of the three F's—free sale—to say nothing of abatements in bad seasons. However, so rare would be the case of a mechanic or farm labourer saving up even £250 at a sufficiently early period in life that this fact alone is enough to condemn the system of peasant ownership as applicable to England. The peasant proprietor on the Continent has had advantages for getting his plot of land not open to wage-paid labourers in this

country. In most cases he has inherited it, though often with the drawback of a comparatively heavy mortgage created probably from his having to portion off a relation under the will of the ancestor from whom he got his little property. For the bulk of English workmen and farm labourers to be placed in the position of inheritors would take up a period of time lasting at least two or three generations, and it would then be only as the result of measures of such force as to amount practically to a revolution in the country.

Under the system, on the other hand, of co-operative farming by labourers, all the capital a mechanic or farm labourer would want to enable him to get upon the land to cultivate it in a way more satisfactory than as a wage-paid labourer, would be £20. With this £20 he could buy the four £5 shares entitling him to become a member of the fourth or lowest class of shareholders. By fixing the number of £5 shares as low as four for the money qualification for admission into a co-operative farm, such admission is thus practically made available to every young man in the country, if only he is capable of exercising the least amount of self-restraint for a very few years. Indeed, such a man has only to put into the Post Office Savings Bank 4s. a week out of his wages, and this for two years, and the feat is accomplished. A young man that could not do this would obviously be incapable of exercising the self-restraint, in other matters as well as his own money, needed to carry on a co-operative farm with the success it is capable of.

When once a member of a co-operative farm, the former mechanic or farm-labourer has only to conduct himself so as to secure his position in it, to become a prosperous man. Of course, if he were to turn out to be a fellow unwilling to perform his share of the work, or in any other way disagreeable to the manager and the rest of the partners, he would be expelled from the co-operative society, as he would be from any other. An extreme step of this nature would, however,

only be had recourse to after repeated warnings, to be followed by a resolution to that effect, come to at a meeting of all the members, before whom the offending member would be arraigned. On his expulsion, and on giving up all his shares, he would have all the capital he had given for them returned to him ; but the co-operation would be under no obligation to make him any compensation for the loss of prospects incurred through his own folly. In the case of a minor offence against the harmony of the co-operation, such as that arising from a sudden outbreak of temper, the members would form a committee of arbitration among themselves to settle the difficulty by the infliction of a fine on the disputant judged to be in the wrong.

It would be desirable that the landowners, both individually and in their collective official capacity of members of the Land Committees already suggested, should keep aloof from all squabbles unfortunately taking place among the members connected with the carrying on of the work of a farm, unless appealed to by the members themselves to assist them in restoring harmony. The landowners' sphere of usefulness would be not in intermeddling with the conduct of the affairs of a single co-operative farm, but in acting as a medium in any work requiring the co-operation of all the co-operative farms. In the case—for one instance out of many that might be given—now under discussion, of differences taking place between members of a farm requiring the removal of one or other from a co-operation, the landowners could settle the matter to the advantage of all parties by effecting for one of the disputants an exchange into another farm, just as an officer for a similar reason effects an exchange from one regiment into another.

Certain rules, to which on joining every member would have to give his consent in writing, would have to be drawn up in such a manner that, should he afterwards prove recalcitrant in any way, he would be debarred from bringing

an action against the co-operation in the event of his expulsion from it. That this should be the case would be clearly for the benefit of the co-operators themselves. It would never do for a member to have the power of breaking up a co-operative partnership, for, if this were the case, all those who thought their interests were injured by the existence of co-operative farms would take this course through a deputy to make them impracticable. But an opposition of this nature may be safely left to the mechanics of towns and farm-labourers to thwart, for they would be the persons chiefly to be injured by such tactics. These men, aided by the legislative influence of the landowners, would be able to overcome a far greater difficulty than this is likely to prove. It is to be remembered that co-operative farms would exist at a period of universal suffrage, when every one of the forty members of a farm would have a vote. Moreover, when these farms become established pretty generally over the country, the agricultural interest would play a very different part in the legislation of the country from what it has been playing under the solitary helpless tenant-farmer employer of labour, whose own men even have, under the direction of Labourers' Unions, been acting in antagonism to him. Thus, for the first time for many a year, if ever before, the interests of all engaged in agriculture would be united, and union, as we all know, is strength.

There are, however, several what may be called subjective reasons why the harmony among the partners of a co-operative farm is not likely to be disturbed. Besides the uselessness, in a legal point of view, of the partners quarrelling with one another just hinted at, every member would feel it would be decidedly to his own interest to be on good terms with the rest of the members. The most ill-tempered and dullest among them could not fail to see that his own prospects in life are bound up with the success of the undertaking; that the more successful the undertaking is, the larger must be his profits; and that it

cannot be successful unless all the co-operators pull together in harmony. The feeling of equality that would exist among all the members would tend greatly to promote this harmony. Even the younger members would, in all probability, take the reproofs of the manager set over them to see they did their work properly in good part, and not as wage-paid labourers under a tenant-farmer or bailiff, knowing that they were socially on an equality with the manager, and that what severity he may have used arose from the exercise of his duty to the whole co-operation ; that, therefore, in acting as he did, he acted for the interests of the young members as much as for his own ; that he was only treating the young members as he had been treated himself ; and that they would themselves become managers to direct others as they were being directed. All this exercise of their reasoning faculties would be an education of itself, tending to cause them to practise self-restraint for promoting harmony among the co-operators. In fact, so few are likely to be the cases of discord for these and other reasons, as to be hardly worth taking into account ; and they are alluded to now not from a fear that they would prove so many obstacles to the carrying out of the scheme, but to show that they had not been overlooked.

When a mechanic or farm labourer has once put his foot on the lowest step of the co-operative ladder, by having saved up £20, there would be nothing but his own conduct to stand in the way of his getting to the very top ; and when there, though he may not have the satisfaction of being a landowner, yet he would be in a far more enviable position in all other respects than nine-tenths of the peasant proprietors on the Continent. There is no change in the condition of the peasant proprietor from youth to old age. During all these years his horizon is bounded by the few acres he cultivates. Should his ambition ever soar above the plodding and unvarying routine of a long life thus spent, it would be to pay off

some of the money-lender's debt, or some of the encumbrances he has inherited with his little farm.

On the other hand, the mechanic or farm labourer who has had the good luck to put his £20 into a co-operative farm, would be passing through class after class of shareholders till he got into the first class. From holding four shares in the fourth at the beginning, he would get to hold sixteen in the third, thirty in the second, and fifty in the first. At last, as head manager, he would have the superintendence and control over a farm of 1,000 acres of highly cultivated land, which, with its forty co-operating partners, its machinery, and its tramways to and from markets, would, for all intents and purposes, be a factory for land produce on an extensive scale. While the once mechanic or farm labourer rejoicing in the possession of only £20 has arrived at this important position, the peasant proprietor of the Continent would, at the same age, be still pottering about his little plot of land, with no alteration in his condition but the having, perhaps, a son or a grandson to help him in his incessant toil. Even in respect to having such a solace to his perpetual round of drudging work, he need not be better off than the manager of a co-operative factory farm, since, if thought desirable, the sons of members could become members of the same farm as their father; and to facilitate this step was one of the objects in adding five supernumeraries or apprentices, not shareholders, to the forty shareholding members of each farm.

Let it be understood that the low sum of £20 just alluded to as being required from an incoming member relates more to a period when the co-operative farms have been established some years. At such a period, when a member of a higher class of shareholders dies or retires, no outside member would be allowed to buy his shares, and so take his place, whatever amount of capital this outsider may have. There would instead be a general rise through all the classes of shareholders,

according to priority of standing in them, provided the capital would be forthcoming to buy the shares caused by the vacancy to be for sale. Thus, in the course of time, the only vacancy left open for an incoming member, even in the event of the death or retirement of the head manager at the top of the first class of shareholders, would be ordinarily at the bottom of the fourth class. This is, in fact, one of the merits of the plan, since it would be so valuable for promoting thrift among the members. A man who had once let a chance of gaining a step in advance pass by through neglecting to practise some easily self-imposed restraint would receive a bitter lesson, that would be likely to impress strongly on his mind for the remainder of his co-operative career the necessity of practising the habit of thrift, if he should desire ever to get among the first class of shareholders of his co-operation. If the members of the co-operation would have an inducement to save their money, to prevent one of their own members stepping in before themselves to a vacancy, they would have a still greater one to save it to prevent an outsider.

All that has just been written refers to the introduction of fresh capital into the co-operative partnership, after the farms have been got into working order, and therefore after their capital of £5,000 each will have been raised. A word or two will now be said as to getting this £5,000 capital at the very outset. As was pointed out at the beginning, in giving a bird's-eye view of the system, if there should be a hitch at all in it, it would be on this very subject; and this from the fact that we have to deal with a capitalless class, the members of which, in every other respect, are the most suitable to become members of a system of co-operative farming at all, but especially by labourers.

For meeting this difficulty there would be two courses open. The first is to admit, at the outset, those of this capitalless class who had saved up £20, but only into the

fourth class of shareholders. The small capital of £20 required for the admission of these, they would surely be able to save up. The other three classes of shareholders would then have to be made up of small capitalists, some having £80, some £150, and some £250, with which to buy the requisite number of shares for admission into these classes. The possible drawback to this scheme would be in the getting men possessing these sums yet willing to work as labourers, even though masters of their own labour. Yet if the men who could bring as capital into the co-operation the comparatively small sums of either £80, £150, or £250, would not work as farm labourers, what a fiasco would be the attempt to introduce into this country the system of peasant proprietors, each of whom would require a capital of £500, and whose existence would have to be far more laborious, as we have been showing, than that of a partner-labourer in a co-operative farm; and, worse still, this greater labour would be attended with less profit!

Another way of meeting the difficulty of filling up the higher classes of shareholders at the outset would be by the land-owners individually, or collectively through the Land Committees, advancing to those who had once been farm labourers, and wished, under the new conditions of labour, to become so again, two-thirds of the capital wanted, provided these labourers could furnish one-third themselves as the result of their own savings, and not of borrowing. Any difficulty cropping up in the carrying out of this alternative would be of short duration. In fact, it would only occur with the first farms started, since the ten members of these farms in the second class of shareholders ought, after a time, to have saved up enough capital to admit of their going into a first class of a newly-started co-operative farm, supposed to be looking out for members with a capital sufficient to make up its total working capital of £5,000.

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In any arrangement connected with this alternative proposal, those men who had brought into the partnership the most capital should take precedence in the classes of shareholders, just as in the other, where the labourers find the whole of the capital. This would act as an additional stimulus to them to exercise thrift to furnish enough capital of their own as soon as possible. Evidently, the more capital they embark in the co-operation, the less need the landowners. These would naturally want to lend as little as possible. It must be borne in mind that, in any case, they would be lenders of the land, farm buildings, etc. This being so, they would only naturally be glad to see the co-operators themselves have a stake in the undertaking as large and as soon as possible.

It would not do for the landowners to lend all the capital required, alike for the reason just given and for others. For one thing, all being equally without capital, or nearly so, it would not be an easy task to apportion the labourers to the different classes of shareholders. Favouritism, or what the labourers might think so, would have to govern, in a great measure, the selection. Again, as farm labourers would not have been taught by experience to work to the best advantage the capital of a large undertaking like that of a co-operative farm, they might waste some of it in buying this experience—the more so, possibly, if it all belonged to landowners, and none to themselves. On the other hand, when the system has been in working order for some time, the farm labourers who had entered as young men into a co-operative farm by means of their £20 capital, would, long before they had been called on to manage its working, have obtained so thorough an insight into every particular respecting it, that, when they did undertake its management, they would enter upon it possessed of as much experience as if they had been managing it all their life.

The lending to farm labourers two-thirds, say, of the total

capital required to enable them with their own one-third to hold all the shares of a co-operative farm, would be attended with the following advantages:—In the first place, it would cause the system of co-operative farming to be worked from the very outset in the manner it would continue to be ever after, or till, at all events, it was superseded by a better. It would, secondly, put the climax at once to the popularity of the system among the ruling masses of the country; and, thirdly, it would be lent to men who would heartily give what is so necessary for making farming pay, their labour, though from their inexperience in conducting the extensive working of a co-operative farm of 1,000 acres they may at first waste some of the fruits of this labour.

Respecting, however, the management of a co-operative farm at the outset of its career, surely out of forty farm labourers one could be found capable of undertaking the task of manager, for the benefit of the whole co-operation. As in the case of finding the £5,000 capital, so in finding a competent manager—whatever difficulty there may be would occur only in respect to the first few farms started. After a little time, any of the members of the second class of shareholders of these few would have gained experience enough in the working of a co-operative farm to undertake the management of a newly-started one, and he would probably by the time have saved up the £250 required for buying the necessary number of shares. If he had not, the landowners would act wisely in lending him the slight difference.

It is not proposed that the land of the United Kingdom should all be turned in a year or two into co-operative farms, even if it were practicable to do so. Their establishment over the country would necessarily be a work of many years. There can hardly be a doubt that, before many years have passed, so popular among the labouring classes would be the co-operative farms already at work, that the landowners

would find no difficulty either in getting from the farms then in existence a competent manager with the requisite amount of capital, or in raising the necessary £5,000 capital from among the forty labourers wishing to monopolise to themselves the 1,000 £5 shares of every newly-started co-operative farm.

On the supposition that landowners have to lend capital, as well as land and buildings, a word or two will now be said as to the likelihood of this capital being paid back by the labourers of the co-operative farms, and when. On the latter point it is to be presumed that for their own advantage these latter would make an effort to pay off the debt owed by the co-operation as speedily as possible; and their power of doing so would lie in this, that being men unaccustomed to wants costing money, they could each pay the moderate rate of interest charged on the loan out of weekly wages, and devote the whole of the surplus profits at the end of the year to the paying off of the principal. When these collective debts as it were of honour, as well as legal, had been discharged, the system, even in respect of the first-started farms, would then proceed without a hitch, just as if the labourers had at once brought into the co-operation the whole of the £5,000 working capital. But it is beyond question necessary that the borrowed capital should be paid off in a few years, and if this, on trial, be found impracticable—about which there can hardly be any fear—the first alternative suggested of bringing in at first capitalists, irrespective of their ever having been farm labourers, would have to be adopted. Indeed, it would be advisable that the both should be tried on different farms at the same time. The labourers of the one would then be put on their mettle to make the exertion required of them to pay back as quickly as possible the loans advanced to them by the landowners.

The great point to be kept in view in respect to the two alternative plans would be that the money should either belong

altogether to the co-operating partners as in the one, or be partly lent by the landowners at a moderate rate of interest, as in the other ; so that no "Gombeen" man, or other money-lender of his stamp, with his twenty per cent. rate of interest, should ever have an opportunity of planting his foot within the fold of the co-operation. Could the co-operators but be saved from resorting to such men at the first start of the undertaking, there would be no fear of their ever being under the necessity to do so at any subsequent period.

This question of raising the £5,000 capital required at the outset for setting on foot a co-operative farm has been gone into at some length, because it is so important for the successful working of the scheme in all its completeness that the co-operators should be free from debt other than that due to the landowners. The very working of the system, as already shown, would be a sufficient safeguard that when the £5,000 had once been raised, there would be no occasion to borrow from outside sources. Should, however, in the course of years, £1,000 or even £2,000 more capital be found to be wanted for carrying on further operations connected with the factory farm, the forty co-operating partners ought to be in a position to lend it out of their own savings, at any rate with but a slight help from the landowners.

Concerning the only difficulty likely to arise in bringing the system into practice—the raising the necessary capital for the farms first started—it would be in overcoming it that the landowners would show their ability for the task here imposed on them to the greatest advantage. It could never occur but once, and this in only a few cases. Those of them who approve of and see no difficulty in the plan in other respects, have only to put their shoulders to the collar for one effort, and the great scheme is set going for ever that is to give contentment to the labouring masses of a country possessed of the suffrage, and that is to raise the agricultural interests so long depressed for

want of co-operation among all engaged in it, into a state of prosperity, corresponding to the position it ought to hold in every country.

Should the landowners here called on to make this one effort refuse to do so, let them ask themselves what is likely to be the outcome of such refusal. The leaders of the masses possessed of the suffrage are clamouring for a peasant proprietary. If there is a difficulty in getting forty labourers of these masses to raise among themselves £5,000 capital in order to cultivate 1,000 acres of land, what chance, may one ask, would 100 labourers of these masses have in raising £50,000 for purchasing the same number of acres, as well as cultivating them, as peasant proprietors? There can be only one way of surmounting this difficulty, and that is by confiscating the £30,000 out of the £50,000, that ought to be paid for the 1,000 acres; and not only this, but the greater part as well of the £20,000 required for the buildings and farm implements, etc., needed to work the 1,000 acres with profit. The confiscation would be of the capital of landowners, and of the tax-paying community, but in what proportions advocates for a peasant proprietary have not yet made known. If there is to be no confiscation, the 100 workmen or farm-labourers about to become peasant proprietors of the 1,000 acres, divided into 100 small farms of 10 acres each, will have to furnish all the capital; and, if 100 workmen and farm-labourers can, between them, get together £50,000, it ought not to be an insuperable task for forty of them to find the £5,000, required under the co-operative system, to farm in the lump the same number of acres. The truth is, it will be utterly impracticable to set up in this country the small farms of a peasant proprietary without resorting to confiscation, and this, too, on a gigantic scale. Under the system, on the other hand, of co-operation, this confiscation is avoided, partly by the landowners lending their land and the buildings thereon, and partly by the co-operating

labourers finding the rest of the capital wanted; which, from their not being hirers of labour, and of land only on fixed and moderate terms, they ought to and would be able to do without any difficulty.

The only approach to confiscation required for working the plan of co-operative farms would be in the grant to the co-operators of the fixity of tenure in the modified form suggested. This can hardly be said to amount to a confiscation peculiar to the system of co-operation, for it is one of the many concessions to be exacted from landowners on the programme of the Farmers' Alliance, and this without limit of duration, and without any compensating advantage. By the introduction, on the other hand, of a peasant proprietary, which is to take the land altogether away from its peasant owners, these owners, it is needless to observe, would be deprived of even the power of granting such a concession.

Even if the landowners were to look upon the modified grant of fixity of tenure here suggested to be necessary for the carrying out of the system of co-operation as a confiscation of their rights, this mild form of confiscation would be confined to themselves, and then only in their capacity of owners of land. There would be no need to force any of it on the taxpaying community not owners of land, as would be the case in the introduction of a peasant proprietary through the State; the only medium through which it could be done. It can hardly be supposed that political economists and others of liberal views about the distribution of the capital of others intend that the whole of the immense loss attending such introduction should fall upon that portion alone of capital invested in land. Besides an exemption from the confiscation of any of their capital, the taxpaying community of capitalists would be benefited by the adoption of the system of co-operative farms in having fresh fields open to them of investing a considerable portion of it without the least risk of loss.

Furthermore, the extremely mild form of confiscation, if it is to be called confiscation at all, implied in the grant of a modified form of fixity of tenure would not be without compensating advantages to landowners that would cover many times over whatever loss may accrue from it. In return for the fixity of tenure of the land granted to the co-operating labourers of a farm, landowners would receive fixity of security in the possession of their property and in receipt of the annual revenues therefrom, and this too without abatements for bad seasons. More than this, there would be fixity of security in the possession of, and in the annual income from, whatever capital they may further lay out on their land in the way of buildings for working profitably the system of co-operative farms. In no surer way than in making such a grant, by which alone could these farms succeed could be brought about a fixity of security in the maintenance of the institutions of the country, in which it is to be presumed owners of land would continue to feel an interest.

The system now under review would be superior to a peasant proprietary, not only in its dispensing with the necessity for the forcible transference, on a gigantic scale, of the capital of the country from its lawful owners to others, but in ultimately giving a greater amount of satisfaction to the working and labouring classes, now discontented with the manner and amount of remuneration given for their labour. It is not unjustifiable to assume that the effects of the introduction of the small farms of a peasant proprietary into this country would not differ from those resulting from their existence in countries on the Continent. It was pointed out, in the first chapter, how widespread is the discontent of the working and labouring classes in these countries of small farms, as manifested by the prevalence in them of secret societies, started with the main object of upsetting, if not destroying, the capital and the social institutions of these countries, based and

slowly built up on the existence of that capital; and how the revolutionary doctrines propagated by these secret societies are hindered from developing into an actual revolution only by the presence in most of these countries of small farms of an enormous military force, and in another of a large armed constabulary, in addition to an army of regulars.

Now, the satisfaction that would be imparted to givers of labour in this country by having placed before them facilities for co-operating together in the carrying on of industrial undertakings—especially that of cultivating the land through the aid to be given by owners of capital in the form of land—would be such as to render futile all attempts to start secret societies for the dissemination of the teachings of Socialism, Communism, Nihilism, and Fenianism. No greater enemies in the country would those attempting to spread abroad such doctrines meet with than the labourers of co-operative farms; for no class of men, as will be shown further on, would be greater sufferers from the working out of principles leading to the derangement of the order of things, on which the prosperity of the whole country is based. Without the numerical backing of workmen and labourers once discontented, but afterwards made contented by the system of co-operative farms, of little avail would be the energy and sophistical teachings of those profiting by the existence of secret societies for one or other of the above-mentioned evil purposes.

CHAPTER XV.

CO-OPERATIVE FARMS BENEFICIAL TO TRADE.

Trade of Country dependent on Agriculture—Two Requisites for Promoting Trade—Co-operative Store in a Co-operative Farm—Benefit to the Publishing Trade—Small Requirements of Peasant Owners—M. Sismondi on Isolation of Peasant Owners—Landowners of United Kingdom as Promoters of Trade—Need for retaining this Stimulus to Trade—Demand for Goods by Co-operating Farmers—Impoverished Condition of Farm Labourers.

So far but little or nothing has been alluded to respecting the effect that the system of co-operative farming by labourers would be likely to have on the trade of the country. When it is considered that this is essentially a trading country, and that for the promotion of this trade those engaged in it did not hesitate to greatly interfere with—to put it mildly—the interests of agriculture that were deemed by them to be opposed to the extension of this trade, it is justifiable to assume that something will be expected to be said in reference to the prospects of trade under the new form of carrying on the agricultural industry of the country. On this point the commercial world may rest assured it will have nothing to fear. On the contrary, the system now under review it would find to be superior in respect to its tendency and capacity to promote the trade of the country, especially the home branch of it, to the two other systems of agriculture with which it has all along been compared. In the opinion of most writers on the subject, it is of far more consequence to the general welfare of a country that its home trade should be in a flourishing condition than its foreign, and this for more than one reason, among which is this, that a home trade is founded upon the prosperity of the people therein. This being so, it is likely to be of much

longer duration, because less subject to periodical disturbance. Strangely enough, many of these writers, while admitting this, seem to have overlooked how greatly dependent is the prosperity of the people of a country, and therefore their home trade, on the well-being of those engaged in the cultivation of its soil.

It is clear that the form of cultivating the land of a country that is best adapted for increasing its trade is that which brings the greatest amount of wealth to its cultivators. Cultivators of land can promote trade only by being able and willing to purchase goods. In the one case they must be sufficiently well off, and in the other sufficiently influenced by a desire for some of the comforts and conveniences of life to induce them to exert themselves to obtain them. Now, in both these respects the system of co-operative farming would be found to have a beneficial effect upon the trade of the country. By it, first of all, the land is to be made extremely productive, so as to be able, as will be shown further on, to supply pretty well, if not quite, all the wants of its people with those crops suitable for growth on its soil; and this greatly increased source of wealth coming to the country, made possible through the co-operation of those engaged in creating it, will be for the most part distributed among the co-operators. These co-operators being in the country, and being engaged in extracting the wealth from its soil, it will not be the fault of the system that has brought such a condition of things about if they do not have the goods which the state of their finances would put them in a position to buy from home factories instead of foreign, but of the owners of these home factories. On this point, however, more will be said in the chapter on co-operative farms and co-operative factories.

The system of co-operative farms would effect more than place the co-operators in a financial position enabling them to purchase goods. It would be the means also of implanting in

them a disposition to take advantage of this position. It would, in fact, give the labouring cultivators of the soil higher notions of living in comfort, not perhaps unattended by a few luxuries. Even as regards food, the co-operating labourer would be better off than the peasant proprietor of the Continent, for he would be in a position to get something more than the mere produce of his farm to live upon. Touching clothing and such-like, as the co-operative labourers would live on the spot as close neighbours to one another, they and their families would make up quite a society of their own; and it is just possible that one of the labourers may be a typical Mr. Grundy, having a wife given to criticism, under the piercing stings of which something more than a mere covering of the body would be sought for. If the cottages were built by the landowners with a little taste, though not costing more, there would spring up also a rivalry among the inmates excited by the same restless Mrs. Grundy as to which of them should have the most becoming furniture. All these strivings after as high a state of comfort and decency of appearance as their means would command, consistent with the necessary practice of thrift, would greatly promote trade throughout the country, and a trade that would not be evanescent, but lasting.

As to the admittance of these aids to a more humanising condition of being into the circle of the co-operative farming community, it is proposed not to do this through the tradesmen of the nearest village, which may be miles off, but by the members combining together for distribution among themselves as well as for production for consumers outside. A store should be established, to be managed by one or more of the wives on the same principles which have succeeded so well in many co-operative societies for distribution. Thus, instead of each wife buying by retail her grocery at a high price and of indifferent quality at a chandler's shop in a village, she would get it at the farm store common to all; and this store

would get all the articles wanted by the members in large quantities at a time from wholesale houses, possibly at some large seaport town, at the lowest price, yet of the best quality.

As regards, again, the getting clothing, the store would get its cotton and woollen cloth for both inner and outer clothing by the full piece, to be retailed out again amongst the women members in yards. A great deal of this cloth ought to be made up by the women themselves for inner clothing, if not outer as well. One of the reproaches hurled by foreigners at the social system of England is the utter helplessness and apathy of the women in the families of the working men in towns and of farm labourers in respect to needlework, and all that goes to make their homes clean, tidy, and comfortable. It is more than probable that the living so near together of the families of the co-operative labourers, their intimate clanship consequent thereon, and their co-operating together for objects in common, acting as they would most beneficially on one another, would greatly help to wipe out this stain on the national character. By the aid of the co-operative store, of sewing machines, and of their own industry, the wives of the members of a co-operative farm would have it in their power to introduce into their husbands' houses a degree of comfort, cleanliness, and tidiness, if not an appearance of luxury, with which the home of not one peasant proprietor in twenty on the Continent could bear comparison, and which might possibly put to shame the mistress of many a family home in the middle ranks of life in this country.

It is not at all unlikely that the spirit of co operation prevailing on all sides among the men in their daily farm work for the benefit of all may be inhaled by the women, so as to induce them to supplement by their hands and heads the work of their husbands. There can hardly be a doubt that co-operation in this direction would procure a great many more home comforts at a much less cost, and would thereby greatly

increase the well-being of all engaged in the co-operation. As to the fitness of the wives of the co-operative labourers for the task here set them, it would be strange indeed if these wives should not receive sufficient training for so simple an occupation through the education given at the National and Board Schools to be able among them to manage with great profit to themselves and their belongings the distributive store of a co-operative farm, when women can be trained to exercise the franchise, to be clerks in Government offices, and to be medical practitioners.

In co-operative farms there would exist another way of promoting the trade of the country which ought not to be altogether overlooked. This would be the club-house, with its books, magazines, and newspapers, which it is proposed to establish on every co-operative farm. As these means of improving the minds of the labourers would all cost money, the purchase and constant renewal of them would benefit this branch of trade. The labourers would require now and then some change from their work, especially in the long nights of winter, and the club-house with its large reading-room would afford such a one of a more elevating tendency than what the wage-paid labourers of a farm find in a village public-house. The members would want a building of some kind with a room large enough to admit of their holding therein their quarterly and half-yearly meetings; and it would cost but little more to have a building that would answer for a club-house as well. An account of this club-house and the objects it is intended to subserve will, however, be given later on in the chapter treating of co-operative farming as a civilising agency.

So much for the home life of the members of co-operative farms in respect to promoting the trade of the country. With it will now be compared that of a peasant proprietor, as described in the work of a well-known writer on political economy. M. Sismondi, in his "*Etudes sur l'Economie Poli-*

tique, Essai III.," says:—"Le paysan, qui fait avec ses enfans tout l'ouvrage de son petit heritage qui ne paie de fermage à personne au dessus de lui, ni de salaire à personne au dessous, qui règle sa production sur sa consommation, qui mange son propre blé, boit son propre vin, se revêt de son chanvre, et de ses laines, se soucie peu de connaître les prix du marché, car il a peu à vendre et peu à acheter, et il n'est jamais ruiné par les revolutions du commerce."

This truthful description of the habits and surroundings in respect to trade of peasant proprietorship is taken from a work which seems never to tire of singing the praises of this system of land tenure and cultivation. Now it discloses, be it observed, a state of things in direct opposition to what would prevail under a system of co-operative farms. In peasant ownership all is isolation. Under it, each peasant with his family is all but excluded from the outer world, and he has to be satisfied that he and his belongings should consume but little more than what they produce themselves. What does a peasant owner want with the fabrics of the manufacturers of towns, when almost everything required for himself and family in that way can be procured from the raw material of his farm to the garments made ready for wear by the women of his family? What, again, does such a man want with the products of the tropics? The honey from his beehives provides for him all the luxuries in this way he makes bold to covet. As to buying anything in the way of literature to improve the mind, this is a thing never thought of by the bulk of peasant proprietors, much less carried into practice. There are exceptions, of course, to this isolated manner of existence, especially in cases where the peasant proprietors, living near towns, are able to farm a larger quantity of land than is usual with this class by the occasional aid of wage-paid labour, and can consequently obtain a better price for their produce. It would not answer the purpose of these men to consume only what their farm produces. When

taking their produce to market they are constantly coming into contact, in these towns, with people who find it cheaper in the end not to produce all they consume. But these are the few while the majority, by far, of peasant proprietors are here alluded to.

In weighing the claims of the system of a peasant proprietary to be of benefit to the trade of a country, only one person had to be taken into account, the peasant owner, in whose person is combined the function of cultivator as well as owner of land. In considering, on the other hand, the claims of the present system of employer of labour farmer, there are three different persons, each with separate functions—1. The lender of the land; 2. The hirer of both land and labour; and 3. The lender of the labour; or in other words the landowner, the middleman farmer, and the labour-owner or farm-labourer.

However remiss may have been the owners of land in other countries in giving encouragement to the trade of their country, it cannot be said with any truth that owners of land in England have been wanting in this respect. So far from their having failed in promoting the home trade of their country, they have been doing all in their power to contribute towards its extension. As a rule, they have been living in their country houses on their estates, and have been spending therein and about the greater part of their income, and this in no niggardly spirit. Now, the spending of incomes implies the promotion of trade, whether the money thus spent goes in improving the estate or in the purchase of goods to administer to necessities or luxuries. To such an extent has this been done by landowners that not a few of them have thereby got into financial difficulties more or less temporary through exceeding their incomes. In those cases where the income was more quickly spent than was consistent with prudence, the loss arising from such imprudence fell, not upon trade, but upon the landowner. Trade was rather advantaged than otherwise by this reckless-

ness, for the money of the spendthrift was circulated all the sooner through the hands of the trading community. Even the greatest enemies of landowners do not bring against them a charge of failure in contributing in proportion to their means towards the maintenance of the home trade of the country. Indeed, so much is trade indebted to what has hitherto been known as the landowning class, that it is a question whether, on its disappearance from the scene by the introduction of a peasant proprietary, some of the higher branches of trade, especially those connected with the fine arts, would not disappear too.

One of the advantages to be derived from introducing the system of co-operative farming by labourers instead of a peasant proprietary as a substitute for the present system of middleman farmer is that the landowning factor of this latter would be retained. More than this, it would be retained in far greater vigour for the benefit of trade ; for under the new system the landowners, not having to make abatements in rent in some cases amounting to a half and in most to a quarter of their incomes, would have more to spend in gratifying their tastes and ideas of comfort, all of which expenditure would go to promote the trade of the country. It may be relied on that whatever incomes they would get from lending their land to the labourers of co-operative farms would not be hidden up in secret drawers, but circulated quickly and freely for the benefit of trade, and that in most cases this circulation would take place in the very districts from which their revenues would come. This is more than can be said of the large revenues got by the shareholders of the Land Mortgage Banks of the Continent, through charging a high rate of interest for their loans to peasant proprietors to enable them to buy and cultivate their land.

In regard, however, to the two other factors in the system of employer of labour farmer, the employer of labour and the

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farm-labourer—above all, the latter—it cannot be denied that the trade of the country is benefited but little by their existence. This arises from their getting so little profit from the cultivation of the land. It is this poverty which makes them unable to become purchasers of manufactured goods on a scale large enough to benefit the trade of the country to any appreciable extent; and this poverty springs from their faulty mode of cultivating the land under the system by which not sufficient capital is employed in procuring labour and fertilisers for it to make it productive. To rob the landowners, as the Farmers' Alliance talks of doing, would not bring the lacking capital. Such a step would certainly not increase the trade of the country. To put it in the most favourable light, it would be only like lengthening one end of a stick by the addition of a piece cut off from the other. The additional wealth required for increasing the trade of the country must be extracted not from a class already contributing so largely to it, but from the soil; and this can be done only by the vigour imparted to it from a fresh influx of labour and capital to be obtained only by a change of system.

This fresh influx of labour and capital would be best brought about by the system of co-operation. Under this system, be it remembered, the co-operating labourers are to be owners both of the labour and capital required for working their farm. This labour would consequently be of the best quality, and the capital, as it would be employed in purchasing machinery, manures, &c., to assist the labour in raising as much produce as possible from the land, would be laid out to the greatest advantage. In this respect the capital of the labourers of a co-operative farm would be much more profitably employed than the capital of peasant proprietors, since it would not be employed in securing the results of labour by the purchase of the land on which the labour is to be bestowed. If the landowners would but grant the fixity of tenure of the kind

here suggested, the labourers of a co-operative farm would be under no necessity to stint their labour of the capital required to turn it to the best account, or to secure its fruits to burden themselves in addition with a heavy debt at a high rate of interest, as have to do peasant proprietors. With, then, the best of labour always at command, and in sufficient quantity, and with enough capital laid out to the best advantage by assisting that labour, the partners of a co-operative farm could not be otherwise than highly prosperous. Such prosperity, it is needless to say, would give no little impulse to the trade of the country, and this, too, without lessening the contributions of landowners to the same end.

Under the present system of employer of labour farming the very reverse of all this has taken place. It is, therefore, not surprising that all three factors engaged in it have had their power for swelling the bulk of the trade of the country so greatly curtailed. The abatements of rents which the landowners have been having to make more or less for some years have compelled them to well-nigh limit their expenditure to the procuring of necessities, the result of which has been to ruin many of those engaged in that branch of trade connected with luxuries. Again, those who ought to have benefited most by the system, if any benefit was to be got out of it, have many of them become bankrupt, and many more, it is reported, are on the brink of insolvency. These middlemen farmers have been preventing the co-operation of capital and labour by thrusting themselves in wedgelike between the two as hirers of both, land being part of the capital. Yet, for all this, they have not been benefiting themselves, and consequently have done but little to augment the trade of the country.

In making these remarks it is not intended to cast any reflection on the actions of these men, of many of whom any country may well be proud; they are, on the contrary, to be pitied as being victims to a system of land tenure, which the

march of events, over which they could not have had any control, has rendered injurious no less to themselves than to the country at large. In short, the workings of free trade and labourers' unions have caused them to be looked upon as impediments to a profitable cultivation of the soil of their country; and the advice here given in all friendliness to those who have not yet been drawn into the vortex of insolvency is that, if they wish to continue to take part in the agricultural industry of their country, they should cease to act the part of a wedge between lenders of land and of labour by acting as hirers of both these commodities, but to rank themselves either on the side of landowners or co-operating labourers according to their position as capitalists.

If, under the present system of middlemen farmers, neither the landowners nor the farmers have of late years been able to do but little to better the trade of the country, the farm labourers have been able to do still less. The condition of the farm labourers in this country is too well known to need to give it here. It may be summed up by saying it is one long struggle to keep themselves in sufficient health to go through their incessant toil; and were it not for the relief they sometimes get from the clergy and the members of the land-owning class, and a place of refuge in the workhouse to fall back upon, their position would become so intolerably hard that they would, as a class, cease to be fit for cultivating the land. It is obvious that a class that can exist only through the kind offices of charity, either private or public, however numerous its members may be, cannot be said to be in a condition to promote trade.

The condition of this class is never likely to be improved so long as its labour is remunerated by wages alone. There is always a tendency, perhaps natural, on the part of hirers of labour to give as little for it as they can; and the employers of labour in agriculture have greater facilities for doing this than

those in, perhaps, any other industry, They have always more applicants for their unskilled work than they have work to give, to say nothing of the lack of capital of nearly all, and with very many of enterprise, for employing more labour. It is for these reasons that the condition of agricultural labourers is not likely to be improved by the concessions the members of the Farmers' Alliance are seeking to extort from landowners. If the landowners were to be made to give them their land right out without being allowed to reserve to themselves a vestige of interest in it, these farmers would then not be better off than were these farmers before the Corn Laws were repealed, when they could get 120s. a bushel for their corn. Yet in those days, though these middlemen farmers were making large fortunes, their labourers were no better paid than are the farm labourers of the present.

Employers of labour give only the rate of wage they are forced to give by circumstances they cannot control. This is the market rate controlled by supply and demand. Farm labourers would not be receiving even the low rate they are now doing, were not the hirers of their labour compelled to give it by the action of Labourers' Unions. Unfortunately for the labourers, they do not gain much by the keeping up of their rate of wage, as it cannot be done without the costly machinery of their Unions, which the labourers have to maintain at their own cost. Even when the middlemen farmers do get from their landowners all that is asked for through their alliance organisation, there will be no guarantee that the increased competition from the importation of produce from America and other countries will not force them to try to reduce the wages of their labourers to a point even lower than they are now. This would result in a greater reliance on the part of labourers upon their Unions, and so in a greater expenditure from their reduced wages to counteract this action of their employers. In fact, between the upper millstone of

the employers of labour farmers, even when these do get all the claims satisfied demanded by the Farmers' Alliance, and the nether millstone of Labourers' Unions, the condition of the wage-paid farm labourer is not likely to be brought nearer to a state in any way beneficial to trade. It is far more likely to degenerate into a condition worse, if possible, than it now is; and this is such as to be a scandal and a reproach to so wealthy and civilised a country as England is supposed to be.

To what extent, on the other hand, the forty labourers of a co-operative farm would promote the trade of the country it would be impossible to say to a nicety. The capacity of the system for this purpose would, of course, depend on the extent of its power to put the co-operators into a position enabling them to purchase goods, and this would depend on the prospects of co-operative farming. The discussion of these prospects it is not intended to enter upon in this chapter, but in a subsequent one. Here, however, it will suffice to observe, by anticipation, that the forty members and their belongings of a co-operative farm of 1,000 acres ought to be placed in a position to consume altogether more than double the amount of goods that the employer of labour farmer, and his dozen labourers, half permanent, half occasional, farming the same number of acres, under the present system, have been consuming. What this would amount to for the whole country may be gathered from the fact that, if these co-operative farms of forty partners were distributed over the land of the United Kingdom at present in cultivation, there would be 50,000 of them. This would give 2,000,000 co-operative labourers, most of whom would be married and fathers of families. The manufacturers and traders of this country will now be able to form some idea of the effect the system of co-operative farms is likely to have on the trade of the country, inasmuch as these 2,000,000 family groups are not to be, some of them, ever on the verge of bankruptcy, as if they belonged to employers of

labour farmers, nor are others of them to be eking out a scanty living by charity, as if to farm labourers, but to be highly prosperous.

The manufacturers of England must surely see by this time that, in their over-eagerness to make goods for all the world, they have been sacrificing their home trade. They were forewarned that this would be the case when the battle between Free Trade and Protection was fought; they were then told, what has since come to pass, that if the growers of foreign produce were to be made rich enough to buy largely of the manufactured goods of England through taking off the import duties on this produce, it could only be accomplished by impoverishing the growers of home produce, so that what the manufacturers would gain in one way would be more than lost to them in another. However, short-sighted avarice gained the day against foresight and patriotism; and what is now to be done by those who are now suffering from their own unaccountable want of forecast is to throw the blame upon those who led them astray—certain writers on political economy. If the manufacturers of England had largely augmented their foreign trade so as to make up for the small increase in their home trade, instead of the very large one that ought to have resulted from a large increase of population, of inventions, of facilities for communication of late years, success might have justified to some extent their selfishness. But this is just what they have not done. They must be cognisant by this time of having met with more than their match in the manufacturers of other countries, and notably so of some of the colonies, and above all of the United States. They are now finding they are losing their hold on the markets of these countries, to gain which they not wisely destroyed their home markets.

Strangely enough, it seems never to have struck the manufacturers of England that the wealth gained through the well-

high ruin of the agricultural interest of their own country might be employed more advantageously than in buying their fabrics. What were the writers on political economy about not to tell them that this wealth might possibly be employed instead in starting factories in these foreign countries, turning out in quality, if not price, goods preferred not only by their own people, but by consumers in other countries as well? As the prospects of British manufacturers of getting their foreign trade back grow every year dimmer and dimmer, is it not incumbent on them to turn their attention towards recovering their home trade? There is, however, nothing they could do to bring about this most desirable object more effectually than to improve the condition of the actual tillers of the soil of their country by the establishment throughout it of co-operative farms. This would be a far more sensible proceeding than to carry out what they are so constantly threatening to do—their resolution to transfer their capital to a foreign country. In what country not blessed with a Land Department would they find remunerative openings for the investment of their capital? They, perhaps, contemplate taking their capital to the United States; but to do so, owing to the enormous wealth made of late years in that country at the expense of the agricultural interest in this, would be about as sensible as to take coals to Newcastle.

CHAPTER XVI.

CO-OPERATIVE FARMS A CIVILISING AGENCY.

Connection between Trade and Civilisation—Description of Civilisation by Certain Authors—Causes of Want of Civilisation in Peasant Owners—Clubhouse and Reading Room of a Co-operative Farm—Objections to a Clubhouse Refuted—Manual and Labour Reading not Incompatible—Co-operation Cause of Civilisation in Towns—Co-operative Farms as Producers of Future Labour—Lack of Civilisation in Farm Labourers—October Brewings in Co-operative Farms—Co-operative Farms as Civilisers of Natives of Asia and Africa.

THE quotation made in the last chapter from M. Sismondi's work on political economy to illustrate the exceedingly few wants peasant proprietors have for the goods supplied by manufacturers and traders, is also applicable for showing how little advanced in what is called civilisation are these same peasant proprietors. That these peasant proprietors should be both bad customers to manufacturers and traders and uncivilised can hardly be a matter of surprise, when the intimate relation between civilisation and trade is considered. So close is this relation that civilisation can be said to exist only in those communities in which there is a considerable intercourse through the medium of trade.

The connecting link between civilisation and trade is wealth. Trade calls forth wealth, because it stimulates the production of it from that source of all wealth, the land, and much, if not most, of this wealth is laid out in procuring comforts and luxuries of a civilising tendency, and this again constitutes trade. The two thus act and re-act on each other, and are dependent both of them on the cultivation of the soil. Even the metals are obtained indirectly from the earth through agriculture, for it is only through the strength imparted by the

food produced by agriculture that the miners can extract these metals. But not only does the cultivation of the earth benefit trade by producing food as an exchangeable commodity for fabrics, but it does so by producing the raw materials, without which these fabrics could not be manufactured.

Seeing, then, that both trade and its result, civilisation, are dependent on the food and raw material for fabrics produced from the soil by its cultivators, there must surely be something wrong with any system of farming that does not allow of these cultivators taking part pretty freely in these results of their labours. In the last chapter it was shown what little influence the cultivators of the soil under both the system of a peasant proprietary and that of an employer of labour farming have had on the trade of the country in which each system has respectively obtained. There will be as little difficulty in pointing out in the present chapter how extremely little these cultivators have been influenced by the civilisation of the age, which their labour has been tending so largely to promote.

With respect to what is called civilisation, most people know what the word means, though few are able to define it. J. S. Mill, in his well-known work on Logic, says:—"Whatever be the characteristics of what we call savage life, the contrary of these, or the qualities which society puts on as it throws off these, constitutes civilisation." "The fundamental idea of civilisation," writes M. Guizot, "is progress or development, the perfecting of civil life, or of society properly so called, but comprising also the development of the individual internal life, the development of the man himself, of his faculties, his sentiments, his ideas. . . . Hence civilisation subsists on two conditions, and manifests itself by two symptoms—the development of social activity and that of individual activity, the progress of society and that of humanity." According to Buckle, "The measure of civilisation is the triumph of the mind over external agents. . . . In Europe the tendency has been in men to

triumph over nature ; out of Europe, in nature to triumph over man." From the tenor of the above remarks, and others that might be quoted from works of like high authority on the subject, there can hardly be a doubt that civilisation denotes a state of advancement from the savage state to that higher and more perfect condition which both reason and revelation lead us to believe to be the ultimate destiny of the human race.

Though most of the above quotations may be descriptions of what the majority of people understand by the word civilisation rather than definitions, they suffice as a basis for enabling the reader to judge to what extent the cultivators of the soil have been influenced by it through either the system of a peasant proprietary or that of an employer of labour farming, and to what extent they are likely to be through the system of co-operative farming here suggested as a substitute.

However much people may differ as to what constitutes civilisation, they must all have a standard of some sort in respect to it to form a judgment upon, and they must all acknowledge that hitherto the actual tillers of the soil have fallen short of that standard, however low it may be. Take, for instance, the case of peasant proprietors. The same isolation which prevents the peasant proprietor from trading with his fellow creatures must also prevent his taking part in the civilisation, which the intercourse necessary to trade, and the comforts, luxuries, and other results of trade have ever brought about. Shut out as he is by his isolated existence from well-nigh all connection with the outside world, he can know but little of what is going on in it. This ignorance is caused by the character of his work in two ways—first, its remoteness from the resorts of human beings, and secondly, its engrossing nature.

More or less is this the case with all engaged in the actual tillage of the land, whatever may be the nature of the tenure under which it is carried on. Those whose fate it has been to live in an English village must often have been struck by the

ook of mental voidness there is about labourers constantly engaged in farm work, which is not visible in the artisans of towns. There can surely be nothing about the work itself on a farm to cause this difference. It cannot certainly be from its being less interesting through a want of variety in it, for in no factory is the work of an operative anything like so various. Nor is there any work in towns executed by wage-paid labour more adapted for calling forth the intelligence of the labourer than that connected with a farm. In the work of a farm labourer there are not only the characteristics of each of the many varieties of crops to be studied, but the breeding of animals and the many different maladies to which they are all liable, and, on the top of these, the nature of the soil and the variations in the weather. Yet, with all these incitements to intelligence in his favour, how has it come to pass that, by general consent, the farm labourer has been reckoned to have the least?

There is nothing in the work of the peasant proprietors of the Continent to make them more intelligent than the farm labourers of England. Even when the peasant does own the land he tills, there is nothing in the fact of his being a small landowner that would of itself make him more intelligent than the farm labourer of this country. Possibly he may have his intellect sharpened a bit by the handling of more money by the sale of his produce than can a farm labourer by receipt of wages; but, if M. Sismondi's account be true of the extent of the financial enterprises of the present proprietors of the Continent, even about this there may be a doubt.

As far as a knowledge of things outside farm work is concerned, it is possible that in some countries the peasant proprietor may be to a certain extent superior in intelligence to the farm labourers of this country, owing to the Governments of these countries having provided schools for their education of a better class than have been placed within the

reach of our own farm-labourers, and to their compulsory service of three years in the Army. But in the incessantly toiling life the peasant proprietor is obliged to lead the little education thus picked up can never be of any service to him as a mental and moral exercise. It can only be rendered serviceable by being constantly added to by either coming into contact with his fellow-creatures or by reading now and then the thoughts of others recorded in print. But it is mainly in both these respects that the system of peasant proprietorship is so unsatisfactory a form of the settlement of the land tenure of a country laying claim to be in any way civilised. As to the dangers to the social institutions of a country attendant on having all its land held by an isolated, non-reading, and therefore an illiterate class, a word or two will be said in the next chapter on "Co-operative farming as a conservative agency."

In counteracting the two spoken-of drawbacks to the progress of cultivators of the land in all that goes to make up what is called civilisation, there can hardly be a more effective agency than co-operative farms. Co-operation in any form, provided it is brought about for worthy objects and from worthy motives, has necessarily a civilising tendency, since the very act itself bespeaks a subordination of the mind and will for carrying out the purpose common to all the co-operators, on which it is engaged. The system now under review would effect a great deal more than what is implied in forty men co-operating together to get through a certain amount of work. It would be of itself a constant training of the mind for every member, from his first entrance into a co-operative undertaking as a supernumerary lad, to the time when he should become one of its five directors, and all this would be independent of the great variety of mental exercise in the daily work of a highly productive farm. It stands to reason that a partnership in an extensive factory of land produce, as would be a co-operative farm, would afford a much wider scope for the thinking

faculties of its members than would the peddling life, bounded by a few acres, of the solitary peasant proprietor, or than the allotted task of field labour of the wage-paid labourer. With these two latter the fear of a foreclosure of one and of a drop in wages of the other is the predominating incentive to the exercise of their thoughts.

Much as the co-operative farms would promote in their very working the civilisation of their members by giving a healthy stimulus to their thinking powers, yet they are capable of doing even more than this in the same direction. They are capable of being the means by which these co-operators should have an abundance of food administered to their thoughts from sources altogether outside their farming operations. In this respect, perhaps, more than in the other would the organising quality of co-operative farms prove itself vastly superior to the isolation of a peasant proprietary, and to the utter helplessness of wage-paid labour. It need hardly be said that the agency for this organising quality would be the club-house already briefly alluded to, with its library of standard works and books of reference, and its large reading-room containing magazines and newspapers. What but a system based on co-operation could give rise to such an institution as a club-house? Imagine the one hundred peasants of the Continent, each working apart from the others all day, as if they belonged to different hemispheres, and owning among them 1,000 acres, combining together to start a club-house of the kind here suggested for each co-operative farm of the same number of acres! Imagine too, the labourers of a tenant farmer occupying 1,000 acres combining together for the same object! Yet the idea of this latter system being capable of causing so great a stride towards the civilisation of the cultivators of the soil working under it, is no more absurd than is that of a peasant proprietary.

Club-houses, as here suggested, but of a much more

expensive kind, are being established in nearly every town in the kingdom, for the mental improvement of the wage-paid labourers of these towns. Not one of these would have been started but for the principles of co-operation being put into practice, and in the majority of cases the co-operating contributors have been landowners—the very class who would have it so much in their power to help the members of a co-operative farm in the starting of their co-operating club-house. The part to be contributed by the landowners ought to be the erection of the building itself, and the supply of books, perhaps, by way of gift for the library; while that for the co-operators should be the payment of a rent on the building high enough to cover a moderate rate of interest, and a percentage over as a reserve for clearing off the building debt in, say, fifty years. In addition to this the members would have to pay all the expenses incidental to the use of the club, such as would be incurred in lighting and warming it, and in supplying the reading-room with a sufficient number of magazines and daily and weekly newspapers.

It would be of the greatest importance to have a club-house connected with every co-operative farm. There need be no provision made in it for games. The purposes for which it would be most wanted would be for social converse and for reading. Closely engaged as the co-operative labourers would be in their daily farm work, their only means of getting to know what would be going on in the outside world would be through reading the newspapers in the reading-room of the club-house, or in hearing the news from those who had read them there. In fact, it would act as a link of mental connection between themselves and the people of towns and villages. It should be noted that these co-operative labourers would acquire the capacity of reading with a tolerable amount of ease to themselves through their education at the National or Board schools; and as they would have the privilege of exercising the suffrage, it

would obviously only be prudent on the part of the landowners to put them in a position of acquiring the necessary information for giving their votes with judgment. Furthermore, the club-house of each co-operative farm would form one of the bonds of union between it and all the other co-operative farms in a manner and for a purpose to be explained by-and-bye.

It would not be a matter of surprise to hear that some hands had been held up in astonishment at the notion of such a thing as that farm labourers should have a club-house. The owners of these upheld hands would probably say that a club-house would prevent the success of a co-operative farm by its enticing the men away from their work. There need be no fear of such result coming about. The working of the co-operative system would have a sufficiently counteracting tendency to prevent it. If the co-operators under the system did not reap the reward of their labour to the full, the objection might have some weight. The member who would frequent the club-house in the daytime, when he ought to be at work in the field, would not only have to pay a double penalty, first by a direct fine, and secondly by a diminution of profits at the end of the year, but he would also incur the risk of being turned out of the co-operation altogether. However fond a co-operative labourer may be of reading, he would hardly care to indulge himself in this luxury at so high a price. The difficulty, however, could easily be got over by not opening the reading-room till dark, and the outdoor work is over.

The reading-room would be useful to all the members of a co-operative farm at all their respective ages, and would accordingly be greatly prized by them; but where it would be more especially useful would be in the case of the young unmarried members in the fourth class of shareholders, waiting, before marrying, till they had been able to pass over that terrible gap between the possession of £20 and £80, the

capital necessary for buying the 16 shares of the third class, and of the five apprentice lads in no class of shareholders at all. The benefit such would gain from a reading-room of the kind suggested would be so great that were it only on their account there certainly ought to be one. For one thing, in no other way could these youngsters get so much relaxation and enjoyment at so little expense and of a nature that would be of so much advantage to them in after years.

Landowners would, moreover, reap no little profit themselves from the kind of training in their leisure moments the reading-room would give these young men. They should bear in mind that it is these lads who would in the course of time arrive at the management of the co-operative farm; it is these lads to whose skill, sobriety, and judgment their property would be consequently entrusted, and it is these lads with whom, in the capacity of chief manager of the farm and agent of the landowner, they would be constantly coming into contact. The moral as well as mental training, therefore, of such men in their youth would be surely worth attending to, and through no more effective medium could this be done than by providing for them a reading-room with well-chosen books, magazines, and newspapers, to which they could go whenever they could snatch a few moments in the evenings from their farm work.

The reason why the members of a co-operative farm would find time for an occasional indulgence in mental recreation would be owing to the peculiarity of farm work. At the time of preparing the land by a thorough cleansing before putting in the seed, and then again of harvest, the shareholders of a co-operative farm would have probably to work so hard as not to be able to give themselves any time for reading—except, by-the-by, on Sunday. But this need not be the case while the crops are growing, and during the long nights of winter. On such occasions they might, by the exercise of a little

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ingenuity, greatly ease one another. It is true that, under the new style of farming to be carried on by co-operative labourers (more after the manner of the small farms of peasant proprietors than of the large farms of employers of labour), the harvests would be taking place oftener, and thus the work of the farm would be going on more equally all the year round; yet the difference would not be so great as to hinder from holding good, to a certain extent, what has been said in respect to the leisure time that would be occasionally at the disposal of the co-operative labourers.

We are not of those who think that manual labour and fondness of reading cannot go together. The seeming incompatibility of the two is an old prejudice, for which there has never been any ground. Some of the greatest thinkers have been labourers at the hardest of manual toil, even while engaged in authorship. As one instance out of many that might be given, the name of Elihu Burritt ought to occur to most minds. There can hardly be a doubt that the reading-room and its literary attractions would be the means of increasing rather than of diminishing the amount of labour turned out every year by the co-operative partners. It would certainly act as a stimulus to their exertions to know what is going forward in the world outside their co-operative sphere; and in no more effective way as regards smallness of cost, quantity of matter, or saving of time could they obtain this information. Why, not to have a club-house, with its reading-room and mental pabulum therein, would be to make of co-operative farm a mere money-getting machine, and of its members the mindless bands and wheels of such machine, and so to deprive the system of all power of lifting up the co-operators to a higher point mentally and morally of enlightenment and civilisation than it was ever before possible for farm labourers, as a class, to approach anywhere near. Unless the

mind of the co-operators, as well as their material prosperity, will have been benefited by the system of co-operative farming now under review, it will not have produced anything like the full effect intended.

How different from the outline here drawn of what is likely to be the position of the labourers of a co-operative farm in respect to their claim to be entitled civilised beings is that of the peasant proprietors of the Continent? The life of most of these small landowners is, comparatively speaking, even according to the account of their advocate, M. Sismondi, but little removed from that which, after all, constitutes savagedom; and every one not having a theory to maintain who has lived in the districts in which the system prevails must bear witness to the truth of his description. The want of intelligence revealed in this state of things arises from the necessity for the intense absorption of the time, thoughts, and energies in the *petite culture* of peasant proprietors to make it yield them a living, and from the capital of these men being much too small for their dual position of landowner and cultivator. Pinched as they are all their lives in both time and money what can such men care for improving their mind, or even for knowing what is going forward in the vast world outside their own extremely circumscribed sphere? But why is this? It is because there is no co-operation among them of the least kind, or for any in the least purpose. Each peasant proprietor, instead of co-operating with other peasant proprietors to get thereby far more produce out of his land at a far less cost, and to spend on the body the profits thus made in a most economical manner by means of a co-operative store, and on the mind by means of a co-operative club-house, acts completely on his own account, as if there was not another peasant proprietor in the country with whom he could co-operate. No wonder that this incapacity on the part of peasant proprietors to co-operate among themselves has been attended

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with results so unsatisfactory to all wishing for the advancement of mankind in civilisation.

What causes a greater amount of wealth, comfort, luxury, and other signs of civilisation in towns and cities than in the villages of the country? It is that a greater development of co-operation exists among their indwellers, and as a rule the greater is the town the greater are these signs of civilisation produced by co-operation. Even in the matter of water and drainage, which one would think ought to be in a much better state where there are much fewer people to cause the pollution of the former by the latter, the one is happily often found in a less impure and the other in a less ineffective state in the largest and most densely populated cities than in villages.

In fact, the system of co-operative farming by labourers ought to be adopted if only that it would bring some of the benefits of civilisation to those engaged in the manual toil of tilling the land more effectually than any other system can possibly do. Besides the beneficial working to that end of the co-operative farm itself, this would be done through the two co-operating adjuncts connected with it, the co-operative store and the co-operative club-house. Thus, by means of co-operation, many of the civilising influences enjoyed by the working classes of towns would be enjoyed by the labourers of co-operative farms, though living away from towns. Such excrescences of civilisation in towns and cities as public-houses, gin-palaces, and music-halls, these labourers would have to do without; for the club-house, though public in one sense, yet in a potable one it would not be so. But these are the fungoid growth of civilisation, and have no connection with the true sap; and, moreover, they are not the fruits of co-operation, but of individual enterprise.

So much for the civilising tendencies of co-operative farming upon the labourers themselves engaged therein. These effects of co-operation could not fail to be of lasting benefit to

the community at large. The co-operative farms would every year produce crops of human beings as well as of land produce. They would therefore form the nurseries and training grounds for generation after generation of labourers to meet the demands for labour, skilled and unskilled, in the towns. Even though there would be 45 males engaged on each co-operative farm, it is not likely to give employment to all the sons of the co-operating members who would every year be of an age to work for a living. On the farm itself, the vacancies open among the apprentices would possibly not amount to more, on an average, than two a year, while the number of lads grown up to an age to fill them would perhaps average more than half-a-dozen, possibly a dozen. The surplus number in each year of all the co-operative farms would then have to go to the towns for employment.

It would be of great importance to the employers of these lads that their training at the co-operative farms should be such as to cause them to turn out intelligent, truthful, honest, and industrious. All these qualities in the lads a co-operative farm, if thoroughly worked out on the system, ought to bring about to the full satisfaction of their employers. A great deal would, of course, depend on the idiosyncracies of the parents of each boy and girl, but these parents would be more or less influenced in their home life by the qualities that would be developed in the daily work of co-operation on the farm. From these and other causes the boys and girls, yearly going into service from these farms, ought, from their having had on the whole a much better moral and intellectual training in their childhood, to be far better fitted to make themselves useful in whatever career they may enter on than the children of either farm labourers in this country or of peasant proprietors on the Continent.

Not only would it be a matter of concern to future employers of labour as to the moral and intellectual character of the boys and girls yearly turned out for getting their living by

the co-operative farms, but also to the community at large. Ratepayers especially would naturally be anxious to know whether these products of co-operation would be likely to prove so many burdens on the rates or contributors to their diminished amount. On this point there can be no hesitation in giving a reassuring answer. The very fact that each of these children would, through that period of life in which, in towns, they are most exposed to danger, look back with a feeling of becoming pride on the whole co-operative undertaking, in which they had been brought up as their home, would hardly fail to keep them from committing many an act which the children of farm labourers, from the absence of such a feeling, are guilty of only too often. Thus, by means of the co-operative farms, future employers of labour would get the kind of lads employers of labour of former times used to get in the sons of yeomen farmers, who had a family reputation diligently instilled into them by their parents to keep up for the qualities enumerated that were calculated to please their masters. Furthermore, through the co-operative farms would liberal-minded mistresses be likely to meet once again with the honest, faithful, and industrious female servants that from the same cause were once so much oftener to be met with than they have been of late years.

Say what social philosophers may to the contrary, there can be no real civilisation in a country in which the children of the cultivators of the soil are brought up in the way in which the children of the farm labourers of this country have been allowed to grow up. Bred from their infancy to see around them, in what only by a stretch of language can be called their home, nothing but poverty and squalor, begotten of unremuneratively-paid labour and of a despair of an amendment of condition, and to hear only too often the utterance of blasphemous oaths, it is not a matter of surprise that these children when grown up lead a criminal life, and pass

their remaining days in oscillating between prisons; workhouses, and the slums of the great cities. The becoming pride and the feeling of self-respect which would have made of them sober, industrious, and honest characters were never instilled into them in their wretched homes by their miserable parents. What better lives than those crowding our gaols, reformatories, and workhouses can be expected of the children of parents who have no higher notion of the sweetness and light of civilisation than what is gained from drinking alcoholics at the bar of a public-house, and in the enjoyment of the pleasures of which alone can they feel themselves at all at ease?

These remarks are made, by-the-bye, not from a conviction that beer is either unnecessary or injurious to farm labourers. On the contrary, it is the opinion of competent and impartial testimony that good beer, if drunk in moderation, is a useful tonic, suitable to the constitution of men constantly engaged in laborious toil in the open air. The complaint made against brewers and publicans is their not selling wholesome beer, and not giving better accommodation in which it may be drunk. But this improved accommodation would not benefit farm labourers much unless they were allowed to make use of it as long as they liked without feeling compelled to drink alcoholics. That beer would never be drunk in the co-operative club-house of a co-operative farm has never been entertained; but the beer drunk there should be limited in quantity and of a sound quality. Indeed, there is no reason why the labourers of a co-operative farm should not co-operate together, as in other matters, to have their October brewings. This operation Mr. Gladstone's new measure will have facilitated. The home-brewed beer thus yearly turned out might with advantage be sold in small barrels at the co-operative store, and sent to each member's cottage for the use of himself and family. When a member is at the club-house he ought to be able to get a glass of this beer or a cup of tea or coffee, but to

be under no obligation to take either. By a little arrangement in this way, which landowners are so well able to suggest, the pleasures the co-operative labourers would derive from their co-operative club-house would be greatly enhanced, without in any way counteracting its civilising influences.

The civilising effects of co-operative farms might be turned to account to a much greater extent than even in the lessening of the crime and pauperism of this country. It might be made the instrument of civilising the people of countries of immense extent partly or wholly steeped in barbarism. It has been pointed out what a powerful instrument for civilising the natives of Africa would be these co-operative farms, and what effect the working of the system would have on these natives in leading them on by degrees to throw aside their spears in order to take an interest in the peaceful operations of farming. These beneficial consequences of the system of co-operative farming are to flow, be it remembered, from the Land Department, putting in the way of the coloured natives facilities for co-operating together at first in a rough way without interference from the English colonists in their individual capacity, so that they may gradually pick up a knowledge of farming with profit to themselves *fari passu* with the expansion of their intellect for appreciating the benefits of civilisation, and this without losing their self-respect by being treated in a contemptuous manner by their white fellow colonists. In a colony of natives under a Land Department, the only white persons the coloured colonists would come in contact with would be the officials directly and indirectly connected with this Department, such as engineers, inspectors, schoolmasters, clergymen, doctors, &c.; and even some of these would be superseded as they advanced in civilisation by educated persons of colour. The Land Department and its two powerful coadjutors, English capital and co-operative farms, worked by native labour, would effect all the rest.

Under the working of these three instruments for bringing the coloured colonists to the level of civilisation of the English colonists, what need would the former have for purchasing firearms? Having never lost their self-respect through the harsh and contemptuous treatment of white men, there would be no necessity for them to break out every now and then into rebellion to recover it by the shedding of human blood.

Furthermore, by means of the all-potent trio, a Land Department, English capital, and the system of co-operative farms, might be solved many a problem not unconnected with what is called the Eastern Question, which is now perplexing the statesmen of England and India, in respect to bringing the two countries very much closer together by civilising the natives of the intermediate regions in Asia. No two of the three would be of any avail without the third. What effect the three together are to have in promoting civilisation among the natives of Asia has been already shown, when pointing out the suitability of the plan of co-operative farms for India. The three would render the government of that dependency by the statesmen of England a matter of ease, because, under them, sufficient wealth would be yearly extracted from the soil to give contentment to its native cultivators, to pay the stipulated sum for interest on the English capital employed, and to leave a surplus over considerably more than would be required for defraying the expenses of the Government.

Mr. Caird, in his last report, recommends the decentralising of the Government of India by dividing it into six separate Governments. What does the necessity for this, if there be one, prove, but that under the *petite culture* of the ryots the government of their country has been made so difficult to carry on from a single centre, that its subdivision, to correspond better with the minute subdivision of the occupancy of the land under such a tenure, has been made a matter of necessity? On the other hand, the centralisation of the land of India into

co-operative farms of 500 acres, and better still, if found practicable, of 1,000 acres, would make easy the centralisation of the government of that country. Why, the co-operation of a Land Department, with its necessary helpmates, English capital, and co-operative farms, would, there can hardly be a doubt, render the whole region of Western Asia between Constantinople and Calcutta really easier to govern than is now the portion of this region lying between Candahar and Calcutta; and, if ever the people of these regions are to be made prosperous, and to be brought within the pale of civilisation, it will be done only by the one European Power that can employ all the three.

CHAPTER XVII.

CO-OPERATIVE FARMS A CONSERVATIVE AGENCY.

The Subject treated in no Party Spirit—Order and Anarchy—Co-operative Farms in one sense Democratic—The Conservative Tendency in Working of Plan—Democratic Results of Small Farms—Effects of Small Farms on Workmen of Towns—Large Farms on Continent Result of Small Farms—France, though a Republic, no exception—Employer or Labour Farming become a Danger—Co-operative Farms Training Grounds for future Order—Beneficial Effects of a Resident Gentry.

IN treating of co-operative farms as a conservative agency, all intention of doing so in a party sense is most heartily disclaimed. From the author's standpoint in reference to the state of affairs in the United Kingdom, the present division into the political parties of Liberals and Conservatives of the orderly disposed classes is doing unspeakable injury to the country. It is only hastening on those events which these parties, each in its way, are opposing one another in the vain hope to stave off. Instead of flying at each other's throats, as at present the members of these classes are doing, they ought to be co-operating together in an endeavour to conciliate the classes less favoured by fortune than themselves. Already in this work has been said enough to show it would be far more to their interests that this co-operation should take place, than to the interests even of the working and labouring classes. The former should always bear in mind that whatever may happen from a state of violence, the outcome of aimless drifting, the latter cannot have so much to lose as themselves. If there is to be a division of political parties, let it be one, not, as at present, of Liberals and Conservatives, but of the well-disposed property classes, including both Liberals and

Conservatives on one side, and of the irreconcilably disaffected classes on the other. In other words, if there must be political parties in the country, let the lines of division be drawn between Order and Anarchy; for this is really the state towards which affairs in all countries are now fast drifting.

Were the friends of Order to watch the tactics of their opponents, the friends of Anarchy, they would not be long in discovering that the one primary aim of these men is to throw into inextricable confusion the whole framework of society, by disintegrating one by one its component parts. This accounts for the attacks of these men on the different institutions of their country, by which the social order therein is maintained. As many of these attacks are insidiously made, they are apt to escape the observation of those blinded by party spirit against whom they are directed. To such an extent does this party zeal get the better of the judgment of those ranking themselves on the side of Order, that they are led by it to take part in an attack, which, on cooler reflection, they must know to be most injurious to the cause they have at heart. Meanwhile, the friends of Anarchy are profiting by the paroxysms of folly on the part of the supposed friends of Order, all kinds of fish falling into their net being acceptable.

There is in reality but one remedy for preventing the possibility of the friends of Anarchy one day getting the upper hand and of producing the chaos to which all their actions are tending, and that is the co-operating together of all those whose interests would be injured by the advent of this chaos. To be the humble instrument of bringing such a co-operation about is the object of this book. But the co-operating together of the property classes with no other object in view than to defend their own interests, though effecting a great deal, would not be enough when brought into direct antagonism to the masses under the direction of leaders no less unscrupulous than clever. It is far more likely to defeat the ends for which

such co-operation would be taken in hand. How powerless at a crisis are the property classes without the right sort of co-operation, when opposed to the masses become dissatisfied through the grinding poverty begotten of an insufficient remuneration for their labour, must have of late become painfully palpable to these classes in Ireland. For co-operation to be effective to resist the incessant onslaughts of the apostles of Anarchy it must embrace, besides the natural friends of Order, the greater part of the most deserving of the discontented masses, by making them contented. It must, therefore, be of such a nature as to prevent discontent by anticipation, and not to stifle it by coercion. If this course be not taken in hand the present opposite one of drifting must go on till stopped from time to time by sops in the form of confiscation more or less of the property classes, by which the leaders of the masses would be the only ones likely to be benefited. As the franchise becomes extended the greater is the need that the kind of co-operation here suggested should be brought about to counteract the increased disintegrating effects on the social institutions of the country of such extension.

After this disclaimer of all petty party motives in writing this chapter on "Co-operative farms as a conservative agency," the subject of co-operative farms will now be resumed.

The system now under review will be compared first of all with that of a peasant proprietary, because this latter is advocated in preference to any other by the leaders of 'Trades' and Labourers' Unions, who are supposed to have the interests of the classes from which these unions draw their members most at heart. A peasant proprietary is also advocated by the Land League of Ireland, and, indeed, by all dissatisfied with the present system of tenure, which excludes the actual tillers of the soil from any marketable share in its occupancy.

It is possible that the charge will be brought against the system of tenant farming by co-operation among labourers of

being the most democratic measure in regard to the tenure of land yet introduced into any country. Those who would bring such a charge may say, in support of it, that it is more democratic than the system of a peasant proprietary, inasmuch as any man possessed of only £20 capital may, under it, get a living upon the land in such a way as to secure the fruits of his own labour; while the peasant proprietor, to obtain as much land as would be necessary to get a living out of it under the same favourable conditions, would require a capital of £500; or, if he had not that amount, he would have to burden himself with a debt equal to the difference between his own amount of capital and that required.

Let it be admitted there is no little truth in the above-mentioned charges, it does not follow therefrom that there should be anything in the carrying out of the system of tenant farming by co-operation among labourers to alarm holders of property, or that would be dangerous to the institutions of the country. On the contrary, its extreme democratic tendency in a country in which the suffrage would be universal would cause it to be a most conservative measure. What measure could be more conservative than that which would content the masses? Every measure that gives satisfaction to the most powerful section of the community must be conservative, and the working men of towns and farm labourers in countries in which such men have the franchise must, by their very numbers, be the most powerful. These classes would be very hard indeed to satisfy if they were not satisfied with a system of land tenure that opened its arms freely to every working man having so small a capital as £20.

On the other hand, to offer these men an opportunity to prosper as well on the land by making them peasant proprietors, as the co-operative system would give, would be either to mock their poverty, or to do it at the cost of either the land-owners or the taxpayers. This would mean confiscation; and

can a system claim the merit of being conservative that can only be carried into practice through confiscation? Even when the working classes and farm labourers had been put on the land, through giving them enough to make a living out of it at the cost of others, the advantage gained through this confiscation would not be likely to satisfy them as a class, unless there should be a constant renewal of such confiscation every generation. The agitators of another generation may say to these classes—"Why should not the sons of the men benefited by a previous confiscation be made to yield up possession of the land obtained by their fathers only through such a process?" Such appeals would be made to men to whom, having no capital—or, at most, £20—the possession of land requiring a capital of £500 would seem as hopeless a task of attainment as that requiring a capital of £5,000.

As it is of the greatest importance that the reader interested in the subject should have a clear idea of the difference of position of the working classes of towns and farm labourers under the two systems in respect to the facilities offered by each to these classes for cultivating the land in a manner satisfactory to themselves, a further comparison between the two will be instituted, but in a somewhat different form from any hitherto made. There are to be, say, 1,000 acres to each co-operative farm; and the capital for working these 1,000 acres is to be, say, £5,000, to be divided into 1,000 shares of £5 each. Clearly this would give one £5 share of capital to each acre. The shareholder of the fourth class having, as he would, four shares, would have thus for his proportion of capital, so to speak, four acres of land; and the shareholder of the first class, having fifty shares, would in like manner have for his proportion fifty acres. When the workman or farm labourer would enter into a co-operative farm as a member of the fourth class of shareholders, by means of his saved-up £20, he would then be supposed to be on an equality in respect to

getting his living upon the land with the peasant owner, who had given, say, £120 for four acres of land, and had in reserve a capital of, say, £80 for working these acres, making in all a capital of £200; and when in the first class, with his capital of £250, he would rank with a peasant proprietor holding fifty acres, for which he may have given £1,500, and requiring, perhaps, £1,000 more for working these fifty acres.

It is true, the member of a co-operative farm would have no land to sell, to raise money on, and to leave by will; nor, on the other hand, would he have a debt owing to a money-lender, perhaps not far short of the capital given for the land, and which had been hanging as a mill-stone round his neck all through his farming career. But it is not the complaint of the working classes and farm-labourers that they have no way placed before them of becoming owners, even nominal, of fifty acres of land at some time or other in their life. They have far too much sense not to know that no system could be devised to make this practicable. What they really want is a way placed before them of getting a living off the land, that would be more remunerative and certain than their present prospects as wage-paid labourers. This not immoderate wish on their part would be more than amply gratified, as here shown, by the system of tenant farming by co-operation among labourers.

Moreover, the very working of the co-operative farms, more especially in respect to the division of the shareholders into classes, would have a conservative tendency among the labourers. It would teach them that the acquisition of capital is a step by step process not accomplished without the practice of industry and self-restraint. It would teach them the value of capital and the best use to which to put it. It would also most effectually point out to them, as if they were a boat's crew in training, the unspeakable value of an united action in the carrying out of a common purpose. As all the members of a

co-operative farm would be on a social equality, there would be nothing to create the least jar in this unity of action; and this *esprit de corps* among them would be increased by a knowledge of the fact that every young man on entering the fourth class of shareholders carried, so to speak, the prospect of a marshal's bâton in his hand—the position of one of the five managers of the whole co-operative undertaking. The tenant farmers of the present day do not get anything like so much work out of their labourers as did the tenant farmers of a former generation, who lived more on an equality with their men, which sociability extended to even having their meals together. But even these labourers were far from enjoying the social equality that the younger members of a co-operative farm would enjoy with the older ones. With so satisfactory an understanding among all the members, young and old, though separated into four classes of shareholders, there would not be a crevice left open for the admission of even a whisper of discontent at their own condition, nor of envy at that of others. Not only would the members have no time from their farm work to waste in listening to the sophistries of political agitators, but the little time not thus spent would be occupied in a much more profitable manner by improving their minds in the reading-room of their co-operative club-house, in reading first-class magazines, &c., devoted to subjects connected with the many different branches of their own daily work, as well as to events occurring in the world outside its sphere.

It has been already remarked that in all countries in which the system of small farms obtains there is a strong desire among the working classes in them to overthrow existing institutions on which the society in those countries is based. If this spirit of social democracy existed only in countries under monarchical and imperial rule, one might attribute it to something inherently bad in these institutions, which prevents the working classes of these countries from becoming prosperous and happy.

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But the spirit of Communism is even more rampant in the cities of Republican France than in any of the empires on the Continent, and it is in France that the subdivision of the ownership of land is perhaps the greatest. Is it not possible that the system of a small land proprietary in France has been the cause of much, if not all, of this communistic feeling among the proletariat of that Republic?

It is a well-known fact, derived from well-recognised causes, that the population of every town and city is kept up or augmented, as the case may be, by the surplus population annually flowing into them from the rural districts. Those who thus migrate into towns and cities naturally take with them whatever impressions they may have formed in the most impressionable portion of their life—their youth. In the last chapter, on the civilising influences of co-operative farms, was pointed out the sordid, joyless, unvaried, and unceasingly toilsome life led in the cabins of the greater number of the peasant proprietors on the Continent, from which so many lads have to go every year to get their living in the towns and cities. The contrast between the unceasing toil and general wretchedness left behind in their old homes, and the profusion of wealth and apparent idleness seen on all sides in their new sphere of existence, must make an unfavourable impression on the minds of the artisans and unskilled labouring classes of large towns and cities not easily effaced. It is while in such a mood that they are led to listen to the harangues of demagogues, who tell them that the wealth thus unostentatiously flaunted before their eyes has been obtained by cruel exactions on what they call the rights of labour. Possibly some of the handsomest equipages thus seen may be kept by money-lenders receiving a high rate of interest on their money lent to peasant proprietors, the relations of the proletariat in the towns and cities of France. Should this fact ever be known to the latter, their resentment against the insti

tutions of a country allowing a state of things so detrimental to their well-being to exist, would not be any the less vehement.

Liberals of extreme views are constantly bewailing the existence of large armies on the Continent of Europe, and laying the blame of the evil consequences of such existence on the great Empires of Germany, Austria, and Russia, which, they say, are being exhausted of their wealth by having the prime of their manhood taken away from peaceful occupations to become non-producing idlers. Beyond question, there is a sufficient cause for this lament. But why should it be confined to the three empires just mentioned, and not extended to France? That Republic is surely a more deserving object of reproach in that respect than they. France has no half-civilised tribes living on her frontiers, as Russia; no variety of races and discordant elements resulting therefrom to bind together, as Austria; and no nation on her frontier bent on a war of revenge to resist, as Germany. She is a homogeneous nation, composed of people of one race and one language, and surrounded on all sides by civilised nations only too anxious to be at peace with her. Thus she has really no excuse for arming all her male population in the way she is doing.

The only possible excuse that France can have for doing that which Republicans in this country so loudly yet so justly lament at being done by Germany, Austria, and Russia, is that it would enable her to recover the prestige lost at Sedan by the concessions wrung from her in consequence of that defeat. This can mean nothing less than that she is to be an aggressive Power, though in a crouching attitude, till the prestige thus lost has been regained. It is, however, very questionable whether the present rulers of France are going the right way to work to bring back her prestige. If they wish to make of their country a nation greater than before they lost their two provinces of Alsace and Lorraine and their

prestige at Sedan, there is a way open to them of doing so that would excite neither the envy nor the opposition of any great Power. This is to colonise the north-west of Africa by means of a Land Department of State, assisted by the capital of its wealthy investing public, and by the system of co-operative farming on a large scale by the actual tillers of the soil. Their great political economist, M. Léon Say, should write off Alsace and Lorraine from the public ledger of the Republic as a loss beyond hope of recovery. They would then be able to reduce their army to the dimension more in accordance with the Republican simplicity of which we hear so much. The many millions thus saved every year would furnish the Land Department of Algeria with the millions necessary to prepare the way by means of railroads, &c., for the establishment of co-operative farms over their what ought to be magnificent colony of imperial dimensions. By following the course here suggested the present rulers of France would confer a greater benefit on mankind than was, perhaps, ever before in the power of a body of men to do. They would not only bring a new world, with its scores of millions of inhabitants, into existence and within the pale of European civilisation, but they would set the example of disarmament in Europe, which it would be difficult for the three great empires therein to refuse to follow. By doing this the rulers of France would do far more than recover for their country the prestige lost at Sedan; for by such an action that country would be raised beyond all cavil to a high position among the greatest nations of the earth, and this no less physically than morally.

The Republican rulers of France, however, know they dare not take what, expediency apart, is beyond all question their wisest course. They know, alas! only too well, that their war of revenge is but a subterfuge for keeping on foot an immense army to overawe and keep in subjection the Communists of their own large cities. The army of the French Republic is as

much kept on its present immense footing for that purpose as are the armies of Germany, Austria, and Russia, to keep down the Socialists and Nihilists that swarm in the cities and large towns of these empires. It has been shown pretty clearly that Communism, Socialism, and Nihilism are the social products of a system of small farms. This being so, it would be as well that whenever the members of the extreme section of Liberals advocate the introduction of a peasant proprietary they should bear in mind that this system of land tenure is the primary cause of the existence of the vast armies of all the countries on the Continent of Europe—a result strongly condemned, strangely enough, by those highly approving of the cause.

There is, however, no need to go to the Continent of Europe to be made sensible of the injurious effects of the system of small farms to the stability of the institutions of a country. They have been made plain enough in this country. Of the four divisions into which the United Kingdom is divided, there is only one in which small farms may be said to exist to any extent, and this division is the very one in which alone there is a chronic rebellion requiring for its suppression thousands of troops, besides a large force of constabulary armed and drilled as soldiers. Even already has this rebellious spirit in Ireland been the cause of the Disestablishment of the Protestant Church of that country, and of a confiscation of the property of its landowners, without, unfortunately, doing the least particle of good, if the effects of these revolutionary measures are to be judged by the absence from Ireland of the discontent they were passed to allay. Quite recently has the scarcely veiled rebellion, "within a measurable distance of civil war," of that island been giving a shock for the first time to one of the most venerated and valued institutions of England. Even the Irish labouring population in all the large cities of Great Britain have been proving themselves, both at the last General Election and since, to be

disaffected to a man, and quite willing to back up their leaders in any revolutionary project as far as these have deemed it prudent to go. Now, it would be no exaggeration to say that nine-tenths of the disaffected Irish in the large towns of the three other divisions of the United Kingdom were brought up on the majority of the 600,000 small farms of their country. It is possible that more of these disaffected, because discontented, dwellers in the slums of the large towns of England and Scotland were brought up in the mud-cabins of rack-rented cottier parents than in those of parents having a property in the land under the Ulster custom. Any way, they were all brought up on small farms, with all the pinching sordidness and generally uncivilised conditions of home life consequent on that form of cultivating the land, whether the tenure be that of a tenant at will or part ownership.

Beyond doubt, a great deal of the freedom Englishmen have hitherto been enjoying from Socialism, Communism, and other democratic propensities in their large cities has been due to the system of tenant farming on a large scale by employers of labour. Now that this system has been undermined by the repeal of the Corn Laws, by labourers' unions, and, proleptically speaking, by the enfranchisement of the labourers employed under it, its hitherto conservative effect has actually been turned into a source of danger to the stability of society and property, and to the cherished institutions of the country, since it is opposed to the interests of those who, by their numerical majority at the hustings, would have the power of destroying them all. But all the preservative tendency in tenant farming on a large scale of the past would be conserved in the tenant farming on a large scale of the future, with this enormous additional advantage, that the conservative labourers under the tenant system of farming by co-operation would be far more numerous, and so, in a political sense, far more powerful. At present, in a farm of 1,000

acres, farmed by an employer of labour, there is only one vote on the side of order to counteract the anarchical effects of the votes of the working and labouring classes privileged to vote in towns. To give farm labourers votes without at the same time making them masters of their own labour through co-operative farms, would not be to increase the number of voters on the side of order, but to swell the number on the side already by far too numerous for the safety of the commonwealth. On the other hand, when the forty co-operating labourers farming the same number of acres as the one employer have each a vote, they would all be on the side of order; and for these to swell the ranks of those whose interest it is to preserve order, would be for them to diminish the ranks of those who believe it to be to their interest to put anarchy in its place.

The order-preserving tendency of the co-operative system would not be confined to the sphere of co-operative farms, but would extend to towns. The co-operating labourers of such farms, imbued with the notion that owners of capital, more particularly that portion of it invested in land, were acting justly towards themselves as owners of labour by allowing them to reap its fruits, would naturally entertain a regard for such capitalists, and be likely to instil the same sentiments into their children, most of whom, on growing up, would become workmen or the wives of workmen in towns. It may be relied on that the boys bred up in the homes of the co-operative labourers would not be likely to grow into the men that would be so lost to self-respect as to lead lives of drunkards, criminals, or beggars in the slums of the large towns and cities, nor would they be found such as to be ever ready to greedily drink in the traitorous perversions from the truth of demagogues. The early training at their co-operative home, and the example therein set them by their parents of the industry, sobriety, thrift, and suavity of manner developed by co-operation

would prevent the former, and their own intelligence in addition the latter.

Touching the conservative effect tenant-farming by co-operation among labourers would have in upholding the institutions of the country, it is essential that the portion of the system in which landowners are to have a share should not be lost sight of. If the landowners perform the part here assigned to them, the benefit they would have it in their power to confer on the country by causing a kindly feeling to spring up among the co-operators and the classes from which they would come, and which they would represent, towards the property and highly educated classes—or in other words, between capital and labour—would be immense. Landowners, in dealing with the members of a co-operative farm, should treat them in such a manner that the respect of themselves as a class, as well as of each as an individual member of the class, is obtained. They should bear in mind that landowners are always treated as a class of badness by advanced Liberals when exciting an ignorant audience against them. The very worst of the type among them is singled out by these perverters of the rules of logic as a representative of the whole class, which receives the denunciations of the deluded assembly accordingly. To get at this class of badness all the good qualities exhibited among the other landowners are quietly ignored. In order that the whole class of landowners should be treated as a class of goodness instead of badness, the plan of instituting the Land Committees already spoken of, and yet to be further alluded to, was devised. By means of these Land Committees the landowners would be represented in their dealings with the managing partner of each co-operative farm by those of them well versed in business matters, and who, unlike a Land Agent, would have no other interests at heart than those of the co-operating labourers, excepting, of course, the previously well-defined ones of their own class, for whom they would be acting.

In the case of a peasant proprietary, on the other hand, the peasant owners are completely shut out from all communication with a wealthy class of well-educated gentlemen. The only men of an education better than their own and of any claim to the training of gentlemen they ever have a chance of coming into contact with, are the petty professionals of their own neighbourhood, and then only in connection with subjects for which they have to pay a fee, and considering how necessary it is for these peasant proprietors to look after every penny of their hardly-acquired earnings, their visits to these cannot be very often. As to the gombeen money-lenders, with whom their communications may be more frequent, they are not likely to have their thoughts elevated by intercourse with such men.

It stands to reason that if the tiller of the land is the owner of it also, there can be no well-educated gentlemen residing near, to whom the tiller could look up as an example of a life higher on this earth than what is enclosed within the narrow circle of his own hard life, and from whom, by way of relief to it, he could occasionally receive advice out of his power to get in any other way. Is it not possible that the utter divorce between a resident gentry performing functions such as those set them in the system of co-operative farms, and the cultivators of the soil in countries wherein a peasant proprietary exists, may have had no little to do with being one of the chief causes of the ill-feeling so easily stirred up by the harangues of seditious-mongers, and so conspicuously displayed by the Socialists and Communists among the working classes against the wealthy and educated classes in those countries? Knowing as they do nothing of such people by coming into contact with them or seeing them, or even reading about them, in their isolated homes on the paternal plot of land, what can they know about them when they leave these homes to migrate to towns and cities, but what they hear through the distorted medium of a mendacious section of the press or of platform orators?

CHAPTER XVIII.

CO-OPERATIVE FARMS AND CO-OPERATIVE FACTORIES.

Owners of Land and Owners of Factories—Dual position of Owners of Factories—Loss of Capital through Trades' Unions—Threatened Competition from Southern States—Such Competition met by Co-operation of Labour—The future of Woollen Manufactures—Many attempts at Co-operation by Operatives—Causes of Failure hitherto of Co-operative Factories—Modification of Plan for Co-operative Factories—Employment of Boys and Women in Factories—Causes of Overstocked Markets—Leaders of Trades' Unions, and Co-operative Factories.

It is not at all improbable that the advantages to be derived by owners of capital, in the form of land and by farm labourers from the spread of co-operative farms over the country, would be so great as to create in the minds of owners of capital in the form of factory buildings and machinery and their workmen, a desire to co-operate together on similar principles. A great many events have of late been coming to pass to render such a step no less advisable in the one case than in the other. In both the relations of capital and labour are strained to the uttermost, the latter being discontented with the manner and amount of its remuneration, and the former alarmed at its insecurity, owing to the course taken by the owners of labour to extract concessions from the owners of capital, through the action of strikes and other embarrassing actions of Trades' Unions. It is true that the owners of factories and machinery have not as yet been threatened to have their factories and machinery taken from them by the State in order to give them to their workmen, and this too without compensation, or if compensated, only so at the expense of taxpayers; but this escape, so far, is a piece of luck due less to the forbearance of the leaders of Trades' Unions than to that of the

capitalist owners of land, who have refused to countenance, even in the hurry of the moment, the return to the House of Commons of men delegated by owners of labour to make war therein on capital in every form.

As it is not at all unlikely that the same principles of confiscation now being applied to deprive those capitalists having capital in land of that portion of their capital, will be also applied to deprive capitalists of their capital invested in factories and machinery, it behoves these latter as much as owners of land to see whether they cannot come to terms with labour in such a way as to give satisfaction to its owners. As in the matter of land, so in that of factories there is only one way of giving permanent contentment to owners of labour without involving the destruction of capital, and that is by the owners of capital coming forward to help labourers to help themselves through a system of co-operation. A great deal, therefore, of what has been written touching the policy to be pursued by owners of land capital is no less applicable to owners of factory and machinery capital, if these latter wish to preserve for themselves this form of capital, as presumably landowners do their land.

Capitalists, who are owners of factories, have more concessions to make to give contentment to owners of labour than have capitalists owners of land, inasmuch as they perform the dual part of employers of labour and owners of factories. They are really what in husbandry amounts to a combination of landowner and farmer. Like the landowner they own, or are supposed to own, what may be called the fixed capital of the concern corresponding to the land in husbandry, such as the factory buildings and machinery, and like the middleman farmer they are owners of what may be called the working capital as opposed to the fixed—and they are hirers of labour. The capitalist owner of land, in respect to the land he lets to a farmer, is not an employer of labour. He has in fact nothing

to do with labour ; for between him and labour, in respect to that particular portion of his land stands the middleman employer of labour, the tenant farmer.

Now, in husbandry, this middleman farmer has become a failure, through the action of causes which are every year more and more becoming an embarrassment, to say the least, to that portion of the dual character of the present owners of factories corresponding to the middleman farmer, namely, that of employer of labour. 'Trades' Unions are not one whit less detrimental to the interests of employers of labour in the one branch of industry than are Labourers' Unions to those in the other. It is questionable whether from their much longer standing they are not even more so. The longer experience gained by the leaders in training the members in the art of "Boycotting" their employers, and non-unionists, has made them more competent to inflict injury on the capital, against which their tactics are directed.

On the other hand, though employers of labour in factories have their capital exposed to greater risks of loss through the action of their workmen under the instigation of their Unions, yet they have hitherto been more fortunate than employers of labour in husbandry, in this respect that they do not suffer from the effects of free trade. Owing to the possession of several advantages, such as large beds of coal near to seaports, the command of an abundance of capital and of cheap labour, due in a great measure to a dense population unable to get upon the land to cultivate it for their own profit, employers of labour in factories have been hitherto benefited rather than injured by the working of free trade. Can these manufacturers reckon for a continuance on this immunity from loss, through the competition of foreign producers, from which employers of labour in husbandry have to suffer in addition to that from the irritating action of their men through their Unions ?

Let us first of all see how this immunity has come about,

and then we shall be in a better position to judge what prospect there is of its continuance. There can be but few English manufacturers not prepared to acknowledge that, with all their relatively cheap capital, cheap coal, and relatively cheap labour, they are heavily handicapped in their race of competition with the weight of not producing on their own soil the raw material. So long as the people of the countries, in which this raw material was grown, were unwilling or unable through a want of cheap capital, cheap coal, or cheap labour, to make it up into fabrics, the employers of labour of the factories of this country did not, as the employers of labour of its husbandry, want the products of their industry protected. Thus, the cotton manufacturers of this country have been all along relying for their prosperity on the inability of the people of the Southern States, in which most by far of the raw material for their looms is grown, to become manufacturers themselves. This reliance would probably have been justifiable, had slavery continued in the Southern States, for it was the policy of the planters to employ their capital and their slave labour in growing cotton for the Liverpool market rather than employing their capital and the labour of "mean whites," whom they despised, in setting up factories to turn out cotton cloths of a quality and price capable of ousting out of the markets those of Manchester.

Now, all these conditions, hitherto so favourable to the manufacturers of Lancashire are, it seems, on the point of being reversed. The people of the Southern States, no longer contented with growing the raw material, are fast getting themselves into the position of being able to make it up into cloths themselves. They have an abundance of coal, and now that they are making available the labour of their "mean whites" as well as their coloured population they have an abundance of cheap labour. With an abundance of cheap coal, cheap labour, and cheap raw material, all that has been recently wanted has been cheap money. This want is now being supplied. Owing

to the enormous amount of wealth poured into the United States in payment of the corn, cotton, and other land produce of those States, a great deal of which has found its way into the Southern States, capital has become quite plentiful there, and it is in consequence being employed in setting up factories for the making up of the raw material grown in these States.

There is nothing now to stand in the way of the owners of factories in the Southern States of America supplying not merely their own people with cotton fabrics, but consumers in other countries as well, not excepting even those in England. The cotton manufacturers of Manchester may well ask themselves how this formidable competition is to be successfully met. They cannot well ask for protection to their interests by the levying of a duty on the products of the looms of the Southern States. If only from its being inconsistent with their past action, they can hardly have the hardihood to ask consumers at large to pay a tax for their profit. Even if they should be prepared to set consistency at defiance, they would not succeed in their request for aid; since, if by no other class, it would be rejected by the working and labouring classes under the action of their Unions. The leaders of Trades' Unions leagued with the consistent portion of free-traders would be sure to vehemently oppose their demand, and this with all the power due to a numerical majority in a country of universal suffrage.

There is however one way, and only one, by which the cotton manufacturers of Lancashire would be able to get their capital protected from the competition impending over them from the Southern States of America. This would be by making it the interest of the owners of labour to side with them in their efforts to that end. Now, there is only one way by which the owners of factories can gain the hearty sympathy and concurrence in any joint action of their workmen, and that is by their doing what has been recommended to the owners of land

to do to protect their capital against the adverse competition it is exposed to from the produce of the Northern and Western States, imported free of duty. This is for them to allow their capital to stand towards labour in a different relation from what it has been hitherto doing. They should let their capital stand on one side, so to speak, in the coming struggle between American competition and English labour, for this is after all what it must ultimately come to, and not between the two as have been standing the capital of themselves as employers of labour and that of the employers of labour in husbandry. In this new position, as will be shown further on, the capital of owners of factories in the form of buildings and machinery would be safer, and would better assist labour by enabling its owners to co-operate together in its employment to the best advantage. In husbandry, this standing aside has been done to a certain extent, by the capital of those owners of land, not employers of labour as well, but who have been letting their land to employers of labour or tenant-farmers. It would have been wholly done, had these owners let their land instead to a co-operation of labourers.

Labour thus assisted by capital would not for one thing be so heavily weighted with the injurious tactics of Trades' Unions in its direct struggle with the competition of cotton fabrics imported free of duty from the Southern States of America. As soon as labour has become its own master and an employer of capital, instead of being employed by it, there will be no longer any need to call to its aid this pernicious machinery of industrial warfare. The gain to labour by this alone would be so great as to make all the difference between success and failure in its contest with American competition. One result of an end being put to strikes and other forces of Trades' Unions so disturbing to the peace of mind of capitalists, would be to place capital on a higher eminence of security. This would be cheaper money; for this greater security would draw

forth more capitalists willing to lend and at a lower rate of interest. Absence from the disturbing influences of Trades' Unions would have also the effect of making labour cheap. Another circumstance tending to cheapness of labour would be the fact that the owners of it would get all the profit obtained from its employment. With then absolutely cheap labour, cheap capital, and cheap coal, there would be only one thing wanting to enable the working partners of a co-operative factory to compete with the imported fabrics of the Southern States, and that is for the raw material to be cheap too.

As yet the owners of factories making up woollen goods, are exempt from any immediate prospect of anything like so severe a competition from abroad in their particular branch of industry. How long this exemption is to last it is not easy to say. Events move fast in these days of steam and electricity. The tendency of peoples in new countries, in which the raw produce for looms is grown, is to aggregate into large towns, and this tendency creates a population suitable for factory work. With the cheap raw produce and cheap coal at hand, all that is wanted in such countries for their people to out-manufacture England in fabrics of wool, is to have cheap capital and cheap labour. Now, who can tell but that these two requisites for cheapness of production now lacking may not be supplied by the people of the Pacific States and Australia in no longer time than it will have taken those of the Southern States to out-manufacture her in cotton fabrics? Both these countries are fast increasing in a population of European descent collected in towns, and besides this source of labour they have, owing to their geographical position, the option of employing at once, and to almost any extent, the labour of Chinese immigrants, which for both cheapness and quality is reckoned to be most suitable for factory work. That both the States on the Pacific and the colonies of Australia are fast growing in wealth is indisputable, and with

this wealth will not fail to come, as in the Southern States, cheap capital, the last requisite for cheap production in woollen fabrics.

If England is to continue to be the vast manufacturing centre she has hitherto been in the face of all this competition, it is needless to say she must continue to have her coal, capital, labour, and raw material all cheap. Her chance of getting all these cheap, will depend on the existence of a harmonious relation between capital and labour, to be brought about only through co-operation among the owners of the latter, assisted by the owners of the former. It would only be by co-operation among miners in getting coals from the mines that the coals to be used in her factories would be likely to be cheap. It would only be through co-operative factories, as just now shown, that the capital and labour to be employed in manufacturing her cotton and woollen fabrics would be cheap; and the operatives partners in these co-operative factories would get their raw material for working up into fabrics cheap only through co-operative farms in India for cotton, and in those colonies having a Land Department as well for wool. By means of the co-operative farms under a Land Department, and assisted by English capital in India and the colonies, as pointed out elsewhere, the labour and capital of these dependencies would be employed in raising the raw produce for the co-operative looms in England, in sufficient abundance and at a sufficiently low price instead of being engaged in making it into fabrics for the English markets as well as their own.

The necessity having been shown for co-operation among owners of labour in factories, if the capital and labour employed therein are to continue cheap enough to enable the owners of both to compete successfully against the products of foreign looms admitted duty free into this country, some suggestions will now be offered as to the best way in which such co-operation should be carried out, and as to the position

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owners of the capital employed in factories, who are not co-operative workmen, should take up in their dealings with these workmen.

Efforts have been made at different times to start factories for production on co-operative principles ; but they have nearly all ended in failure. Co-operation, however, for distribution, has on the whole been a success. The failure of co-operation for production has no doubt been owing mainly to the fact that the shares of the capital in a co-operative undertaking have not been held exclusively by the partners engaged in producing, as they would be in co-operative farms. On the other hand, for success in co-operation for distribution the shares cannot well be too widely distributed. The same principles have been employed in carrying on undertakings in co-operation that ought to have been conducted on totally different principles. Hence the failure of the one.

Another obstacle to the success of co-operation for production has arisen from a faulty mode of distributing the profits among, and of paying wages to, the co-operating producers. The first essential for success in co-operation for production, whether in farming, in manufacturing, or in any other productive work, is that the working bees should share among themselves all the honey made by their industry in the beehive. Unless this be the case they will not put their brain, heart, and muscle into their work by which alone can success be achieved. After the hives have been constructed, and the flowers planted for them, which in the case of co-operative farms would be done by the landowners by lending their land, farm buildings, &c., all the profits made by making the honey gathered by their industry from the flowers and deposited in the hives the co-operating labourers should be allowed to appropriate to themselves. In co-operative husbandry all this would take place only of course after payment of the stipulated annual interest on the capital

expended by these landowners in giving them the above-mentioned requisites for making their profits.

Now this is just what has not been done in all attempts hitherto to found co-operative factories. Through the over-eagerness of the co-operating producers to own everything connected with their undertaking they have ever raised, or attempted to raise, a far larger amount of capital than was necessary for carrying on their co-operative work; and to procure this unnecessary capital they have been compelled to issue a larger number of shares to outsiders than held by themselves, and thus to introduce into the partnership of working bees non-workers, who, from their greater number and perhaps better education have, in most cases, monopolised the financial control of the whole partnership, and this for objects detrimental to the interests of the workers. Hence the failure of well-nigh all attempts at co-operation for production, and no wonder. The seed for producing a crop of failure was sown at the very outset in introducing the wrong class of capitalists into the partnership. The capitalists who should have been introduced were those, such as the owners of factory buildings and plant, whose interests were limited by an agreement sanctioned by law to a fixed rate of interest on the capital laid out in erecting these buildings.

Had the co-operative workers done this, the capitalists they had taken into partnership with them would have been, it is true, in some sort a burden on their labour; but being one at a fixed charge and at a moderate rate it would have been much less onerous than the other kind of capitalists. Not having sufficient capital of their own to carry on a co-operative undertaking, working men must procure it from some quarter outside their own sphere. Now from no quarter could they honestly procure it except on such terms as would make it a burden on their industry. Capital is, and always will be, a burden on the industry of those who cannot do without it,

but not more so than any other necessity not to be dispensed with as food, clothing, &c. Most persons would make money much faster than they do had they not to pay tribute to these and other like indispensable tyrants. Unfortunately for workmen co-operating for production in factories, instead of keeping these facts in view, they have set about to get the capital wanted in a form, though apparently the most advantageous because the easiest, yet turned out in the long run to be by far the most burdensome. It was burdensome not only because they had to pay a higher rate of interest upon it by distributing the profits made annually by the labour of the workers among the non-working lenders of capital outside, but because this distribution, bringing as it did an element of uncertainty into their work, had a depressing effect upon their exertions, without which no undertaking, however great may be the amount of capital invested in it, can be prosperous. If the workers had but kept all the shares to themselves, as the members of a co-operative farm would do on the plan here laid down, they would have been their own masters subject to no interference from outside, and having this feeling they would have set about their work with redoubled energies, knowing, as they would, that however great may be the profits resulting from these efforts they would not have to be shared by outside capitalists beyond the fixed amount agreed upon before entering upon them.

The artisans of towns, owing to their being in receipt of higher wages than farm labourers, and other causes, are in a better position for getting the capital necessary for commencing co-operative undertakings. This accounts for their having made so many attempts, at different times, to start co-operative factories, while only one instance is recorded in England of farm labourers having combined together in any number to carry on a farm on anything like a large scale. Even in this instance the idea emanated from the brain of a landowner, a

Mr. Gurdon, of Suffolk, and it was only through the help given by this liberal-minded gentleman, that it could ever have been carried into practice. But though this instance of co-operation among farm labourers has been a marked success of a kind so much so as to cause the co-operators to be looked upon with envy by the farm labourers of the neighbourhood, yet, in respect to being a benefit to the co-operators themselves and the country at large, it falls far short of the benefits that would be gained from the system of co-operative farms as here advocated.

For one thing, the farm for working which the Suffolk labourers co-operate, is not one-fourth the size of the 1,000 acres co-operative farm here proposed. If co-operation be a gain, the greater the number of co-operators the larger must be that gain, provided this principle be carried out in due moderation, and the area, over which the co-operators work, be correspondingly extended. This being borne in mind, it is a question whether it would not be still more conducive to the success of the plan if its co-operative farms were of 2,000 acres extent instead of 1,000. The number of members of the doubled co-operation would have to be doubled too, or, at any rate, nearly so. The gain to be effected by the co-operative farm being extended over a doubled acreage would be, not in increasing the number of acres proportionately to each co-operator, but in the whole body of co-operators being put in a position to raise more produce and stock from the same aggregate number of acres, and this in a way more profitable to themselves. For instance, the farm-buildings, club-house, etc., on the larger farm, would cost, to erect, but little more than those on the smaller, and therefore the co-operators would have to pay but little more rent on them. The tramway from these buildings to the nearest railway station would be the same for one as for the other. Again, the same quantity of machinery might possibly suffice. The number of 1,000 acres for a co-operative

farm was, as said in describing the plan at the outset, only an assumed one, to be varied according to circumstances. The variation, however, should, wherever possible, be in the direction of making the farms larger than 1,000 acres, rather than smaller.

Even the nearly 100 members of a 2,000 acres co-operative farm would be a small number in comparison with the 500 men or more that would be members of a co-operative factory. In this latter case there would have to be a much greater number of classes and a greater number of shareholders in each. This increase would not affect the principles upon which the system of co-operation for production, here proposed, is founded, one of which is to make the entrance into the lowest class of shareholders easily accessible for young men having but little capital. As boys are much employed in factories, and as they would not be likely to have capital enough to buy shares with, the difficulty might be got over by reckoning them as supernumeraries or apprentices until they had saved up the requisite amount of capital, which, in their case, might be fixed at £5 each, while that for the admittance of a young man who had not served his apprenticeship in the co-operation, should not be less than £10. As supernumeraries these boys would, of course, receive weekly wages for their work from the manager of the co-operation, as factory boys now do from an employer of labour; but they would not have, as the shareholders in the co-operation, a share in the profits to be distributed at the end of the year, in addition to their wages. However, as this work is mainly concerned with co-operative farms, it is not intended to treat therein at any length of a system for the formation of co-operative factories. These latter have been alluded to here, not so much to draw up a plan for carrying them on in a way most advantageous to all concerned as to illustrate more clearly the great difference between co-operation for distribution and that for production, the neglect of keeping which in view by the

working classes has hitherto been the cause of their failure in carrying out the latter form of co-operation with any degree of success.

Not only is it the practice to employ boys in factories but women. The reason for this is, of course, the cheapness of their labour. The question is whether this is a wholesome practice for any one but the employer of labour, bent on getting his labour at the lowest possible cost regardless of consequences. Factory work is admitted by medical testimony to have an injurious effect on the constitution of most women, and therefore on their offspring. The proper sphere of women's work is their home; and those of them having a family have usually quite enough of this work to do to take up all their time, if it is done at all as it should be.

Moreover, it is questionable whether the money made at factory work by women (above all, mothers) is after all a gain to them and their belongings. It is certain that no little of the drinking habits of the country, no less among women than men, is attributable to the practice, and as in this country more than £140,000,000 are spent every year in drink, most of which by the wage-earning class, it is clear the habit must be a very costly one to those indulging therein, greatly reducing, as it does, the amount earned in wages to be spent in procuring necessities, to say nothing of comforts and of making a provision for old age. The general experience is that most women are unable to keep on at factory work without the aid of stimulants. The effect of an indulgence in stimulants on women, as every one knows, is to make them slatternly in their habits, and a woman with slatternly habits means a wretched home, and a wretched home means the expulsion from it of her husband and the father of her children to seek consolation, poor though it be, in a public-house. Thus comes about the husband's weekly drinking bill to be added to that of the wife as a drain on the joint weekly wage. Such is the result in nine cases out

of ten, if not in ninety-nine out of one hundred, of married women working in factories.

When the factories of England are carried on by co-operation among the workmen according to the plan here suggested, there would not be likely to come to pass a result such as the one just described. The work of the factory would be carried on by the co-operative partners themselves, and as the profit to be obtained from such work would be shared among themselves, there would be no need for the wives of these men to work in the mills. These women could then employ their time and strength in their own home in bringing up their children in a healthy state and in keeping the house clean, tidy, and comfortable for the husband on his return from work, so that he would find more enjoyment in spending his evenings at home than in getting drunk at a public-house. Possibly, the saving effected in this way and by their own sober habits would be equal to the greater part of the wages these women would have earned had they gone to work in the factory.

It does not however follow that, because the wives of the co-operative workmen in a factory would not be constantly at work therein, they should not work in it at all. There is no reason why they should not every now and then, when trade is unusually brisk, take a spell at the looms for a few hours in the day or at night as would be found to be most convenient. This would be only doing to a certain extent what the wives of labourers on co-operative farms would do at harvest time. By doing this the wives of the co-operative workmen in a factory would form, like the wives of the co-operative labourers of a farm, a sort of reserve of willing and efficient, because not exhausted, labour always at hand to fall back upon at a period of brisk trade.

The advantage to be gained from such a reserve being attached on to every co-operative factory would be very great in many ways. The value of it would perhaps be best shown

by contrasting it with the evil effects resulting from the absence of such a reserve under the present system of employer of labour manufacturer. From not having such a reserve to fall back upon, a manufacturer at a time of a very brisk demand for his goods has to make arrangements to meet it by enlisting fresh hands often unused to the work required of them, and by the extension of his factory buildings, machinery, &c. When trade becomes slack again, the extra briskness of which may have been due to Stock Exchange speculations, he finds himself saddled with too many hands and useless premises and machinery. He is then placed in the dilemma of either seeing his capital lie waste or of overstocking the market with his goods. If he cannot muster up courage to cut the first loss, he elects, as is the case with most of his class, to overstock the market with his goods. An overstocked market means a reduction of workmen's wages, and this means a strike in an attempt on the part of the particular Trades' Union to resist such reduction. By such a strike scores of thousands of capital get lost, all of which would most probably have been saved through the reserve spoken of, to be shared among the co-operative workmen.

The artisans of towns in spite of all their failures at co-operation for production, by which very many thousand pounds have at various times been lost, do not seem to be altogether discouraged. They are always ready to risk, but destined to sink more in the same good cause. All their sacrifices, however, will be in vain, unless they make up their minds to go the proper way to work by allying themselves with those possessing what they themselves lack—a sufficiency of capital. But they can never do this so long as they are under the influence of the leaders of their Unions. Co-operation by workmen in order to be masters of their own labour, implies the complete emancipation of labour, of which remuneration by wages is only a step, though a long one, in the process.

Those only are fit to work in co-operation who desire this emancipation, and this as much from the control and dictation of leaders not appointed by themselves and not even in the co-operation as of capitalists. One of not the least merits in the plan of co-operative farms, is the complete independence of all their members of all outside direction and control. They are to be masters of their own labour, capital, and everything connected with these farms on conditions to be, however easily, fulfilled, and well known by them before-hand. In short, the whole responsibility of working the concern is to be laid on their shoulders. But, how could this be the case, if their actions are allowed to be controlled by others, and above all by men who, not being members of the same co-operation, must have interests totally divergent from their own?

Hitherto co-operative factories for production have been set on foot and carried on up to their collapse by leaders of Trades' Unions, who have had the management of the capital of the undertakings. Whether this capital was used for the purposes of the undertakings and in the most profitable manner, if so used, it is probable that no one but the leaders themselves ever knew. It is, however, enough to take note that the capital was somehow lost by the co-operators. However honest may have been the leaders of Trades' Unions, they were unmistakably not in the least fitted to have the management of funds for carrying on co-operative undertakings for production. The principle is utterly wrong that allows of any man to manage the finances of such a co-operation, unless he has been an actual working member for a period of twenty years.

These remarks have been made out of no ill-will towards leaders of Trades' Unions, but simply to emphasize what the author believes to be the truth. These men have undoubtedly been doing a great work in rendering wage-paid labour no longer practicable. Possibly without these leaders, their Unions, and their strikes, workmen would never have been

made fitted, and have had instilled into them a desire, to combine together for purposes of co-operation. Having taught workmen to run alone without the aid of leading strings, they must as sensible men recognise the fact by abstaining of their own accord from all interference in the workmen's new field of independent action. This is the more necessary, as the interference of these leaders has hitherto brought nothing but disaster on their attempts at setting up co-operative factories. Another weighty reason for their keeping aloof is the fact that they have not been earning the confidence, if they have not been incurring the hatred, of most of the capitalists, whose money it would be necessary for the co-operators to borrow, if they are ever to succeed, in the form of buildings and machinery. Having done so much towards the emancipation of their fellow-workmen in respect to their labour, it is hardly likely they would act so unwisely as to incur the odium of standing in the way of its completion, because an agency other than themselves was deemed necessary for the purpose.

It is most essential that the manager of a co-operative undertaking for production should himself have gone through all the processes required, so as to be able to form a judgment from his own experience of the amount and quality of work that ought to be turned out by those over whom he is set. It is also necessary that the financier of the undertaking should be a man of the same stamp; for it would be in preventing waste in small ways by each of the forty members, when going through the same kind of work as he had often gone through himself, that would in a measure depend the amount of the annual profits to be divided among all at the end of the year. In short, the position of manager of a co-operative factory as of a farm ought to be a reward for patient toil continued through many years, which any young man in the lowest class of shareholders may look forward to obtain with a tolerable amount of certainty. Having such a prospect ever in view, nine-tenths of the men

would during their whole step-by-step course upwards lose no opportunity of acquiring all the information needed of them on reaching the coveted post. To give, then, the position of manager or secretary of a co-operative factory to an outsider, such as a leader of a Trades' Union, or a platform orator, or indeed any other, would be to discourage all attempts among the co-operative workers to qualify themselves for the post by hard work and attention to details, and thus rob the scheme of co-operation of its grand feature as a training school for the working-classes for holding a position in the civilisation of their species, much higher in every respect than it would be possible for them to hold by any other means.

Besides, if outsiders were elected to the best posts in a co-operation, one of such would be equally as unfitted for filling a vacancy as another. The choice of the candidate could therefore be made only by the votes of the members, and if this did not lead to underhand dealing, it would to contests, which would provoke rancour among the members instead of the harmony, which must prevail, if the co-operation is to be a success. When the successful candidate did get it, the real work of the office would have to be done by the member, who ought really to have been chosen to the place, and to have had its pay. There can hardly be a doubt that, if the many co-operative factories that have been established had had for their manager or other official, such men as would be those developed by the working of co-operative farms on the plan here proposed, they would have turned out flourishing undertakings instead of coming to grief as they have nearly all done.

If the co-operators for production in a factory would but keep the points just touched upon constantly in view, in the starting and carrying on of their co-operative undertakings, there is no reason why they should not succeed as well as the members of a co-operative farm, which after all would be to all intents a factory, though of raw produce, instead of fabrics

made from raw produce. In fact, the products of the two kinds of co-operative undertakings would, to a certain extent, depend one upon the other, and as it were dovetail into one another at any rate as regards the wool product of the farms, while all the factory co-operatives would want the food produce of the co-operative farms, as the labourers on the co-operative farms would want the fabrics of the co-operative factories. In other respects could co-operative farms and factories play into each other's hands. For instance, there would be nothing to hinder the setting up of co-operative factories for the making of agricultural machines to be used on co-operative farms. Possibly, after a time it would be found most advantageous for the members of co-operative farms and factories to deal with one another without the intervention of middlemen. The co-operative store on the co-operative farm would prove an excellent medium for such an interchange of commodities.

CHAPTER XIX.

CAPITAL AND LABOUR IN CO-OPERATION.

A Disclaimer and a Justification—The Wage Fund of Political Economy—Co-operation confined to Farms, Mines, and Factories—Fixed and Movable Capital of Co-operation—Need for a Reserve Fund in Co-operative Factories—Landowners and Manufacturers—Security offered to Outside Investors—Insurance and Benefit Societies for Factories—Gain thereby to both Capital and Labour—Strange Oversight of Employers of Labour—No Need for Poor-laws and Charities—The Future of Employers of Labour.

It would be as well to state at the outset that the mode of treating the above subject in this chapter will be altogether different from the way in which capital and labour are usually treated in works of political economy, to be one of which, in the ordinary acceptance of the term, this lays no claim. Capital and labour will be handled here mainly in reference to the connection of each with the subject of co-operation for production, and not in reference to one another through the medium of capitalist employers of labour. As the system of co-operation here advocated is to be worked out by the agency of labourers, it can hardly be considered out of place to make reference to the subject of labour, and as no co-operation of labourers can be carried on without capital, neither can the mention here of this subject be deemed irrelevant.

The light in which writers on political economy have hitherto viewed the relations between capital and labour has been through the medium of wages. When speaking of labour it has always been wage-paid labour that they have had in view, and when speaking of capital in relation to labour it has been the capital spent on wages to which they have

alluded. Now, the very essence of co-operation among labourers is to do away with the system of wage-paid labour. It is true that in the plan of co-operation as here proposed the co-operators are to be paid wages, but this is only a part of the scheme, and by no means a large part of it. In the plan what has been termed wage is to be employed simply as a token for facilitating its working. It is, in short, to be paid not by one class as employers of labour to a wholly distinct class as labourers in full remuneration for work done ; but the very class that would pay it would be the recipient of it as part payment only in advance, till the profits made on the transactions of the co-operation for the whole year can be ascertained. As far then as co-operation is concerned, the system of paying wages, as understood by writers on political economy, has really no existence.

It is not here meant that wage-paid labour could ever be entirely done away with by the substitution of a system of co-operation, for there are many branches of industry in which it would be difficult to employ co-operation. For instance, there are many branches of industry carried on by masters having but a very few workmen in their employ. For workmen thus placed to attempt to combine together for carrying out an undertaking on anything resembling a system of co-operation would be like an attempt to use a Nasmyth hammer for cracking a nut, though even in respect to some of these it would not be altogether impossible to introduce co-operation with benefit, not only to the co-operators themselves, but also to the purchasers of their goods. This could best be done by some of the small masters joining in the co-operation as workmen, and by right of their capital as members of the first-class of shareholders.

In respect to the work done for the public at large by the Government or the municipality of a town needing the employment of large bodies of unskilled labourers, such as

cleaning the streets, etc., a system of co-operation by which these labourers would be masters of their own labour would be difficult if not impossible to carry out. Such work would have still to be done through the medium of wages by men, of whom no doubt there would be hundreds in every large town, who had been unable to exercise the prudential restraints needed to save up the £20 required for admission into a co-operative farm, or even the £10 into a co-operative factory, and by others who had been turned out of either from an inability to continue that necessary quality for success in a co-operative undertaking. Again, thrown back into the wage-paid class of labourers may be some co-operators in both farms and factories, who, preferring talk to work, may have thought themselves destined to be leaders of men through their oratorical gifts. To such men the plodding toil to be expected of a co-operator would naturally be so irksome as to lead them to seek an opening for the display of their special talent in another walk of life. A sound system of co-operation would do wonders in the way of raising up the mass of the labouring classes to a higher life of intelligence, morality, prosperity, and happiness than they have ever yet lived by teaching them many useful habits, of which the exercise of thrift and prudential restraints in other respects, and the taking a pleasure in their work would be some; but it has never been said, or in the least insinuated, that it would of itself make sober every drunkard, and fond of work every ne'er-do-weel.

Besides farming the instances in which co-operation for production would be most beneficially applied, would be factories wherein the men employed are to be counted by scores and hundreds. There is hardly an undertaking of this kind for which it would not be suitable. It would be especially adapted for mining operations of all kinds. The plan of co-operation here recommended for tilling the surface

of the earth would be almost equally suitable for that branch of industry occupied in getting coal from its bowels. The co-operating getters would for one thing have the same class of capitalists, the owners of land, to deal with as would the labourers of co-operative farms, and these capitalists might with advantage to themselves and the co-operative miners lend their capital—the mineral—containing earth below on the same fixed terms as it is proposed that they should lend their capital, the vegetable-producing earth above, to labourers of co-operative farms.

Among the reasons why co-operation is suitable for all works on which large bodies of workmen are engaged is this, that these men have been undergoing a course of training for it by their unions, which have been teaching them to combine together in masses for purposes common to all, the very quality needed for carrying out a co-operative undertaking with profit to the co-operators. The habit of combining together being thus acquired, to turn it to the best account these men would want a sound system of co-operation that would admit of their capital and labour being made the most of for their own advantage, and this without dictation from any one not a worker therein like themselves, even though he may be a leader of a Trades' Union. Rather than allow the principles of a sound system of co-operation to be set aside to their own detriment to suit the purposes or please the vanity of such a man, it would be worth the while of the co-operators to give him a pension to retire upon as a recompense for his past services in instilling into them a capacity for combining together. It does not follow that because fishermen are good at catching fishes they are equally good at cooking them.

A willingness on the part of factory operatives to agree to labour together in carrying out a co-operative undertaking and an ability to do it, however satisfactory in themselves, are but a part, and that not the greatest, of what is wanted in work-

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ing out the plan of co-operation for production in factories. Not less necessary than labour for the purpose is capital.

When speaking of the capital required in co-operative farming it was shown that two kinds of it are needed, and that they are to be distinguished the one from the other by qualifying words fixed and movable—the fixed to be supplied by landowners in the form of land, farm buildings, and such like, and the movable by the co-operators themselves to be represented by shares. Somewhat after the same principles is it now suggested that the capital of co-operative factories should be raised. It is proposed that this capital should also be divided into fixed and movable—the movable to be found by the co-operating workmen themselves, by way of allusion to which a few remarks were made in the last chapter. The fixed portion will now be treated of.

This fixed portion can come with any advantage to the co-operators from no other source than the outside investing public. The workmen would find it would tax all their powers to provide in sufficient quantity the movable portion of the capital required in their co-operative undertaking. For them to attempt to find the fixed as well, or any portion of it, would be for them to commit the sad blunder made by those making former attempts at starting co-operative undertakings for production, and this with a like unfortunate result. When however a co-operative undertaking will have been set going some years, and some of the more prosperous of the co-operative workmen, especially in the first class of shareholders, will have saved up more capital than would be required to be invested in the movable portion of the capital, there ought to be no obstacle to their investing this surplus capital in the fixed portion. But they ought to be allowed to do this not in the character of co-operative partners as when they invested in the undertaking their movable capital, but simply as outside investors.

The question now to be considered is, whether capitalists would come forward to help workmen co-operators to start factories in some such way as it is here proposed that capitalist owners of land should help farm labourers and others to start co-operative farms, that is, by lending the intending co-operators the necessary buildings, machinery, etc., representing the fixed capital. The first thing the co-operators would have to do towards procuring the fixed capital would be to create confidence in the minds of that portion of the investing public willing to lend it on the terms offered by themselves. It would be only natural that before parting with their money investors should wish to be free from all doubt about getting their interest upon it paid with regularity, and having the whole of the capital itself ultimately returned. On these two points workmen co-operators in factories must be prepared to satisfy the outside investing public.

If, however, they should fail to create this confidence sufficiently through not having put themselves into a position to be able to carry out their engagements in an honourable manner, it need hardly be said it would be of but little use their applying for loans from the outside investing public. Thus repelled, they would have no alternative left but to go on in the old grooves, either of borrowing money at a high rate of interest from professional money-lenders, or from the funds of 'Trades' Unions clogged with conditions that would prevent their being masters of their own actions, either of which, as in former instances, must result in the bankruptcy of the co-operation. If by acceding to the harsh terms of a Trades' Union they are not to be independent, as members of a co-operative factory, they would not be much better off, and perhaps in the end no better off than they were as wage-paid operatives under an employer of labour. All the difference in their condition would be that they had changed masters. It would be hardly worth while for the artisans of towns to throw away the savings of many

years in attempts to set up co-operative factories, if the doing so only resulted in a change of masters.

As to the manner of raising the money in the form of fixed capital required from the investing public for the buildings and, if necessary, the machinery of a co-operative factory, perhaps the best would be through the agency of Joint Stock Companies, the directors of which would act as trustees of the bondholders' capital lent to the different co-operative factories. The duties of these directors would be pretty much of the same kind as those to be performed by the members of the Land Committees already treated of in a former chapter. As the co-operative factories increase in number and in the variety of their respective industries, it may possibly be deemed expedient to start a separate company for each variety. The capital to be laid out by these companies in the ways proposed might be most conveniently raised through the medium of bonds to expire at a certain date, say, twenty years, and having attached to them half-yearly interest coupons.

It would be advisable that some of these debenture bonds, representing the fixed capital of co-operative factories, should be drawn out for small sums, so as to be available for purchase by persons of small means. If this were done, they would form a means of investment for the savings of those of the working-classes not able to join a co-operative undertaking, as also for actual co-operators, who would thus be able to invest their savings in their own bonds. These latter would then have an interest in both forms of the capital of the co-operative factory, in which they would be partners.

It is not at all improbable that many manufacturers, disgusted with the repeated strikes of their men, at the instigation of a 'Trades' Union, would be glad to dispose of their factories and plant, and to invest the proceeds of the sale of these in the purchase of the bonds of the companies alluded to, and as directors take part in the management of their affairs and

therefore of their own capital. There must be many manufacturers, to whom such a method of getting out of their perplexities, caused by these strikes and other irritating actions of Trades' Unions, would be a great relief. As to the men in their employ, these would carry on by co-operation as their own masters the work of the factory they had been engaged in as wage-paid operatives.

The suggestion here made of treating the greater part of the capital required for carrying on both co-operative farms and factories as fixed, is no very great innovation from a practice becoming common among railway companies. The tendency of these companies is to be constantly increasing their fixed capital or preferred, as they call it, without at the same time increasing their movable or deferred capital. Indeed, some of them have gone so far in this direction as to decrease the amount of their most deferred or original capital, by turning a great portion of it into a preferred stock. The railway company that has been adopting this policy to perhaps the greatest extent is the London and Brighton. Out of the total capital of this company laid out in land, rails, plant, stations, etc., amounting to £21,000,000, less than £2,000,000 may be called movable or dependent on the profits of the concern, all the rest amounting to £19,000,000 being lent at a fixed rate of interest, irrespective of the profits, as would be the capital of landowners lent to co-operative farms in the form of land, farm buildings, etc., and of the bond-holding public, lent in the form of factory buildings, machinery, etc., to co-operative factories.

Respecting the security, which must by no means be lost sight of, to be offered to the investing public for their capital lent on the preferred stock of co-operative factories, the annual rents charged to the co-operators for the use of the buildings, machinery, etc., should be high enough, not only to pay, say, five per cent. interest on its bonds, but five per cent. over at

first to enable the directors to meet the office and other expenses of the Company, and to form a reserve fund equal ultimately in amount to, say, one-third of the capital to provide against the contingencies, which seem to be more or less inseparable from all trading operations. A rent just high enough to cover the interest paid to the bondholders would clearly not suffice, nor would a higher rent that would in addition cover the repairs required periodically to be done to the buildings and the wear and tear of the machinery, etc.

Obviously, some extra provision would have to be made to meet the contingencies of trade, if the partners of a co-operative factory are to get loans from the outside investing public. In respect to these loans they would be at a disadvantage in their capacity of offering a security in comparison with the partners of a co-operative farm, though in respect to amount of profits earned by the co-operation, when trade would be brisk, the comparison would be greatly in their favour. The produce of a farm would be always sure to find a ready market, but it is not so sure that the productions of a factory always would. Should this ever be the case, the companies owning idle co-operative factory buildings, etc., through slackness of demand for the fabrics made therein, would perhaps be unable to get their rent with the usual punctuality, and therefore to pay interest on their bonds. To guard against so dire a contingency as this would be the necessity for the reserve fund alluded to.

However, there need be little fear of such a mishap as this for two reasons. In the first place, when co-operative factories have been pretty well established over the country its trade would cease to be adversely influenced by the strikes of Trades' Unions. As the operatives of a co-operative factory are never likely to strike against themselves, there would be no longer any occasion for the existence of these Unions for the promotion of strikes. Secondly, when the co-operative farms are established over the country with their much greater powers of

production, the agricultural wealth of the country, as will be shown in the next chapter, would be enormously increased; and this vast increase of wealth among all connected with agriculture could not but greatly increase the home trade of the country, and this home trade would give constant employment to the members of co-operative factories. Besides this large home trade there would be the vast trade that would be sure to spring up from the setting up of co-operative farms in India and the colonies having a Land Department, to say nothing of Asiatic Turkey. With a Land Department and its very potent auxiliaries, co-operative farms and English capital, at work in these countries in the manner already treated of, the producing powers of co-operative factories in Great Britain and Ireland would be taxed to their utmost for many generations.

In spite, however, of this brilliant prospect, it would only be prudent on the part of the bondholders to insist upon the accumulation of a reserve fund as a security for their capital. It would be as much to the interest of the working partners of a co-operative factory to comply with so reasonable a demand. In the first place, even if they had to pay ten per cent., they would get it for the reasons stated at a much cheaper rate in the long run, if not at once, than by borrowing it of money-lenders, or from the funds of Trades' Unions. So long as there would be a sufficient demand for their goods to keep their mills constantly going, they would be in a position to pay ten per cent., or even more on their fixed or preferred stock by way of rent with the greatest ease. They would feel this rate of interest a pressure on their resources only at a slack time when from the demands for their goods falling off their mills would be partially or wholly idle. Now, a portion of this interest, or rent, it is proposed the co-operators should pay, would prevent this slackness of demand from ever taking place, if the reserve fund, which it would go to form, were invested in the promotion of co-operative farms under a Land Department

in India and the colonies having such a department. Thus this reserve fund would act in the double capacity of securing to the bondholders their capital, some of whom would probably be the co-operators themselves, and of helping to secure the continuance of a demand for their goods enabling them to pay with ease the interest, out of which the reserve fund would be formed. Can it be said that results anything like these would flow from paying a higher rate of interest to either professional money-lenders or Trades' Unions? Moreover, the reserve fund thus accumulated by the operatives of co-operative factories, if lent to a Land Department to enable it to start co-operative farms in India and the colonies, would allow of these operatives being the indirect means of promoting the cause of co-operation among the agricultural classes of their fellow subjects in these dependencies, as well as, though in another way, in Great Britain and Ireland.

If co-operative factories are to be as successful as co-operative farms, it will be necessary that the part of the plan for the latter to be assigned to landowners should be carried out by the factory owners: this is the establishment of a Society for insuring therein the lives of the operatives of a co-operative factory, and that would act also as a sort of Benefit Club for them to fall back upon for relief in the event of accident or sickness. As an outline of a plan for such an Insurance Society and Benefit Club was given in the chapter on the landowners of England, it will not be necessary to go into any details respecting it in this. The objects for which these provisions against contingencies incident to labour of all kinds are to be effected would be well-nigh the same, the chief difference being in the agencies by which they would be carried out. In the one case the business of such a Society and Club would be conducted by directors chosen from the Land Committees representing the owners of the fixed or preferred capital in the form of land and farm buildings, and in the other by directors chosen from

the Joint Stock Companies representing also the fixed or preferred capital, but in the form of factory buildings and machinery.

Something of the kind would have to be done to prevent the hardship accruing to individual operatives of a co-operative factory in the working of the system, and due to unpreventable causes. If this provision be left to the co-operators themselves to make, it would either not be done at all or it would be done through agencies unconnected in any other with the co-operative undertaking; for it would be utterly impossible for them to do it only among themselves, with the least chance of success. For a Society of the kind to be at all successful, there should belong to it many times more contributors than there would be members to the largest of co-operative factories. In fact, the greater the number of contributors to such a Society the more assured is likely to be its success. The best chance, then, that an Insurance and Benefit Society would have of being of advantage to the members of co-operative factories, would be by its being one large enough to embrace within its folds the members of as many co-operative factories as possible. In the case of co-operative farms there would be no difficulty in conducting one huge Society capable of including all such farms in each of the three kingdoms. As the produce of all farms is pretty much alike, and as they are all to be pretty much of one size, and to contain about the same number of members, their working would not vary much. This close resemblance, in all respects between co-operative farms, would tend greatly to their capacity to be brought under the operations of one monster Insurance and Benefit Society, as it would any number of thousands of them to be easily brought under the operations of one Imperial Government on however large a scale.

On the other hand, factories turn out an infinite variety of productions according to the raw material worked up in

them, and on this account it would perhaps be necessary to have a separate Insurance and Benefit Society for each branch of industry, just as it will be necessary perhaps to have a separate Joint Stock Company of bondholders for lending the fixed capital. However, this is quite an after consideration. Experience may prove the need of having, as in the other instance, but one Insurance Society on the largest scale possible, and this may, in course of time, cause a way to be found of amalgamating all the companies for carrying out the object. Should this prove to be the case, the great point that would have to be kept in view would be to have each of the bondholding companies represented as far as possible on the board of directors of the one all-comprehensive Insurance and Benefit Society to be established for the relief of workmen partners in co-operative factories when overtaken by unforeseen calamities.

Not only would a well-managed Insurance and Benefit Society conducted on the large scale here proposed greatly add to the well-being on the whole of the members of co-operative farms and factories, but the owners of land and factories would find a Society of the kind of such advantage to their own interest as quite to justify their taking all the trouble its management would involve. For one thing, it would in no little degree help to secure the success of the plan of co-operative farms and factories by making good whatever deficiency may result from its working through accident and sickness, to which all owners of labour are liable in the exercise of their calling, and against which even the most prudent among them cannot at all times guard themselves. In fact, so needful is the aid to be afforded by such a Society to the working out of the plan that it may be said to be the complement to it, supplying as it would an incompleteness, or perhaps defect, scarcely to be avoided in the circumstances by any one plan. When, then, such a society makes the

working of co-operative farms and factories a success, it is beyond doubt the means of making prosperous those who profit by such working. But before the members of co-operative farms and factories have a right to be called prosperous they must previously have honourably fulfilled all the engagements entered into with the owners of fixed or preferred capital lent to their respective co-operative undertakings, that is, with those who will have set on foot and carried on the Insurance and Benefit Society that had proved so conducive to the success of these undertakings.

Another no small advantage that both the co-operators and lenders of the fixed or preferred capital to their undertakings would gain from the establishment among themselves of an Insurance and Benefit Society, would be that it would be the means of preventing an admission into the co-operation of an influence that would, in the course of time, if not at once, prove prejudicial to the harmony that ought to exist for the benefit of both, between the co-operators and the only creditors these co-operators ought to have. If it were only on this account, the lenders of the fixed capital, whether landowners or bondholders, ought to make a point of managing the affairs of an Insurance and Benefit Society in such a way that the benefits to be derived from it by its contributors would be greater than they could obtain through any other agency, and having the whole body of co-operators as they would for contributors, there ought to be no obstacle to their effecting this.

When all adverse influences are kept from thrusting themselves in between the two parties indispensable for carrying out the plan of co-operation as here proposed, there can be no interruption in the harmony that must exist between capital and labour, if the undertaking in which they are both employed is to be successful. Had the employers of labour in towns and agricultural districts, in days gone by, but co-operated together in establishing such Societies for the benefit of their workmen

and labourers, they might have staved off for many a year, perhaps for many a generation, the extinction with which they are now threatened through their neglect in using this humane forethought. Trades' and Labourers' Unions had their origin entirely from the workmen and labourers of these employers being compelled to establish such Societies themselves for their own preservation against the many adverse contingencies incident to wage-paid labour. By not using this, what ought to have been ordinary prevision, they allowed a third interest to creep in between themselves and their men, the reason of whose existence is to keep the two interests of capital and labour, which ought to be linked closely together, as wide apart as possible.

What has, no doubt, been all along causing this utter want of consideration for the well-being of their men on the part of employers of labour, has been, firstly, the survival of the fittest intensity of competition among themselves, and secondly, the existence of the Poor Law system. When the nicest calculations have to be made in competing one against the other as to which manufacturer shall produce goods at the lowest price, no room can be left for the exercise, not of philanthropy merely, but of even the slightest forecast of their own future interest; and this heedlessness has been fostered by the knowledge that the effects of the misery which this intensity of competition has caused to their workmen by reducing the rate of wage to the lowest point compatible with their existence as workmen at all, has had to be borne by other capitalists in the form of rates and charity doles. However, employers of labour are now receiving, in the Employers' Liability Act, the reward of their want of thought for their men's welfare. They are now compelled to do what they ought long ago to have seen it to be to their interest to do in making a provision for the men in their employ when meeting with an accident, and they have still to contribute to the poor rate as before. If they had of them-

selves undertaken to do the one, there would have been no necessity for the other. Concessions forcibly extorted are always worthless in comparison with those voluntarily and opportunely given. Had employers of labour of their own free will established years ago Insurance Societies and Benefit Clubs for their own men, they would probably have thereby ingrafted into them habits of thrift and sobriety, which would have rendered it unnecessary for them to seek relief from rates in cases of sickness and accident. It is to be feared it is now too late for them to do this, as the ground has been too long occupied by Trades' Unions, the business of whose organisers and leaders is to keep capital and labour at the greatest distance possible from one another, the protestations of these leaders to the contrary notwithstanding.

There is now only one way left of thwarting the liquidation-producing action of Trades' and Labourers' Unions. This is by giving the workmen and labourers belonging to them a greater interest in their work than what is implied in receiving wages however high. The responsibility for the successful working of the undertaking, to which their labour is given, must be henceforward thrown upon these men's own shoulders, and for this to be done effectively they would have to furnish themselves the whole of what may be called the movable capital of the undertaking, renting the immovable or, in railway company parlance, preferred. As soon as workmen and farm labourers find that besides their own labour it is their own capital that is at stake, and not that of employers of labour or even of outside shareholders, they will then begin to ask themselves some questions about Trades' and Labourers' Unions, that must lead in no long time to their extinction.

With respect to co-operative farms, if only capitalist owners of land would carry out the hints just given about making provision for the welfare of the labourers of these farms by means of an Insurance and Benefit Society, there ought to be

no need for the levying of a poor-rate for the relief of these. when once the system of co-operation has been in full working. The co-operative farms owing to their successful action under the plan in creating a competency at all events if nothing more among the members would of themselves prevent the necessity of these members having individually to seek relief from rates in preventable circumstances, and in an unforeseen calamity such as an accident or an illness would then come in to his relief the co-operative farm labourers' Insurance and Benefit Society supported by the contributions of the members. If the society were well managed, as no doubt it would be, under the direction of a board of well-educated business men like the landowners, whose interest it would be that it should be so, its premiums ought not to be burdensome to the insurers to pay. Unlike 'Trades' and Labourers' Unions, which began their career as Benefit Clubs, the whole of the fund of the society, excepting the comparatively small amount for meeting every year the unavoidable expenses connected with carrying it on, would be devoted to the beneficial objects for which it would be instituted, and not squandered in ways quite foreign to them, such as in holding congresses, in paying delegates to attend these congresses, in returning members to Parliament, and supporting them when there, and in the incitement to and maintenance of strikes. With, then, such an Insurance and Benefit Society based on sound principles honestly carried out for making good the defects in the system of co-operative farming among labourers caused by misfortune, which no system devised by man could prevent, such blots in the government of a civilised country as workhouses and a poor's rate need no more be required for the agricultural population of the United Kingdom than of those countries, the land of which is tilled by peasant proprietors.

Possibly, the same satisfactory freedom from the debasing results and onerous rates of the Insurance and Benefit Society,

conducted by the State through its department of the Local Government Board would prevail in towns, if employers of labour therein would but use a little forethought to meet the inevitable march of events through the existence of Trades Unions, and the vast political power of their members obtained through the last extension of the franchise and the ballot. Let them rent their factories to co-operative societies of workmen on the same principles as those on which capitalists' owners of land would rent their land and farm buildings to farm labourers. Were they to do this, not only would their capital be exempt from the charge on it of a poor's rate, but it would be secure against the losses to which it is now exposed, through the strikes of their men and the retaliatory lockouts, instituted in their own self-defence. Some of them would of course not make such large fortunes as they are now doing, owing in a great measure to the speculative influences at work through the insecurity of capital, caused by the disturbing action of Trades' Unions. But there can hardly be a doubt that a great many, if not the bulk, of the men who are now employers of labour, would be better off in the long run as rent-receivers of co-operative factories.

It may be said that under the system of co-operative farms and factories the middle class employer of labour would become extinct. To a great extent no doubt this would be the case. It would never be wholly so in towns, but would be undoubtedly so in farming. But the blame of this extinction of a class ought not to be put at the door of the co-operative system, but of the Trades' Unions and of the universal suffrage, which render the existence of the co-operative system absolutely necessary to preserve the capital of the country from being destroyed by the never-ending contests between it and labour. The employer of labour would certainly not be better off if all his capital were destroyed, and as in the case of the Blackburn riots, his other kinds of property too; for one cannot conceive

in these days of Trades' Unions, strikes, and Employers' Liability Act, any one wishing to be an employer of labour beyond making money by it.

Embarrassing as may now be the working of the Employers' Liability Act to employers of labour, they are likely to find it before long to be very much more so. The leaders of Trades' Unions have been making no secret both in and out of Parliament that they look upon the concession, wrung from employers of labour by the Act, but an instalment and that a small one of what they intend to continue to agitate for. So intolerable must in no long time be the position of employers of labour, and so insecure must be the capital they own and are answerable for, through the vexatious proceedings of those representing labour, that they cannot but be anxious to find a way of escape from them. Such an escape would the plan of co-operation afford, especially for those wishing to continue to be connected with their factories as would probably be the case with most employers of labour. To be able to make use of it they would have to merge themselves into one or other of two classes according to the amount of capital they possessed. If they have but little capital they would have to become a worker in a co-operative factory, and to take rank in such according to the number of shares they would be able to buy. On the other hand, if capitalists on too large a scale for this, they would lend their capital in the form of factory buildings, etc., to the new co-operative partnership of their men at a fixed rental, and this either directly or through the medium of one of the Joint Stock Companies alluded to.

However, there is no need to fear that every form of production would ever be carried on by the co-operation of the producers. It would not be practicable, even if desirable, in those branches of industry in which it is necessary that the employers of labour should be men of a superior education as well as owners of capital, as, for instance, in the publishing

trade. In the majority of factories the main qualification for the employer of labour is to be able to provide the capital. Provided workmen in co-operation possessed, or had the command of a sufficiency of capital, there is nothing about the carrying on of such factories that they could not do as well as an employer of labour. In fact, most factories are superintended by a workman promoted for his capacity for the work to be either the manager of the works at a large salary, or a junior partner in it. Factories that can turn out cotton and woollen cloths, carpets, and such like, require, it is well known, nothing more of their employer of labour owners than their capital. But these are just the factories that employ the greatest number of operatives, and consequently they are just those from which Trades' Unions derive so much of their strength for working mischief.

A short time since it was the practice for those employers of labour who had naturally become disgusted with the embarrassing tactics of Trades' Unions to make over their factories to Joint Stock Companies. The practice is discontinued for the simple reason that most of these companies have had to go into liquidation. The former employers of labour, who had the good fortune to get rid of their difficulties by selling their factory and plant to a Joint Stock Company, were no doubt subjects for congratulation, if only they were able to get cash for their interest thus disposed of in lieu of an allotment of shares of the new company. But, even then they were benefited only at the expense of the shareholders taking their place. Any way, through such transference, and the liquidating process consequent thereon, many thousands of pounds of capital were in most of these instances lost to their owners, and labour gained no advantage from the disappearance of all this capital.

By having recourse, on the other hand, to the plan of co-operation as here suggested, employers of labour would

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obtain a secure investment for their capital invested in factory buildings and plant. It would be secure for the sufficient reason that by the plan labour would be made contented, and the owners of it would be so placed that it would be quite as much to their own interest that the capital in question should be made secure as it would be to that of its owners. It could be rendered insecure only by the leaders of Trades' Unions inciting the owners of the labour employed in the same co-operative factory as the capital to lessen its value, if not to destroy it altogether, by the employment of the same kind of embarrassing tactics that had worried the former employers of labour into converting their factory into a co-operative undertaking. For the workmen of a co-operative factory to allow themselves to be persuaded to do this would be obviously to allow themselves to be persuaded to commit the folly of utterly destroying all their chances of success in life—a most unlikely contingency. It does not follow that because workmen have been co-operating together for years through the medium of Trades' Unions to harass the capital of employers of labour they would continue to do so, when a great portion of a capital of a factory, in which they were co-operating together to carry on for their own profit, had become their own, and they had made themselves responsible for the remainder. No, the one form of co-operation clearly means the total extinction of the other.

CHAPTER XX.

FREE TRADE OR PROTECTION?

Sympathy between Co-operators in Farms and Factories—Depression of Agriculture through Free Trade—Owners of Land and Farm Labourers—Causes of Loss of Agricultural Influence in Country—Statistics, Real and Hypothetical—Leaders of Trades Unions Free-traders—Conservative Party and Protection—Peasant Owners and Workmen of Towns—An Operative as Proprietor of a Small Factory—Amount of Protective Duties to be Levied—American Corn-grower and English Consumer—Not all Consumers Losers by a Protective Duty.

Nor the least of the benefits that would be derived from the establishment of the co-operative factories treated of in the last two chapters would be the sympathy they would be the means of bringing about between the owners of labour engaged on the land and in factories. Farm labourers and factory operatives have, it is true, been working in accord to a certain extent with each other through their respective Unions. Their bond of union has unfortunately been effected to attack the interests of their employers, and through them of capital, and has in consequence been most injurious in its action to the whole community of the country. But when co-operative farms and factories are in existence, the employers of labour in both farming and manufacturing will have been superseded, since in both owners of labour are to be also owners of capital—at all events, as much so as most employers of labour have ever been, and as owners of capital they would be employers of their own labour only. Together with the employers of labour would have to retire from the scene Trades' and Labourers' Unions, as the work for which they were instituted will have been accomplished.

The sympathy that would be likely to spring up between the

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owners of labour of farms and factories on the disappearance of the employers of other men's labour and of 'Trades' and Labourers' Unions, the outgrowth of the same system, could hardly fail to lead to a greater sympathy between the owners of capital employed on the land and in factories. The owners of both labour and capital in co-operative farms and factories would not be long in discovering that their interests were identical. It was shown in the chapter on co-operative farms as beneficial to trade that the only solid foundation of a country's wealth is that based on the cultivation of its land, and, therefore, on the prosperity of its cultivators. Unless the cultivators of the soil are prosperous, there can be no wealth with which to give employment to the capital and labour that ought to be engaged in factories. These are facts that were unaccountably overlooked by those owners of factories who set the interests of those engaged in agriculture aside as being of no worth in comparison with their own when they agitated for the repeal of the Corn Laws.

When co-operative factories are established, this error is not likely to be repeated by the workmen of such factories. These are not likely to sacrifice their interests out of hatred to a class, since, for one thing, the class connected with agriculture they would most injure by a hostile action would, under the plan of co-operation, be not the owners of land, but the labourers of a co-operative farm, holding the same position in husbandry that they would be doing in manufactures.

Much, however, of what has been said touching the practical sympathy to be shown by the workmen of co-operative factories to the labourers of co-operative farms is by way of anticipation, since co-operative factories are far more likely to follow upon than precede co-operative farms in the order of their institution in this country. The reason for this is, as already stated, that landowners not being as a rule both employers of labour and owners of land, as manufacturers are employers of labour and

owners of factories, the change required to be made by them to adapt themselves to the plan of co-operation would be trifling to that required to be made by manufacturers. For manufacturers to make the change, they would have to divest themselves of one of their dual functions, employers of labour. Reluctant as they may now be to separate these functions, most of them will have to do it sooner or later, unless they are prepared to witness all their capital frittered away through the action of Trades' Unions. Manufacturers could hardly fail as employers of labour without failing too as owners of factories, thus losing their capital in each of their double capacity, or, in other words, the whole of it. On the other hand, farmers have been failing of late by hundreds without causing the owners of the land occupied by these unfortunate employers of labour to fail too; though it is to be feared that many of them must have been put to great inconvenience from not being able to get any rent from the farms deserted on account of these failures.

There might be some consolation, though but a poor one, to the country at large for the ruin that has been overtaking those interests engaged in the cultivation of its land represented by owners of land and tenant farmers, if the labourers employed by the latter have been benefited; or if they have, their condition before the repeal of the Corn Laws must have been a very miserable one indeed, and a disgrace to their employers profiting by the existence of those laws. That farm labourers have not been having their condition much improved of late years must be admitted by all. This is not to be wondered at, when it is considered that the wage-fund, out of which alone could such improvement take place, has been greatly diminished through the action of free trade. That whatever little improvement they may have gained in their condition they look upon as likely to be taken from them at any moment is sufficiently proved by their organisations into Unions for the protection of the interests of their labour.

Moreover, this little gain in their weekly wages must have been more than swallowed up by the contributions they have been under the necessity to make to support the Labourers' Unions, through whose instrumentality alone could it be maintained.

It is evident, then, that if the interests of all engaged in the tillage of the land of the United Kingdom are not to be altogether ruined, and the land to go out of cultivation, so great a calamity to the country can be averted only by effecting a thorough change in the present most unsatisfactory condition of things. This change, it is here maintained, can be brought about only by the system of farming on a large scale by co-operation among labourers, by means of which these labourers, by becoming owners of their own capital and labour, and being made contented with the manner and rate of its remuneration, would make the land far more productive; and by obtaining the sympathies on their side of the working men of towns, now become all powerful, through the extension to them of the franchise and the ballot, would be enabled to get a better price for their produce.

Touching the latter result from the adoption of co-operative farming, the present system of tenant farming on a large scale by employers of labour, even when these employers have had all the demands of the Farmers' Alliance ceded to them, will not, as we have already seen, bring over to the side of agriculture the sympathy of the labouring classes in town and country. As the tenant farmers with the landowners' help have never succeeded in doing it, it is not at all likely they will succeed now that, by the action of the Farmers' Alliance, they will have made enemies of their landlords. Their only chance of succeeding is by sharing with their labourers the concessions to be extracted from the landowners through their new organisation. But will they allow their labourers to participate in these concessions? and, if so, what proportion are they prepared to make over to their men? Even if they gave

the whole, they could not give more than it is now in the power of the landowners to give. Now, judging from the character of these middlemen and from the antecedents of their class as employers of labour, there can hardly be a doubt that they mean to keep all the fruits of these concessions to themselves, and do not mean for their labourers to have the smallest fraction of a share in them, and however much other persons may be led astray by denials to the contrary, the labourers themselves and the leaders of their unions are not likely to be.

Nothing can be clearer than this, that the agricultural industry of the country can revive from the depressed condition into which it is falling every year deeper and deeper, only by a much closer union between the two interests most naturally connected with it, the owners of the land and the labourers on it. The initiatory step towards such an union, it is needless to say, would have to be taken by the owners of land. Their duty to the interests of their country, no less than to their own, is manifest. As unions are now all the rage, they should at once league themselves with the workmen of towns and labourers on farms for the purpose of working out the system of co-operative farms on a large scale on the principles here laid down. The interests of the owners of land and farm labourers ought never to have been separated by the interposition of an intermediate one, benefited through the hiring of what each has to lend. Their union again presents beyond all doubt the only true solution of the land question ; for it is only by this union of capital in the forms of land and labour that the cultivation of the soil can be rendered profitable to both, and the agricultural interest be kept from being swamped altogether by those of towns leagued against it by a coalition of a mouse-and-cat kind between factory owners, leaders of trades' unions, and certain writers of an advanced type of politics. More especially will this be the case

when the franchise will have been reduced to the lowest point.

A little dabbling in figures—not, however, worthy of the name of statistics—would give the reader some idea of the increased influence the agricultural interest would be likely to gain through the adoption of the system of co-operative farming by labourers throughout the United Kingdom under the *régime* of universal suffrage. Statistics tell us that there are in the three kingdoms about 50,000,000 acres of land, including pasture, in what is called cultivation, and 10,000,000 acres of heath and bog that could be brought into cultivation. Let us now leave real statistics, and suppose that these 60,000,000 acres could be divided into co-operative farms of 1,000 acres each; there would be 60,000 of such farms. As there would be forty labourers partners in each of these 60,000 farms, the number of these partners would be altogether no fewer than 2,400,000. When the suffrage has become universal, every one of these 2,400,000 co-operating labourers would have a vote, and they would be sure to use it in behalf of the interests of the agricultural class, since, from their having taken the place of employers of labour, it would be their own. Now, these 2,400,000 voters would be sprung, not from the upper nor even from the middle classes, but actually from the manual labouring and artisan, and from these latter would their numbers be constantly recruited. To these 2,400,000 toilers on the land would be added the votes of the comparatively few owners of it, and of the very many more of all classes living in towns, especially the workmen of co-operative factories, who would be pretty certain to sympathise with a system that had brought about the settlement of the land question in a way that had extricated the manufacturing interests of the country from ruin no less than the agricultural.

Let us suppose, on the other hand, that the agricultural interests of the United Kingdom are not to be extricated

from the ruin impending over them by the system here suggested any more than by the other systems, and that, despite the extraordinary power developed by the organisation under it of getting the greatest amount of produce from the land at the least possible cost, the labourers of the co-operative farms have, after all, the greatest difficulty, with all their industry and thrift, and with all the help furnished them by the capitalist owners of the land; what then is to be done? It has been shown how peasant ownership, under the like adverse circumstances, not may, but must, fail, the backward state of civilisation of the small landowners notwithstanding; and as to the system of tenant-farming by employers of labour, it is its utter break-down that has brought on the land question at all. In fact, it is in how the one is to be avoided and the other superseded that lies the whole difficulty now presented for solution.

But supposing, to repeat the hypothesis, the system of tenant-farming by co-operation among labourers fails too, from causes over which it could have no control—it is not said that it will—what next? In the answering of such a query would be conspicuously brought out one of the advantages to be derived by the country at large from the system in question having had a trial. The failure of such a trial would afford the greatest of proofs to the rulers of a country in which the most powerful party by far would be, on account of universal suffrage, the working classes, that the difficulties under which agriculture was labouring were so great as to prevent even themselves from succeeding in it with all the advantages attending co-operation among themselves and with landowners. On the other hand, when the system of a peasant proprietary had been tried and had failed, as most certainly it would if the adverse conditions which caused the failure of the peasant tenant co-operation system existed, would the combination of the peasant landowners and money-lenders of the peasant owner-

ship of political economists have the sympathy of the working classes of towns? Certainly not, especially if these saw a chance of the other system ever being brought within their reach. Hardly needs it be said that, without the sympathy of the working classes, in a country in which power lies with the greatest number, the unfavourable conditions of a fiscal nature alluded to could not be altered.

The reason why agriculture has been brought to its present deplorable state in this country is, that the agricultural interest in it, hitherto represented by a combination of landowners and tenant farmers, has become too weak in point of numbers to resist the numerical force of towns brought against it by the successive Reform Bills, and this weakness has been further developed by the lodger franchise granted by the Conservative party. The landowners were not able to profit by the last extension of the franchise, as it was confined to the working classes of towns, and not extended to farm labourers. Even if it had been extended to these latter, it is doubtful whether the landowners would have obtained their votes. When farm labourers do get the privilege of voting, which probably will not now be put off beyond a year or two, it may be taken for certain that, under the dictation of the leaders of labourers' unions, very few of their votes would be given to support any measure having for its object the benefit of the agricultural interest of England by putting a duty on corn imported from other countries. It is noteworthy in respect to this point that every one of the leaders of both trades' and labourers' unions who have expressed an opinion in public on the subject are strongly against the imposition of the least duty on the importation of land produce from America. Writers on political economy are not more unanimous on this point than seem to be these leaders of the working and labouring classes. Whether these two parties have any other object in view in ruining what ought to be the greatest industry of the country than benefiting, as

they make out, all the others therein, it is left for others to decide.

Not only would the landowners not get the votes of farm labourers, but the last election proved clearly that they were losing the support of even their tenant employers of labour, some counties having chosen a representative from among their own class, instead of, as heretofore, among the landowners. Why did these tenants turn round upon the Conservative party? It was because their hopes that the Conservatives, when put into office by their votes at the previous election, would lighten the burdens then weighing so grievously on agriculture were blighted. In what way these tenants were disappointed has now become a matter of history. Their wish to have a duty put upon foreign corn was pooh-poohed by the leader of the Conservatives as a musty idea that ought never to have been brought ought again from the place in which it had been long ago entombed. The Conservative party did not even do that which has since been done by Mr. Gladstone, and which received the support of even the farmers' enemies in all other respects, political economists, and leaders of trades and labourers' unions—the removal of the tax on malt. If the landowners cannot now reckon on the votes of their tenants, how is it likely they will be able to reckon on them when the differences between them become more sharply defined?

The tenant-farmers, on finding that all the Conservative landowners felt disposed to do for them was to throw a taunt about musty parchments in their face, have determined to see what they can do for themselves. Hence the revolt of these farmers against the Conservative party at the last election, and their conversion to the views and their compliance with the advice of political economists and of Liberals not owning land to seek a relief out of their difficulties from the State, not by levying a duty on imported corn, but by compelling landowners to part with a portion of the interests they have hitherto been

exclusively enjoying in the land. The tenant-farmers are, however, not likely to gain anything by allying themselves with those who have most unmistakably shown themselves to be inimical to the agricultural interests of their own country. Nothing would benefit these farmers but a greater profit on their produce than the low one they are now getting, owing to the unrestricted competition from abroad, against which they have to contend; and they are never likely to be relieved in this direction unless they gain over the sympathetic votes of their own labourers, now leagued against them through union organisations, leaving out of consideration the sympathetic votes of the working classes of towns.

If, then, the heavy penalties with which the agriculture of the country is handicapped, and which threaten to impoverish all classes in it, are ever to be removed, the removal can be effected only through the system of co-operative farming by labourers. These labourers may be able to do it through the effective working of the system under which they would co-operate. But should they, unhappily, not be able, they will have conferred a service next in importance to their country by convincing all in it but those whose prospects in life will depend upon their not being convinced, that nothing further is to be done for the relief of all classes connected with agriculture but the taking off the heavy load which oppresses it, and that load is the importation of the land produce of other countries without payment of duty. The 2,400,000 co-operating farm labourers, allied with the landowners and the working classes of towns, would form a political force sufficiently powerful from their numbers to undo all the mischief leaders of 'Trades' and Labourers' Unions, political economists, and such like have worked to their country for reasons they have not yet ventured to avow.

Should the co-operative principle here laid down ever take root in the factories of towns, the operatives therein would have

another reason for sympathising with the system of co-operative farming by labourers than the fact that they could, whenever they chose, avail themselves of it by becoming a member of a co-operative farm on purchasing the four shares of the fourth class of shareholders. When the co-operative factories of towns will have been established on the same lines as the co-operative farms, it will only be natural that the co-operating partners of these factories should have a care for the home trade of the country, and their common sense would tell them that the home trade could flourish only by the continued prosperity of those carrying on what ought to be the greatest industry of the country—the agricultural—for without such prosperity those engaged in this industry could not buy largely the goods turned out by the co-operative factories. To do the leaders of trades' unions justice, one of the good points about them—and they are not quite destitute of all, especially when, as in this instance, they break away from the dogmatic fallacies of political economists—is that they have always shown a disposition to prefer a home to a foreign trade, on the principle that, as buyers are supposed to be possessed of capital, it is better for the country that this capital should be held by their own countrymen, and better still, by the working classes among them. This would be the case when, through the system of peasant tenant farming by co-operation, the land of the country is tilled by, and the profits got from such tillage are distributed among, its labouring population.

On the other hand, the peasant proprietary of writers on political economy could not gain the sympathy of the workmen of towns in either of these ways. In the first place, these workmen could never save up capital enough to enable them to buy land enough to get a living off it, and to work it as well. Even if their wages were twice as high as those they now receive, it would require the greater part of a workman's life to get together the amount of capital requisite in an old

established and populous country like that of the United Kingdom to buy this sufficiency of land alone, to say nothing of the extra amount necessary for working it. When the workman of the town had bought this sufficiency of land he would have to begin to work it with most likely borrowed capital at a high rate of interest, and with his life three-parts gone, and his energies enfeebled by the incessant toil and exercise of thrift needed to enable him to earn and save the capital with which the land had been bought.

As to the good-wishes of the workmen of co-operative factories for the prosperity of those engaged in the tillage of the soil under the system of a peasant proprietary, this is a subject that needs no discussion, for the simple reason that under such a system co-operative factories are never likely to come into existence. In the event of such a system being established in this country, those workmen of towns, who could not find the large sum wanted to enable them to buy land and cultivate it, would have no countenance given them to start co-operative factories on the plan here proposed, as they would have, if the co-operative farms of the same system prevailed. In short, all the example that peasant proprietorship would give them in respect to factories would be to start workmen's proprietary factories, that is, for each individual workman to have a factory of his own, in which all the work done should be done only by himself, wife, and children. Of course, the working man sees the absurdity of all this, when brought within his own ken of every-day experience, though strangely enough, owing to the sophistry thrown around it by writers on political economy, he cannot see the waste of capital and labour the same system involves in farming. The least reflection would make him aware that he could not get a factory with its necessary machinery any more than a peasant owner can buy land with its necessary farm buildings without a considerable amount of capital; and that, if he has not this capital himself, he must

borrow it at a high rate of interest from some money-lender, and that to be able to pay this interest he, his wife, and children would have to toil morning, noon, and night without a moment's relaxation even on Sunday, and this all the year round, and year after year, till, as in nine cases out of ten, an illness or an accident or a slack demand for his goods would put the factory and machinery into the hands of the money-lender, just as an illness or an accident, or a bad harvest is constantly putting the tiny farm of the peasant proprietor, for the cultivation of which to enable him to pay this high rate of interest he has been sacrificing health, comfort, relaxation from bodily toil by reading, nay even the very decencies of life comprised in the lowest scale of civilisation, in short, everything in this life worth living for beyond eating the vegetables grown on his little plot of land.

Should, however, the artisan and labouring classes of the United Kingdom find that the members of co-operative farms could not, in spite of all the advantages so superior to any other that this system would give, compete successfully against the exempt from duty imported corn from America, they would then use the power the suffrage has put into their hands, and insist upon the imposition of a duty, even though a professor of political economy should be prime minister of the country at the time. The question would then arise as to the amount of duty it would be advisable to put on. The artisan and labouring classes, if they were well advised, would be satisfied with as moderate a duty as possible consistent with giving the necessary amount of protection to the new agricultural industry, in which their interests would be so largely concerned. Possibly, a 5s. duty per quarter on corn, and a proportionate duty on other kinds of land produce would be found to be high enough. But, whatever may be its amount, they should insist upon its being levied equally upon the land produce from all countries with the exception of that

from those of the dependencies of England having a Land Department worked by English capital on the plan and for the purposes here set forth.

It has always been alleged against the policy of levying a duty on the produce of one country and not on that of another, that it is tantamount to exempting from duty all produce imported by dishonest importers, and that in this way the State offers a premium on dishonesty without being much of a pecuniary gainer thereby. But, if there is a Land Department of State in a dependency, the Government of the mother country could hardly be cheated in this way. There is not a dependency now that is not in telegraphic communication with the mother country, and however fast steamers carrying the land produce of these dependencies may go, they cannot go so fast as a telegraphic message. The Land Department of the dependency, presumably having possession of all the land therein, would be able to form a pretty close calculation as to the amount of corn and other land produce the dependency would have each year for exportation beyond its own home wants. It would be its business, too, to take note of the quantities annually exported to the mother country, and of the vessels and their owners engaged in this trade, and to communicate the substance of this knowledge to the English Government. By the exercise of this ordinary amount of caution, an effectual stop could surely be put on all attempts to import free of duty the land produce of the United States and other foreign countries, and even of English colonies not having a Land Department of State, as if it had come from India and a colony having such a Department.

To fully appreciate the gain to be derived from the suggestion here made, of exempting from duty the land produce only of a dependency having a Land Department, it would be necessary to recall to mind what has already been said respecting the many benefits such a Department would confer, not

merely on the dependency, but on the mother country herself. In the first place, by means of it, and it alone, would be started in India and the colonies the co-operative farms on the plans here set forth, by which these dependencies would be so greatly enriched in the many ways pointed out. Then, as to the mother country, these Land Departments, through the co-operative farms belonging to them, would be placed in a position to offer to the English investing classes a means of investing their capital, amounting in the aggregate to hundreds of millions of pounds, with a security covered two or three times over by a surplus income derived from these farms; and in the case of India alone, its Land Department would want to borrow, and be able to give more than ample security for more than £1,000,000,000.

As to the great benefit the trade of the mother country would gain from these Land Departments and their large revenue-producing medium the co-operative farms, the inhabitants of India and the colonies would, through the agency of these, bend their energies to the manufacture of farm produce, and not to that of fabrics, which they would get from the mother country in payment of their land produce. Owing to the capital of these countries being diverted through their Land Department, and its co-operative farms to the development of agriculture, their inhabitants would not be driven to put a duty on the importation of the fabrics of their mother country in order to encourage their manufacture amongst themselves. This filial duty upon the part of the daughter colonies ought to be reciprocated by that of the mother country in exempting their land produce from the duty imposed on the land produce of all other countries, including even those improvident daughters that would not add to their Government a Land Department.

Surely all these advantages are worth taking into account by political economists! If, however, there are any so obdu-

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rate as to refuse to do so, there is another gain to be derived from the working of a Land Department in each of the dependencies, the mere mention of which ought to incline them to reason. Astounding as it may appear to say so, such Departments might be made the means of helping largely to pay off the National Debt of England, no little of which was created in the acquisition and establishment of these dependencies. Unless political economists and statesmen conceive the idea of getting rid of this National Debt by a succession of confiscation processes, they ought to be ready to make some sacrifice of their prejudices for the sake of bringing about so desirable an object as the paying it off in an honest manner. Count Cavour used to say that anybody could govern in a state of siege. In like manner may it be said that anybody could be a doctrinaire financier with a policy of confiscation. The greater part of the debt of the United Kingdom might be paid off out of the ultimately immense surplus revenues of the Land Department of India alone, if that splendid landed estate were only managed by a Land Department having all its land farmed out on the co-operative principles here laid down. Of course, the paying off of so large a debt, even with the large surplus revenues of the Land Departments, would be the work of a great many years, possibly of two or three centuries. The time, however, would be shortened if the mother country were to impose duties on the land produce of all other countries but that of India, and the other dependencies having a Land Department of State.

It would be an unpardonable oversight, in treating of the political future of a country, not to take into calculation the probable increase of its population, more especially of a country like England, the population of which has been largely on the increase every year for now many years. Possibly by the time the co-operative farms would be pretty generally set going in the United Kingdom, India, and those colonies having a Land

Department, the population of the former will have reached 50,000,000. This, large as it is, would not be too great a population for these co-operative farms to be able to supply with their land produce without its having recourse to a single bushel of corn from the United States or any other country. Moreover, it is not going too far to assume that this supply would fully keep pace with the vast increase of population to be added every year to the 50,000,000 that could hardly fail to come from the enormous trade pretty sure to be developed through the working of the co-operative farms.

What has been stated in the last few paragraphs is, of course, in the eyes of free-traders and so-called political economists, rank heresy. The idea of enriching one large empire as a dependency in Asia, and of founding another in Africa at the expense, as they will say, of the consumers in the mother country, is too absurd to be entertained for one moment. How can the well-being of 250,000,000 of natives in one empire and of 50,000,000 in the other be thought of if the conferring of such benefits can be brought about in no other way than one involving the possibility of the consumers of the United Kingdom paying 1d. a loaf more for their bread? That thousands of these consumers would be considerable gainers on the whole through these empire dependencies by having a safe investment for their capital, that thousands more by having openings for an honourable career for their sons under the Land Department of each, and that millions more of these consumers would be workmen of co-operative factories, making money so fast through the enormous demand for their goods from these dependencies, that they could almost afford to eat bank-notes sandwichwise between their pieces of bread and butter would not matter one jot. It is enough that they are consumers of land produce, and as such their food of all kinds must be obtained at the lowest possible cost to them, even though the obtaining of it at this lowest cost involved the loss

of India and every one of the other dependencies of their country.

Such is the reasoning of irreconcilable free-traders. In arguing with people like these one feels as if one had the point of a stiletto touching one's breast. In spite, however, of this unpleasant feeling, one must not allow one's self to be deterred from doubting whether the doctrine respecting consumers so dogmatically laid down by writers on political economy, is really after all warranted by facts. At first sight, their assumption appears very plausible, that any duty laid on corn or other land produce from America would have to be paid by the consumers of that produce in this country for the benefit of the agricultural classes therein. But is it so certain as free-traders make out, that the consumers in England would have to pay this duty? May not, after all, the American grower and not the English consumer have to pay it, just as the English manufacturers may be said to have been paying after all the high duties levied on the admission of their goods into America and not the consumers there? That such is the case there could hardly be a stronger proof than the fact of the impoverished condition of the English manufacturing industry and the enormously increasing wealth of the American community. Besides, who are the people who are incessantly clamouring for a reduction of these duties? Are they the consumers in America, or the manufacturers in this country? Were no other proofs at hand that it could not be the former, the late election of President afforded a sufficient one. Not only were the Republicans the majority all but to a man Protectionists; but General Hancock, the Democratic candidate, had to publicly repudiate in a letter the damaging charge brought against him of being a free-trader, so numerous were the Protectionists among his supporters.

Let us put the case in another form, by asking the question, Who pays the freight of corn from America? Is it the con-

sumer in England or the grower in America? Both these questions would be best answered by a reply to the further one, Who would benefit most by a reduction in the cost of this freight? Every one not wedded to a theory for the attainment of ends other than procuring cheap bread would say the American growers. If this were not the case, how could be accounted for the ever restless eagerness of these American growers to reduce the cost of conveying their corn from the Western States to the Eastern seaboard by means of new competing railways, corn elevators, and other forms of machinery tending to reduce cost? This eagerness on their part cannot proceed from an inordinate love to the consumers of their produce in England, for millions of these consumers, counting masters and men, are manufacturers of goods hindered by an all but prohibitory tariff from admission into the United States. Now a duty on the importation of corn into the United Kingdom amounts to the same thing as an increase in the charge of freight, or to put it conversely, an increase in the charge of freight is tantamount to the imposition to the same extent of a duty on the importation of corn, the only difference being that, while the one is levied by rail and shipowners for the benefit of themselves, the other would be levied by the Government of the United Kingdom for the benefit of the cultivators of its soil and other tax-payers. In either case it would be the American corn-grower that would have to pay the increase.

Even supposing, as political economists make out, that consumers would pay the duty on the land produce and goods of other countries imported into this, it does not follow that all or anything like all of them would be losers by so doing. When a London horsedcaler gives £50 to a Yorkshire breeder for a colt, and sells it again the next season for £200, it does not follow that he was a loser by giving the £50, nor is he made so by the fact that a gentleman who gave the same price, £50, to a Yorkshire breeder for a horse is using it for his own

pleasure, or, in the language of political economy, consumption, instead of making a profit of £150 by its sale. To class all givers of £50 for a Yorkshire horse as losers is no more absurd than to class as losers all consumers of foreign produce, on which a duty is paid, as political economists make out they are.

It will now be shown that most by far of the consumers, who are supposed by political economists to pay the duty on the importation of foreign produce, would be in the position of the London horsedealer and not in that of the gentleman consumer of political economy. The population of the United Kingdom is, say, 34,000,000, and according to political economists are all consumers. Let us now see how many of these thirty-four million consumers would be in the position of the London horsedealer—of sellers as well as buyers—that is to say, of those who would gain more by paying an import duty as producers than they would lose by paying the same duty as consumers. Under the co-operative system of farming, be it remembered, there are to be ultimately in the United Kingdom 2,400,000 co-operative farm labourers, exclusive of the supernumerary lads. Now, reckoning the usual average number to a family as five, we thus get 12,000,000 out of the 34,000,000 who would be direct gainers by the laying on of a protective duty.

But these 12,000,000 producing consumers are all either engaged in agriculture or dependent on those thus engaged. It is reasonable to assume that another 12,000,000 of consumers would gain more as producers or as belonging to them than lose as consumers. These would be the workmen of towns, especially the operatives of co-operative factories and their families. If these twelve millions connected with the agricultural class would be better off by the levying of such a duty, as we have been showing they would, and of which free-traders seem so terribly afraid, they would have more money to lay out in buying

manufactured goods, and the increase of outlay in this direction would greatly augment that home trade which the working classes of towns even already so wisely prefer to a foreign one. We have thus the workmen of towns, whether partners in co-operative factories or not, as well as the labourers of co-operative farms benefited by, and presumably in favour of, a duty on foreign land produce. As to the number of these workmen of towns who are producing consumers, it is surely making a low estimate to put them with their belongings, as above done, at twelve millions. We thus get twenty-four million producers, or, to continue the simile, horsedealers, who would be benefited by a protective duty, out of the thirty-four million consumers in all. In addition to these there would be the landowning interest, which, though insignificant in point of numbers in comparison with the working and labouring class consumers, ought yet to be counted. The strength, however, of the case in favour of a protective duty must rest on the twenty-four million producing consumers among the labouring and working classes as against the ten million consumers who, in the supposed case to suit the arguments of political economists, would deem themselves losers by it.

The case of political economists and freetraders would not be much strengthened in this discussion if, instead of tenant farming by co-operation among labourers their pet theory of a peasant proprietary were introduced into this country. The first result of such a substitution would be that a much larger population would be brought upon the land. Instead of there being 25 acres to each cultivator, as under the system of co-operative farming, the average plot of the peasant proprietor would not be more than one-half, or $12\frac{1}{2}$ acres. We are told by statisticians that in France there are five millions of these peasant proprietors, holding less, on an average, than 10 acres of land. A peasant owner and his family of five in all to every $12\frac{1}{2}$ acres on an average, instead of a co-operative labourer and

his family, in all of five, to every 25 acres, would just double the population engaged in tilling the land ; thus increasing the twelve million consumers in favour of protection to their industry under the system of co-operative farms to twenty-four millions under that of peasant ownership.

As it is an undeniable fact that in most countries in which small farms exist, there exist, also, laws to protect the industry of the owners of these farms, it is not unreasonable to assume that such would be the case in England on the introduction into it of small farms. The owners of the small farms in England would have political votes, just as have the owners of the small farms in France and Germany, and being as numerous in proportion to the rest of the population, they would have just as much power to insist on laws being passed for the protection of their interest. The great influence of such a majority of votes on the legislators of a country is more manifest in France than in, perhaps, any other country of small farms, since so many of her leading statesmen are or profess to be unyielding free-traders. It is not a little singular and confirmatory of what has just been said that, great as is the difference between France and Germany in so many ways, such as race, language, forms of government, &c., yet, in the matter of being countries having small farms and laws to protect the produce of their owners existing together, they should be alike.

CHAPTER XXI.

ANOTHER SOLUTION OF THE DIFFICULTY.

Small Farms incompatible with Free Trade—How the Corn Laws came to be Repealed—Free Trade and Prosperity of Agriculture—Failure of Small Farms to produce at low cost—Co-operative Farms less Handicapped—Extraordinary Crops of Wheat and Muck of Towns—Conveyance of Muck to Co-operative Farms—Civil Engineers and the *Cloaca Maxima* of Rome—Fall of Roman Empire due to the *Cloaca Maxima*—Farmyard Manure of Co-operative Farms—Immense Loss to Country through waste of Muck—The Muck of Towns and the Malthusian Theory.

It is the constant lament of divines and philosophers that human nature is full of inconsistencies. But of all the instances of the inconsistencies of fallable man, perhaps that is the greatest which political economists and free-traders commit when in one breath, so to speak, they recommend the system of small farms and freedom of trade in the disposal of the kinds of produce raised by the owners of such farms. It is only natural that small farms, and what is called "protection," should exist together. In whatever country prevails the system of small farms prevails also universal suffrage—both being the products of a revolution of a former state of things by which the two concessions were extracted from a class higher in the social scale previously monopolising certain privileges to be limited by such concessions. The owners of these small farms thus exercise the franchise, and the greater is the subdivision of the land, or, in other words, the smaller are the farms, the greater consequently is the power exercised by these owners in the Legislative Assemblies of their country. To expect that these ignorant, and by the nature of their peculiar position, sordid peasant owners

would use this power in any other way than for the protection of their own interests, argues either a lamentable want of sincerity on the part of political economists and free-traders, or a still more lamentable want of knowledge of one of the weak sides of human nature.

If theoretical political economists and practical free-traders really and sincerely want free trade to obtain in this country on a permanent footing without the necessity of spending thousands a year on lecturing on its advantages to sceptical ears, there is but one course open for them to take, and this is in the institution, not of small farms averaging ten acres, but of farms of not less than 1,000 acres to be worked on co-operative principles on the plan here proposed. They may rely upon this, that no number of Cobden Clubs, and no number of prizes for essays given by these Clubs, would ever persuade the owners and cultivators of small farms in this country, the advent therein of which it is the work of these clubs and essay writers to promote, to let their interests be ruined by what they would deem the unfair competition of foreign growers of their produce, if they could possibly help it. Experience proves that in the three countries of small farms, Germany, France, and the United States, which are strong enough to be masters of their own fiscal property in spite of dictation from without, the owners and cultivators of the small farms therein are well able through their greater numbers to protect their interests against the competition of the foreign grower. In like manner, on small farms becoming prevalent in this country, there can hardly be a doubt the owners and cultivators thereof would be able to protect their own interests in a similar way by compelling their statesmen, through the weighty influence of their numbers, to levy duties on the kinds of produce raised by themselves.

The reason why the Corn Laws were abolished in this country was not that the middlemen farmers wanted to get rid

of them. It was because they were numerically too weak, even in those days, to prevail against the fervour excited in towns by agitators against a monopoly they were credited with possessing. But because this agitation for freedom of trade in land produce succeeded in ruining a comparatively few middlemen farmers, it does not at all follow that a similar agitation would succeed in maintaining the ground thus gained when directed against the owners of small farms. Quite the contrary, for not only would doctrinaire theorists and employers of labour in factories have arrayed against them in such an agitation the owners of small farms, of themselves numerous enough to defeat it, but for the reason given the workmen of factories too.

Those, then, who wish for the permanency of free trade principles in a country of universal suffrage, as no doubt this will soon be, must win over to their own way of thinking those cultivators of the soil whose produce would be exposed to the competition the working out of such principles would entail, and who would have it in their power from their numerical majority to do away with this competition. Such they will have to persuade that they would gain more by buying cheaply through free trade than they would lose by receiving an unremunerative price for the produce of their land. As, however, such reasoning has failed to convince the owners of small farms in the protectionist countries of Germany, France, and the United States, it is not improbable it would fail to convince those in England. Possibly in Germany, where free trade principles have been discarded, it was found by the small farmers that the low price they had been getting for their produce, before it was protected, did not allow of their being able to take advantage of the cheapness of manufactured goods.

No one questions the desirability of every working man being able to buy bread and meat for himself and family at as

low a cost as possible, any more than one questions the desirability of every poor person being better clothed with the cotton and woollen goods of manufacturers. The question is whether it is desirable that this improvement in the condition of the working classes should be brought about at the cost alone of the producers of the bread and meat. If it is absolutely essential to the well-being of the country that its working population should have their bread and meat at a very low cost, either it should be done at the expense of all holders of capital therein, and not of those connected with agriculture alone, or those engaged in cultivating the land should be put into a way of raising corn and meat at this lowest possible cost to the working classes without ruining themselves. But what is to be the gauge by which the lowest possible cost is to be measured? Is it to be the rate of wages? But what is to rule the rate of wages upon which the lowest price of food is to depend? Is it to be the power of the manufacturers of this country to undersell one another, or to undersell manufacturers of foreign nations, and, if of these latter, in what markets? Is it to be in their own home markets, or in markets of free trade or of protectionist countries, or in neutral markets?

Such is the fog of uncertainties into which one is led by that most unsatisfactory method of remunerating labour—wages. This fog would be altogether cleared away by the system of co-operation here proposed, by which the co-operative owners of labour in factories would get the profits of their labour, and to obtain these profits would not be under the necessity to bend all their energies to under-sell the manufacturers of other nations, especially of those excluding their goods by well-nigh prohibitory tariffs. These partners of co-operative factories would find quite enough employment for their mills from a flourishing home trade, and from the yearly increasing demands for their goods from flourishing dependencies, all engendered

through the setting up at home and in these dependencies of wealth-producing co-operative farms worked by their well-to-do cultivators.

It is possible that, as Englishmen have once embarked on the policy of free trade, they cannot well have recourse to protection. For them to take up again with the once discarded protection policy after all so many of their leading men have said in favour of free trade, would be to make the country the laughing-stock of the world. As this could not be endured for a moment, every patriotic Englishman should in duty bound turn his thoughts towards making free trade a permanent institution, upon which the whole policy of the country should be based. The first step to be taken towards the attainment of this end is, as said before, to convince the classes connected with the tillage of the land in some more practical way than by Cobden Club essays, that they would be gainers and not losers by a competition to which their own produce would be exposed. This difficulty over, the manufacturers of England may then continue to sell in all the markets of the world, except of those countries of small farms, Germany, France, Russia, and the United States, that are independent enough of outside influence to have a protective fiscal policy, their low-priced cotton, woollen and other manufactured goods attained by cheapness of food through the unrestricted competition of foreign producers.

From what has been said it is evident that if free trade is to be a permanent institution in a country of universal suffrage, as England is soon destined to be, there must exist in it a system of farming that would give satisfaction to the actual cultivators of its soil. It is also certain that the only system of farming capable of giving satisfaction to those engaged in tilling the land of a country adopting free trade principles, is one that would enable the cultivators to make up in the quantity of their produce to be raised for the lowness of price to be obtained

for it through the absence of protective duties. This condition has not been fulfilled by the system of small farms, or else the owners of such in Germany and France would not have influenced their rulers to levy duties and bounties for the protection of their industry. Neither has the above condition been at all met by the system of larger farms as carried on by the middlemen farmers in England, or else the agricultural interest therein would not be in its present deplorable state, giving satisfaction neither to owners of land, nor to owners of labour, nor to the middlemen hirers of both land and labour.

There is only one system by which the above condition can be realised of enabling the cultivators of the soil of a country to make up by the quantity of their produce raised for sale for the lowness of the price to be obtained by such sale through the working out of free-trade principles. By means of co-operative farms worked on the plan here proposed, the co-operating labourers would, it is anticipated, be able to raise produce and supply their own markets with it at a cheaper rate than could the American growers the produce of their farms though freed from the payment of duties. Whatever these growers may do in the way of making railways with English capital, and of depriving the owners of these railways of their dividends by insisting on the carriage of their produce at unremunerative rates, of erecting colossal corn-elevators, and other modes of reducing the cost of freight, there will ever remain a distance of 3,000 miles or more for their corn and other produce to come before they can compete against those grown at home by the co-operative labourers. So far this would be a gain for these labourers to start upon, though it has not been a sufficient one for the small farmers of Germany and France and the employer of labour farmers of the United Kingdom—to prevent the former from having duties levied to protect their interests, and the latter from failing on account of their inability to get the same done for theirs.

The reason why the system of small farms and that of large farms hired by hirers of labour have not been able to stand against the American competition is that neither has been able to produce enough from the land at a sufficiently low cost. The failure on the part of the cultivators of small farms to sell their produce cheap enough has come about from their having too much capital locked up in the purchase of their land at a high price, which has been causing them to have recourse to loans from money-lenders at a high rate of interest. A heavy burden like this upon the land and upon the energies of its owners and cultivators could hardly be expected to do otherwise than prevent their being able to undersell their American rivals even in their own markets. Hence, the protective duties. The burden again brought on the land by a system of farming which has been throwing all the weight of responsibility connected with the gains and losses in the cultivation of several hundred acres on the shoulders of one man, and he only a hirer of these acres and of the labour employed on them, and in nineteen cases out of twenty of the greater part of the capital borrowed to put the hired labour to the hired land has been also proved in practice to be too great to allow of produce being raised under such a system in sufficient abundance, and therefore at a low enough cost to enable these middlemen-farmers to compete against the unrestricted imports of American produce. Hence, the bankruptcy of late of so many of them.

In co-operative farming, on the other hand, would the burden in neither of the above respects weigh so heavily on the land and on the exertions of its cultivators to compete successfully against American imports admitted into their markets free of duty. The capitalist owners of land by lending that portion of their capital represented by that commodity, would ease the labourers of a co-operative farm of the burden of having nearly all their capital locked up in the

investment of land producing a low rate of interest, while having to pay a high rate to a money-lender on the money borrowed to make the investment. Not having any of their capital locked up in so unprofitable a manner—unprofitable for labourers at all events—they would be able to invest the whole in the proper cultivation of their farm. This advantage alone would give them a power of producing at much a lower cost than can possibly the owners of small farms, with all their sordid economies at home and in the field. The advantage co-operative labourers would have over the middleman employer of labour to enable them to raise produce at a much cheaper rate, would be mainly in being owners of their own labour. Not having to hire labour, they would get it at a much cheaper rate. It would be cheaper, because having for their own gain all the profit to be derived from it, it would be of a better quality, there would be much more of it given, and it would not be fettered and burdened by the action of Labourers' Unions.

All these advantages for bringing about cheapness of production in favour of co-operative farming over either the small farms of a peasant proprietary or the larger farms of an employer of labour farmer, have already been treated of at some length in other chapters. But there is another advantage co-operative farming would have over the two other systems that has as yet had but a passing allusion made to it. This is in the facilities co-operative farming would offer for fertilising the land by using the night-soil or muck of towns. Not the least advantage to be had from this means of improving the land, would be that this kind of manure would increase in quantity with the need for its use, thus enabling the land of the United Kingdom to have its fertility maintained through centuries, and so to meet the greater demands for its produce of each succeeding generation of an ever-increasing population.

Not many years ago there appeared in the *Times* some

letters giving an account of the extraordinary success attending the cultivation of wheat by the Rev. Mr. Jeffreys Dunbar, Haddingtonshire, N.B. For close upon thirty years did this gentleman grow on his glebe land an average of forty-five bushels of wheat per acre, and this without a single year's interval of fallow or rotation of crop. He would probably have gone on doing so for many more years had not his glebe been taken from him by the North British Railway Company to build thereon a station, etc. It was solely by the employment as manure on his land of the muck of the town, on the outskirt of which was his glebe, that he was enabled to produce what, to those unaccustomed to witness the results of the application of such manure, must appear astoundingly heavy crops. This instance of the extraordinary success attending the application of the muck of towns to land is mentioned because it seems to be the only one recorded in this country. Certainly no mention is anywhere made of a single employer of labour tenant farmer ever having used this kind of manure on his land at all, and certainly not to anything like the extent it ought to be used. On the Continent, on the other hand, the practice, attended with its marvellous results, is common enough. Were it not for this kind of manure used on the small farms of a peasant proprietary that system of land tenure and cultivation would prove to be more unsatisfactory in its results than it even is. In fact, it is well-nigh the only redeeming feature about it, for it is by it alone that small farming can with any truth be said to pay. This is proved by the vast difference in the productive powers of the small farms of different peasant proprietors, those near towns, from which the manure in question can be had in greater abundance, being far more productive than those farther off. But not only is the power of getting this kind of manure wanted in this country, but the will to use it; and this seems to belong only to those who reap the profit from

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its use, for it is they alone who can really appreciate its true value.

On the other hand, if, as suggested, tramways be laid down from all the co-operative farms of the United Kingdom to the nearest railway station, and cess-vans made suitable for conveying the muck of towns and for nothing else were to run on these tramways, every co-operative farm would for the purpose of being supplied with this manure of a town be as close to it, though actually miles off, as if it were only on its outskirts. Every co-operative farm in the United Kingdom would then be put on a level in respect to getting this manure with the little farm of a peasant proprietor just outside a town. This is not all. Most of the unpleasantness connected with getting this kind of manure in small quantities to his small farm each peasant proprietor has to encounter would be avoided by the members of a co-operative farm, as one process alone, and this straight off, would be employed to convey it by means of a cess-van from the place of collection just outside the town to the place of deposit on the farm, at each of which places proper tools, if not machinery, would be used. Inasmuch as large quantities of this manure would have to be used altogether on a farm of 1,000 acres, one kind of machinery would have to be used for preparing it, and perhaps another, if at all practicable, for putting it, not on the top of the soil so as to be washed or blown away to where it is not immediately wanted, but into it with the seeds, all being carefully covered over with earth.

It has been by the constant application of this kind of manure in the same painstaking way year after year for centuries that the once sea-sands of Flanders and Holland have become black soil the most productive perhaps in the world, and so friable is it that women usually dig it to a depth of two feet with spades, the spuds of which are not far short of being two feet in length. Perhaps in all Flanders and Holland there would not be found a hard clod of earth the size of a

man's fist, much less of his head, as is to be seen by hundreds in nearly every field on well-nigh every employer of labour's farm in this country.

Taking the Rev. Mr. Jeffrey's yield of forty-five bushels an acre as a basis for calculation, it will now be shown what would be likely to be the prospects of the labour partners of a co-operative farm of 1,000 acres by using the muck of towns as a manure for their land. To enable the reader the better to follow, it would be as well to suppose the whole of the 1,000 acres to be laid out in the growth of wheat alone, as was the case with the land of Mr. Jeffrey's glebe, though to do so would tell against rather than in favour of what is here sought to be proved, for the kind of manure in question is generally acknowledged to be far better for the growth of vegetables and other green crops than of cereals. An average of forty-five bushels, or, say, forty bushels an acre, after making allowance for seed and waste, at an average of 40s. a quarter or 5s. a bushel would amount to £10 for each of the 1,000 acres of a co-operative farm, or £10,000 for the whole. This gross return of £10,000 a year would leave a sufficient remuneration to the co-operative labourers, to be divided as surplus profits at the end of the year after payment of all outgoings.

These outgoings may, for their better apprehension, be divided into three kinds (1), dues to landowner (2), dues to themselves, and (3) dues to other creditors. The order in which these dues or debts have been put, has however no significance, since, if, as has been assumed, there is to be a considerable surplus to be divided at the end of the year, all three kinds must be previously paid. As to the dues to the landowner, these would be in the form of rent for farm and other buildings, besides that for the land and for interest on the extra capital laid out for other purposes beneficial to the carrying on of the business of the co-operative farm, such as the tramway with its vans and other plant. The dues to them-

selves would be the payment of interest on their shares, and the advances made during the year of weekly wages on the scale laid down in the plan according to the different classes of shareholders. As to the other creditors, pretty well the only accounts to be run up by the co-operation as a whole would be for tools and some years for machinery. Beyond, perhaps, occasionally a few tons of coprolites or bone manure, the co-operative farms labourers having as they would at their disposal the best of manures from towns, from their own dwellings, and in their own well-filled and capacious farmyard, would have no need to purchase any other kind of manure for their land.

The above way of putting the case to show the wonderful effects produced by using the manure of towns on the land of a co-operative farm, could not, of course, be carried into practice, since for one thing if the 60,000,000 acres of the 60,000 co-operative farms of the United Kingdom were all planted with wheat, each producing forty bushels, enough wheat would be grown not only for home consumption, but to completely turn the tables on the Americans. Each co-operative farm would, therefore, only grow a certain quantity of wheat, which in the aggregate of all the farms would be about enough for home consumption. This would leave the greater part of each farm at liberty for growing produce that would prove through the use of the night-soil manure of towns more profitable to grow than wheat and other cereals, such as vegetables and root crops for feeding the stock the co-operative farm labourers would keep. In these various ways possibly more than an extra £1,000 would be gained for distribution among them at the end of every year.

An objection may be raised against the removal from cities and towns of their night-soil muck in any other way than by water-carriage by a certain class of civil engineers, whose heads are filled with that combination of brick and

mortar that has perhaps worked more mischief in this world than it can be possible for any other combination of brick and mortar to effect. Allusion is made to the cloaca maxima of Rome. It was surely not a very brilliant idea of English engineers of the present day to take as a model for removing the muck of a city a drain of Rome—a city that for many centuries has been so pestiferous that it has been forsaken at certain times of the year by all those able to get away from it, and the country round which for miles has been producing nothing but fevers and malaria. Had it not been for that relic of a comparatively barbarous age, the night-soil of Rome might have been applied to the soil of the Campagna, by which it would have been turned into a garden of beauty and health-giving pleasure instead of being, as it has been for centuries, a desolation breathing forth a pestilential air round that city. The wiseacres of Rome have preferred instead to throw away through their cloaca into the Tiber the means for affording so beneficial a transformation, and this has caused its bed to silt, and its mouth to be choked up. The flow of the river in and along its natural channel has thus become impeded so as to cause its overflow over the adjacent country, thereby hiding, as in England with her rivers, many acres of land for years from the eyesight of the owners and would-be cultivators. The ancient Romans were no doubt a civilised people in their way, but we do not find in any of their writings that Sanitary Congresses were held by them. Life was held of too small account among them to care for such things. For the civil engineers of England to take the cloaca maxima of Rome as a model for removing the night-soil from a city was an even more retrograde step in civilisation on both sanitary and economical grounds than it would be in behalf of England's defence for her Admiralty authorities to build their ironclads on the model of a Roman trireme, or for those

of Woolwich to make their breechloading guns on that of a catapult.

To this cloaca maxima of Rome may be attributed the neglect of the cultivation of the land of Italy through its exhaustion and want of fertilising matter for its restoration, which the cloaca prevented it from getting, and to it as a result may be ascribed the dependence on other countries for their food of the millions of inhabitants of that city. This dependence, as we all know, ultimately led to the undermining and overthrow of their empire. How history is repeating itself in the undermining and overthrow of a once magnificent empire through like disastrous effects from a like pernicious cause!

Very possibly an injustice has been done to the engineer who designed the cloaca maxima of Rome. He may have intended it after all for only the outflow of the rain-water of that city, and not for this outflow to be made the vehicle for taking away with it what ought to have been removed by some process for being put into the land to re-invigorate its exhaustive powers with the potash, phosphates, nitrogen, amononia, and other chemical properties therein contained. The sewers and drains of the cities and towns of the United Kingdom, now doing double duty, might still be retained for the one service, which the originator of the cloaca maxima of Rome, there can hardly be a doubt, meant that sewer to perform.

A word or two will now be said in a general way as to the payment of the cost that would attend the removal of the night-soil from towns on the plan here proposed. As both the inhabitants of the towns and the co-operating farm labourers would benefit by the removal although in very different proportions, it is obvious that they both ought to contribute, and according to these proportions. As the labourers though great gainers would be the lesser of the two

by such removal, it would be a fair contribution on their part if it were confined to the charges connected with the removal to their farms from the place of deposit outside the town, all the cost connected with conveying it from the houses to this receptacle being left for the townspeople to meet. The cost to the labourers of conveying the matter from the town to the farms would consist in the payment of interest every year to the landowners on their money laid out in getting the tramways, vans, etc., made. These tramways ought to be laid down and worked now-a-days at a tolerably low cost owing to the much lower cost of steel and its much greater durability than iron for rails. Possibly by the time they would be laid down would be invented to run on them an engine propelled by electricity or compressed air that would cost to buy and to work but a fraction of what a steam locomotive costs. Moreover, be it remembered, one main tramway would serve for miles from a railway station for many farms.

The cost of collecting the matter from the houses and of getting it ready to be taken away by the co-operating farm labourers would be considerably greater no doubt than that of making the tramways, but it would not be greater in proportion to the benefits the townspeople would gain by such removal. However great may be the cost, they would be amply repaid for it in many ways. They would be thereby able to get a more plentiful, a more varied, a fresher and a cheaper supply of food. As this more plentiful, more varied, fresher and cheaper supply of food would come from farms in their own neighbourhood they would have living close at hand hundreds of well-to-do co-operating farm labourers as clients and customers, the profit gained from whose outlays would more than compensate them for the comparatively low municipal rate they would have to pay for meeting the interest on the capital laid out in executing the necessary works spoken of. But important as it would be to the towns-

people to have all the above advantages in respect of their food and of making money to pay for it, they but touch the fringe of the benefits to be derived from the removal of the muck of their town in the way proposed. Upon it depends their health, if not their very existence, in respect both to the air they breathe and the water they drink.

Taking into consideration the many advantages already alluded to, which co-operative farming would have in raising produce at a cost low enough to compete against American produce imported free of duty, it is quite possible that the labourers of such farms would be able to raise large enough quantities of food, at a low yet remunerative price, without having recourse to the night-soil muck of towns for manuring their land. One of these advantages would consist in their being able to make in considerable quantities every year their own farm yard muck. Co-operative farming would be particularly suitable for the rearing of animals, requiring as it does the assiduous care of those under whose charge they are brought up. If the capitalists, who are to lend the land, were to lend also suitably built stalls for the cattle, so that these could be brought up in a healthy condition, and their muck protected from being deprived of its fertilizing ingredients, the co-operative labourers of a farm of 1,000 acres might become rearers of cattle on a large scale by stall-feeding, and thus their farms would develop into meat factories as well as for the growth of cereals and roots. Many of them would at all events come to be factories on a large scale for dairy produce of all kinds, and so involving the keeping of many cows. Others, again, would be devoted more to the rearing of horses or pigs, and all to that of poultry on a large scale. The keeping of all these animals would go to the making in large quantities of valuable manure for the land, and require the constant care which only the owners of these animals would give.

If, however, the same care were to be used in towns in pre-

serving the muck of the more intellectual animals living therein from having all its fertilising properties washed out of it, as it is proposed to use in preserving that of the cattle-stalls of co-operative farms, what might be a possible success would be turned into an absolute certainty. The question now is, whether this town manure could be collected and got ready for removal in any other way than by the present one of water-carriage. About the removal itself there would be no difficulty, for this is to be done by the tramways and cess-vans of the co-operating farm labourers already spoken of. The difficulty as to its collection for removal would be of course due to the fact that the houses of all the towns in the United Kingdom have been constructed with no such object in view. For the towns in India, on the other hand, and the colonies in Africa, having a Land Department, foundations would be laid by the engineer of the Department for such a purpose, and the houses would be afterwards built in conformity with them. In the towns the muck would be taken by low-level tramways at the backs of all the houses and connected with the tramways leading to the co-operative farms. This mode of removing the muck would be entirely independent of the drains and sewers constructed as well by the Department's engineer, for the passing away of the surface water, a most essential provision in towns visited by tropical rains. Thus by the two methods of draining, wet and dry, so to speak, the water and the filth would not get commingled and have afterwards to be drunk by the townspeople after vain though costly attempts to separate them again by filtration.

To construct in the towns of England low level tramways, such as would exist in India and a colony under a Land Department, would, it is true, entail an enormous cost; but enormous as it would be, it will have one day more or less to be met. Calculations have been made to show how enormous is the annual loss to the country from the waste of this town

manure. They have ranged from £30,000,000 to upwards of £50,000,000 a year. But all these calculations have been based on insufficient data. For one thing none of the calculators ever entertained the least idea of the part co-operative farms would play, they having before their eyes as likely to apply to the land town manure only employer of labour farmers by means of wage-paid labour. For it to be used through such an agency, would for the reasons stated, reduce the value it would be to labourers of co-operative farms by at least two-thirds. Than to these employer of labour farmers it would be of far more value to peasant owners, were they to be established in this country. Even if the produce of the 60,000,000 acres of the United Kingdom increased in amount to realise by sale only £1 an acre more—a low calculation even on the Rev. Jeffrey's glebe-land basis—there would be a gain to the agricultural labourers of the country through their use of town manure of £60,000,000 a year. Such a result could hardly be estimated by a money calculation; for let it be borne in mind there would be no fewer than 2,400,000 of these labourers of co-operative farms all possessed of a political vote all made contented with the manner and amount of remuneration of their labour, and having the sympathy of the working classes of the towns.

Besides, one result of the contentment given to the 2,400,000 co-operating farm labourers through being able to raise £60,000,000 worth of produce more, would be to set at rest for ever any wish on their part to have protective duties laid on to enable them to make up in price for insufficiency in quantity of their produce. These duties are never likely to reach a figure high enough to bring to the agricultural classes one quarter of the £60,000,000 or more a year, they would gain by the use of town manure. Even if they were to get £15,000,000 a year by means of protective duties, it would not be all gain, for some of it would have to be virtually

deducted in their having to give more for their purchases made dearer by a greater dearness of food. But, in the case of the £60,000,000 a year, got by increasing the amount of produce on 60,000,000 acres, that sum would be pretty well all gain beyond the yearly interest the labourers of co-operative farms would have to pay on the capital laid out on the tramways, cess-vans, etc., necessary for taking the town muck to their farms.

Bearing, then, the above facts in mind, it behoves those sincerely wishing free trade to be a permanent institution in this country, not only to encourage the establishment therein of co-operative farms, but to put the labourers of these farms into a way of getting the manure of towns in as undiluted a state as possible, and therefore as little deprived as possible of its fertilising properties. These labourers would then have facilities placed in their way such as to render them able to compete, beyond all question, against American produce, however low in price it may be. There would then be no fear of their ever trusting to their numerical majority at the hustings for procuring protection to their industry by levying a duty on this produce, as have had to do the owners of small farms in Germany and France, and as would certainly do the owners of small farms in this country. With all deference to the abilities and philanthropic aims of writers on political economy and free-traders of a more practical type, no hesitation is here made in expressing an opinion that these men would further the cause they are supposed to have at heart more by helping forward the labourers of co-operative farms in the way here suggested, than by establishing a hundred Cobden Clubs for giving prizes to essay writers. There could be no greater proof of the wrong course free-traders are taking to make their principles a permanent institution of this country, than their persistent advocacy of a peasant proprietary; for to advocate such a system of land tenure and farming is, as has been already pointed out, and as

their own observations of what is going on in other countries ought to have told them, tantamount to advocating what would put a most effectual extinguisher on free-trade in this country, and so on themselves as upholders of its principles.

Co-operative farming would be especially suitable for using the manure of towns, and this in respect to more than one kind. The only comparison that could be instituted, would be between it and peasant ownership, for an employer of labour is never likely to use it, nor would his labourers with the requisite painstaking care. Those only would take this care who would be stimulated by the extra gain to be derived from its use, such as the peasant owner or the labourer of a co-operative farm. These latter would possess an advantage over the former owing to the combination always at hand of many men for its collection, preparation and use. By such a combination, all these would be done to produce the same results at a much less expenditure of time and labour, with less waste of the fertilising constituents, and in a manner less objectionable to both residents in towns and to the cultivators of the soil using it.

For the use to become practicable there must be a combination on a large scale not only among the cultivators of the soil, but between these and the municipalities of towns—a thing impossible under peasant ownership when on 1,000 acres there would be on the occurrence of sub-divisions, sub-lettings, conacre and other outgrowths of that system more than 100 cultivators to be reconciled, having interests more or less divergent from one another. This impossibility would be still further exemplified by taking the whole area of land round a town that would be dependent on it for its manure instead of merely the 1,000 acres of one co-operative farm. It is within the mark to say that 30,000 acres would on an average be so dependent. Now, these 30,000 acres under a peasant proprietary would be owned not by thirty co-operating bodies, all the members of each of which would be acting under its manager as one body,

but of 3,000 owners with separate interests, and therefore each to be separately dealt with. In fact, the only way peasant owners would be likely to employ of removing the manure of English towns would be that in use in countries of peasant ownership, and that is by a tub on a barrow. That process, it is needless to say, would be too offensive to the inhabitants of towns in this country to dispose them to go to a very great outlay to substitute it for their present system of water carriage. Than endure it they would rather continue to run the risk of dying of one of the many zymotic and enteric diseases so often caught through breathing the foul air of sewers and drains, or from drinking some of the water conveying the muck of their town to the sea.

The subject, however, of the use of the night-soil of towns to the land, and of the system of co-operative farms by which such application would be best effected, opens out a far wider field for contemplation than what is implied in the maintenance of freedom of trade in this country. It may be treated of on Malthusian grounds. Is the present generation acting towards posterity as it ought in neglecting this subject in the way it has been doing? While the land of the country is being starved for want of nourishment, that which would give it the most is being recklessly thrown into rivers to find its way eventually into the sea. True it is that new countries are being opened up by the necessity to supply from their virgin soil the demands of old ones. But this cannot go on for ever. Even in some of these new countries, such as the United States, some of the effects of the wasteful cultivation of the land is beginning to be felt in the Eastern States. Even already a great deal of the land in these States is too exhausted by over-cropping without counter-vailing nourishment of the fertilising qualities contained in animal manure for its owners to raise produce at a rate low enough to compete against that grown in the Western States. Hence the abandonment of it by its cultivators for these States.

Yet the Eastern States have in them many cities and towns containing a large population. What has happened in the Eastern States is likely to take place in a far shorter period in the Western. In fact, were it not for the unhealthiness of towns, caused by their muck being removed by water-carriage, it is not improbable that there would be even at the present time thousands of disagreeable proofs in some of the old countries of the soundness of the Malthusian theory.

One of the many advantages to India and the colonies in Africa of having a Land Department would be, that through its working the land of these countries would never become exhausted, nor would their rivers become polluted by conveying to the sea that which would give nourishment to the land. If the Land Department carried on its work according to a plan, which, health permitting, may some day be given to the public under the title of "Colonisation on a system," there would not be a house in one of the towns of the Department that would not be connected by a tramway with one or other of the co-operative farms of the district. The expense the Department would be put to in laying the foundations of its towns to this end, would not be so very great for reasons to be given in the same work, and once incurred would never have to be renewed. The towns, it is true, would have to be of limited extent, each, say, of 20,000 inhabitants, but as these would be thickly studded over the country one at every railway station, and, therefore, all connected with one another by railway, this restriction as to size would not be found to be inconvenient. As the population of each town increases beyond the number permitted, the surplus would have to migrate to new towns constantly being laid out on the same plan with respect to foundations admitting of the double method of drainage spoken of. All this would be done with the proceeds of the ground rents the Land Department would be getting from the older towns.

Thus in these Dependencies it would be looked upon as much a matter of course for the muck of their towns to go to the co-operative farms around them as for the produce of these farms to go to the markets in the towns. With the manure of these towns, the land around them would be made fit to bear crops on a scale of luxuriance, surpassing even the forty-five bushels an acre of Mr. Jeffrey's glebe-land, inasmuch as whether in India or Africa, it would be in a far more favourable climate for the growth and ripening of crops, and this extraordinary fertility would go on for centuries without exhausting the land in the least. It has been through the use of this kind of manure that the land of Japan has been keeping up its marvellous fertility for thousands of years, and continues to maintain its dense population without being under the necessity of importing any land produce from other countries.

CHAPTER XXII.

DISCONTENT, DISINTEGRATION, DESTRUCTION.

Discontent of Labour, a danger to Capital—Lowering of the Franchise, and the Ballot—War against Capital hurtful to Labour—Obstructives: Representatives of discontented Labour—Bankruptcies caused by discontented Labour—Bribery at Elections: products of discontented Labour—Mr. Parnell and his three Constituencies—Reduction of Interest on National Debt—Attractiveness of a Policy of Confiscation—Concession to, or Coercion of discontented Labour?—Confiscation and Disintegration—The Disintegrating School and their aims.

THE plan of co-operative farming having been at last given in all its details, a few remarks will now be made respecting the subject that chiefly engaged our attention in the first chapter—the discontent on the part of owners of labour at the manner and amount of its remuneration. It was to avert the injurious effects, be it remembered, of such discontent that the plan has been conceived and worked out.

From the point of view taken throughout this work this discontent on the part of owners of labour is at the root of all the danger with which the capital and the political and social institutions of the country are becoming every year more and more threatened. So long as the owners of labour are dissatisfied, it may be relied on, they will take every opportunity, fair or foul, thrown in their way to better their condition, and the more they are debarred from resorting to fair means the more will they have recourse to foul. They have of late clearly shown that if men professing Christianity will not help them they will not scruple to make use of men both secretly and openly denying that profession of faith, nay, even the existence of a God.

The discontent of labour has become a danger to the

capital and to the political and social institutions of the country: firstly, on account of the greatly increased political power of its owners, obtained of late years through the lowering of the franchise, and, secondly, on account of there being certain persons of more or less education willing to turn this great and newly acquired power of the working classes to account. As these representatives, in and out of Parliament, of the working classes are the outgrowth of the political power of the latter, they will continue to hold their posts until this power has been taken away, or the claims of those exercising it have been conceded. The country at large would certainly not listen to such a course as the taking away of the franchise from those to whom it has once been given. There is now, then, only one way of averting the danger resulting from a premature, though sooner or later, inevitable extension of the franchise to all, and this is by appeasing the discontent of those to whom it has given the power of destroying the capital and upsetting the institutions of the country.

So long as the working and labouring classes had no influence on the legislation of the country, their discontent at the manner and amount of the remuneration of their labour could be looked upon without much concern by capitalists, whether owners of land or factories. But since they have become possessed of the franchise, and this has been protected by the ballot, they have become, or at any rate, will soon become the most powerful section of the community in the country. It has been said, perhaps more maliciously than truthfully, that the last Reform Bill was passed with the object of "dishing the Whigs." It has really had the effect of dishing the Conservatives as much as the Whigs. At first the Conservatives profited by the measure, because the working classes had not by the election of 1874 been sufficiently educated by their leaders to know the vast power conferred on their class through it. In fact, all who come

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under the denomination of capitalists, especially employers of labour, were dishd by the last lowering of the franchise, whether these be Whigs, Conservatives, or those who pose as Radicals.

Capitalists can already form some idea of what they have to expect from the discontent of workmen at the manner and amount of remuneration of their labour by what has already taken place since the general election of last year. Both owners of factories and owners of land have had to rue the step, which has put it within the power of representatives of labour to greatly harass their capital. A foretaste of what owners of factories have to expect at the hands of these representatives is the Employers' Liability Act of last year. The losses to these owners from the working of the Act, it has been computed by a member of the Statistical Society, will come to £12,000 a year from fatal accidents, and £1,250,000 a year from non-fatal ones. But when the Act in question was passed, a well-known representative of the working-classes protested from his seat in the House of Commons that it was but a small instalment of the concessions insisted on in the same direction by his constituents. These facts are not mentioned by way of disapproval of the measure but to show what is in store for those capitalists who are owners of factories or other works in which many men are employed. The measure ought to have been passed years before: or better still, the employers ought years ago to have so acted that there would have been no occasion for it.

The great misfortune connected with these demands on the part of labour, and concessions on the part of capital is, that they lead to no good to either. On the contrary, they do a great deal of harm, as they tend to destroy capital without ultimately benefiting labour. The demands are made only through organisations made costly by the machinery of strikes and the employment of delegates to Conferences, and of repre-

sentatives to Parliament, all of which must be eventually paid out of the capital of the employers. The concessions to these demands are not made until after a series of costly fights to resist them, each resulting in a further drain on the capital fund, out of which both the profits of employers and wages of workmen have to come. Yet, in spite of all this loss of capital by the owners of factories and of other works, no settlement of any permanence is made. War may be declared against these owners again in a year or two in the same or another form, and this because there is a well-drilled army always kept in readiness to wage it. Leaders of 'Trades' and Labourers' Unions are loud in their remonstrances at the armies kept on foot in the countries on the Continent as being a constant menace to the peace and freedom of the world, apparently unconscious of the fact that their own organisations are a standing menace to the growth and freedom of the capital of the country.

The capitalists' owners of land have not yet had to feel so grievously the evil effects on their capital of these organisations, at any rate those in England and Scotland, because they are not as a rule employers of labour, and then only to a small extent in comparison with their position as owners of land. The loss of capital due to these hostile organisations has been falling, instead, on the middlemen farmers as employers of labour. Still, owners of land have had to share some of this loss as evidenced by the large reductions in rent they have had to make of late years. The farmers' plea for this reduction has been the badness of the seasons. The flimsiness of this plea has been already combated. Bad seasons have very possibly helped to precipitate the crisis; but the crisis has beyond doubt been brought about by badness of labour, both in quantity and quality. It is the pretty general opinion that the labour given to the land and farm work generally has not been one-half of what the both would profitably repay, and it is on this widely-admitted deficiency of labour that a certain school

of politicians are basing their advocacy of a peasant proprietary in spite of the many drawbacks in other respects connected with that system of land tenure and husbandry. The deductions of rent, however, large as in many cases they have been, are evidently no longer enough, as is proved by the organisation of the Farmers' Alliance and the revolt of these farmers against the landowners in so many counties at the last general election.

Owners of land in Ireland have been more immediately affected by the discontent of labour, because owing to the system of small farms therein there have been no middlemen employers of labour to share in the loss. The discontented cultivators of these small farms have sent to the House of Commons as their representatives men who have made widely known their intention not only to deprive capitalists' owners of land of all their capital represented by that commodity, but to revolutionise the whole island and to separate its government from that of Great Britain. Reasons have already been given why cultivators of small farms are discontented. Enough then is it for our purpose here to state that they are so, and that the result of their discontent has been to send a large compact body, comparatively speaking, of representatives to Parliament to make war on the capital and the institutions of their country. Possibly had the 600,000 small farmers of Ireland lived in the protectionist countries of Germany, Russia, France, and the United States, their discontent would have been appeased by the levying of duties to keep up the price of their produce. As this, however, could not be done in the free trade empire in which they live, they have had recourse instead to methods of relief of a less peaceful nature, one of which is to separate themselves from such an empire.

Capitalists' owners of land and factories are not the only losers by the prevalence of discontent among workmen and labourers at the manner and amount of the remuneration of their labour, and by the power they have of giving expression

to this discontent through the exercise of the franchise. By the two nearly every interest in the country is a loser, not excluding even that of the workmen and labourers themselves. In fact, through the actions of the representatives of labour in and out of Parliament capital and the institutions of the country are already being seriously undermined, though the suffrage has not yet become universal. When this will have been extended so as to admit all under the usual conditions, the attacks will be renewed with much greater force and effect, as the breach that is now being secretly made in the outworks will weaken the power of resisting them. Concessions are being made to the working classes, which only have the effect of strengthening the boards of the platforms, from which more will be demanded. If workmen and labourers were to be benefited by these concessions there would be nothing objectionable in them; but both history and experience prove that they would not be benefited by them for the sufficient reason that they would not be made without involving the shrinkage, if not destruction, of the capital from which alone the benefit could come.

An example or two will be enough to show what effect upon capital and the political and social institutions of the country the representatives of discontented labour have been and are still exercising.

Let us take as the first what has been happening this Session of Parliament in the obstruction offered by the representatives of discontented labour among the cultivators of the land in Ireland to the passing of the Coercion Bill. These men, supported occasionally by the representatives of discontented labour in some of the manufacturing districts of England, have been completely throwing out of gear the whole parliamentary machinery in the Government of the country for now many weeks, and thereby discrediting representative institutions throughout the world. There can be no doubt that these obstructionist members of Parlia-

ment represent discontented labour, for the boast they do so is continually on their lips. If this were not enough, the manifesto of Mr. Parnell issued from Paris to the people of Ireland would prove it, breathing throughout as it does of the wrongs that are being endured by the 600,000 small farmers at the hands of the 10,000 land-owners of Ireland. The very fact of there being so many as 600,000 of these small farms in so small a country as Ireland, is a sufficient proof that quite two-thirds of them must be on a scale admitting only of the labour of the occupier and his family. The cultivators then of these small farms are labourers in the strict sense of the term, and not employers of labour as are the tenant farmers of Great Britain. But they are not only labourers, but most discontented labourers, or else they would not have sent men to Parliament to represent such grievances as require for their redress nothing less than the sweeping away that portion of the capitalists of their country owning land, even though at the cost of a revolution.

Again, for the last twenty years the commercial world has been calling out for a more effective Bankruptcy Bill. The main object of such a bill must surely be to afford protection to creditors by limiting the number of bankruptcies that take place every year. The best bill then would be one that acted as the greatest deterrent to farmers, manufacturers, and other employers of labour becoming bankrupt, by which creditors are defrauded of their dues. But the number of bankruptcies goes on increasing every year in spite of the many attempts of able lawyers to limit them. No great limit will ever be put to the number of bankruptcies taking place every year by the most skilfully devised bill. To do this is evidently beyond the province of law, though by a good bill it is very possible that the losses accruing to creditors from the bankruptcies it cannot prevent may be somewhat lessened. There is in reality but

one way of limiting the number of bankruptcy cases a year, and that is by putting capital and labour on a more harmonious footing so that the stability of the former is not jeopardised by attempts of the latter to be better remunerated.

All these disturbances of capital through the actions of those representing the discontent of givers of labour, practically amount in a greater or less degree to its confiscation. They have not yet been called confiscation in the transactions of workmen and labourers with their employers; but they are not really less so then when the capital invested in land is affected by them. Whatever the representatives of labour in or out of Parliament may say to the contrary, the result of their actions is practically the confiscation of capital in some form or other. It certainly is not the creation of fresh wealth, but the taking it away from those already possessing it. Possibly they resort to this confiscation, because they know of no other way of improving the condition of their constituents or members of their Unions. Still, their modes of proceeding result in acts of confiscation of capital whether they are directed against capitalists owners of land, capitalists owners of factories, or capitalists creditors of employers of labour made bankrupt through their actions.

Another mode adopted by representatives of discontented labour of making war on capital is by bribery at elections for a seat in the House of Commons. At such elections there are two kinds of bribery, the one with the briber's own money and the other with the property of whole classes. A Bribery at Elections Bill could only put a stop to the former kind. Admitted, there were some scandalous instances of candidates bribing at the last general election with their own money, and that such acts ought to be made criminal and punished accordingly. But, reprehensible as it is for a candidate to give money, whether his own or that of his party for votes, it is beyond question infinitely more so to draw bills at dates, more

or less long, on the property of third parties, and when the votes through such have been obtained to use to the utmost the power thereby gained to confiscate for the benefit of the voters the property on which the bills in question have been drawn. Now, the majority of the receivers of such bribes at the last general election were givers of labour made discontented by the manner and amount of its remuneration. To men in such a frame of mind it matters little whether the property, on which the bills have been drawn, is capital invested in land, in the Funds, or in the Established Church of the country. Every fish is sweet that falls into the net of men seeking to have their labour more satisfactorily remunerated. May be, the discontented working and labouring classes hope that by making innocent third-parties suffer for the faults of a system, these may be aroused in defence of their own interests from their careless indifference sufficiently to get it altered for some other, by which their labour would be more satisfactorily dealt with by capital.

Bearing then in mind what has just been said on the subject of bribery at elections, it is not all surprising that Mr. Parnell should have been returned for three constituencies at the last general election, since at each of them he had on the hustings ready for giving away in bribes a waggon-load of promises to pay drawn on the property of the capitalists owners of land in Ireland. Yet this most detestable form of bribery Mr. Parnell committed when he countenanced at the different hustings that injunction of the Land League, the withholding of rents due to landowners by their tenants. By means of bribery on so wholesale a scale he was able to get, not only himself into the House of Commons, but to bring in with him a long train of supporters. Obviously, a crime of such magnitude could not have been committed unless there had been men willing to accept the bribes. The acceptors of these bribes in the form of absolution from rent-paying were

the 600,000 farmers whose cause Mr. Parnell has since claimed in his manifesto to champion, and who, as already shown, are most discontented with the amount of remuneration for their labour to be obtained by cultivating their tiny plots of land. In this instance the discontent has proceeded, not from the system of middlemen employers of labour, but from that of small farms equally as productive of discontent as the other to the actual cultivators of the soil.

Another mode of confiscation is talked of as about to take place with a view to appease the discontent of labour at the instance of those claiming to represent it in the Lower House. This is the reduction of the interest on the National Debt. In the circumstances in which this debt was contracted, to reduce the interest upon it would be a gross act of confiscation, and one for which there could be no possible justification not even on the score of expediency. Those who have recommended it have brought forward the reduction of the debt of the United States by its Government as a precedent justifiable to follow. The two cases are not at all parallel. The debt of the United States was contracted with public investors by issues to them of bonds due at various dates, and as these bonds are becoming due they are replaced by the issue of new bonds at a lower rate of interest. This is a very different way of raising money from that adopted by the Government of England. This debt consists mainly of one huge Stock, and to reduce the interest at one blow on the hundreds of millions of which it is made up is practically to pay it off by raising a forced loan after the manner of the Turkish and other despotic Governments.

As in the long run the forced loans of Turkey and other despotic countries have turned out to be most inexpedient, so will be found to be the enforced reduction of the interest on the National Debt. For one thing, if the Government would not scruple to break contracts entered into by public creditors

why should public companies and other institutions show more conscientiousness in keeping to their contracts? Why, for instance, should not all the railway companies reduce the rate of interest on the perpetual charges they have undertaken to pay?

An act of confiscation of so glaring a kind and of such magnitude as the reduction in the circumstances of the interest on the National Debt, already in all conscience low enough, would damage the financial credit of the country, and so tell against all future Governments when attempting to enter into a fresh contract with the public. With the financial credit of the country thus damaged, how in a crisis would the offers of the Chancellor of the Exchequer of a future Ministry be received by the investing public on his application for loans to meet it? Such a crisis would come about in a necessity for resisting a coalition of European Powers against England to deprive her of her supremacy at sea.

A Chancellor of the Exchequer may have to borrow on a large scale for other purposes than of war. There is a talk of the State buying up the land of Ireland to allow of facilities for the introduction into that country of a peasant proprietary. According to the plan, the landowners are to receive the little value they are to get for their land in Government Stock. But, when they have received this Stock, what is to prevent candidates for the representation of discontented labour at the next election for Parliament from offering as bribes in advance a reduction of the interest on this debt, nay, even the extinction of it altogether? These landowners would, of course, be unable to help themselves, as they would have either to receive the Stock in question or nothing at all. But the occasion would occur the oftenest when the Chancellor of the Exchequer would want to receive in exchange for his Stock, not land, but money. Is he on such occasions to have power to raise forced loans in money on his Stock, liable as the result of bribes at

the next election to be so depreciated in value as to be all but worthless? If this is to be so, in what respect, may one ask, would the financial credit of the country be sounder than that of Turkey, Egypt, and the many bankrupt Republican Governments of South America?

Another objection on the score of inexpediency to the reduction of the rate of interest on the National Debt is, that by it no more effectual step could be taken to discourage the habit of thrift, which it has been taking so many years to implant among the hitherto thriftless working classes of this country. That these classes have been using the Funds as a medium for investing their little savings, has been more than ever made manifest of late by the readiness with which they have been taking advantage of the facilities offered through the Post Office Savings' Banks. There is nothing, it has been said, so bad but that some good may be got from it. Even in favour of preventing the working and labouring classes from getting an at all decent rate of interest for their little savings through State action, there is one thing to be said. It will force them to seek a better investment for them in co-operative farms and factories. Writers on political economy are wont to lay great stress on their theory that small farms are so many savings-banks always ready at hand, into which the owners can every day put the results of their labour. It has been shown in this work that both co-operative farms and factories would act to a much greater extent as such banks, and this not for the benefit of the capital of grasping money-lenders, as in the case of small farms, but of the savings of co-operating labourers of farms and co-operative workmen of factories. Moreover, there is no reason why the bonds of both co-operative farms and factories issued at a fixed rate of interest for purchasing or erecting the farm or factory buildings should not be made the medium for the investment of the savings of artisans at work under employers of labour.

Enough examples have surely been brought forward to substantiate what has been said respecting the war that is being constantly waged by the representatives of discontented labour in and out of Parliament, on the capital and political and social institutions of the country. The main weapon used by these men is confiscation, more or less, in some form or other, of the capital attacked, whether, as said before, it be that invested in land, in factories, in the Funds, or in the Established Church. As the political and social institutions of a country are built up on the existence of capital in its many various forms, when this is destroyed, the destruction of the others follows as a matter of course.

It is hardly surprising to those who know the weakness of human nature, that those taking upon themselves to be leaders of the working classes of a country should preach the doctrine of confiscation. It is a most taking subject to declaim upon. It appears so simple to unreflecting minds that all that is wanted for the happiness of the world is that the present possessors of property should be forced to give up a portion of their superfluity to those wanting the comforts and even the necessities of life. Such persons, we must charitably assume, never consider that this forcible distribution of wealth would soon lead to the diminution of its production, and, if continued repeatedly, to its extinction altogether. In the great French Revolution at the end of the last century such a forcible distribution of wealth took place, the consequence of which was that fresh wealth ceased to be created to take even the place of that consumed in the ordinary course of wear and tear, to say nothing of its rapid destruction in the various stages of the violence of a revolution. At last, what with the cessation of production, and destruction of what had already existed, the disappearance of everything at all approaching to wealth from among the labouring and working classes, for whose benefit the revolution in question was

supposed to have been got up, went on at so fast a pace that in the course of two years, when General Dumouriez led his forces against the army of French emigrés and Germans led by the Duke of Brunswick, his men were in a starving condition, and were clad in such rags and tatters as to earn for themselves the soubriquet of *sansculottes*. In fact, one of the reasons the leaders in the French Revolution had for undertaking the war, was to partake of the wealth of their neighbours which had not been destroyed by a revolution. The French, all through the many years of war that followed on this devastating revolution, had to maintain their armies on the wealth of the countries they conquered, so great had been the destruction of their own.

Every loyal Englishman must hope that in the expiring years of the present century no such fate is in store for the capital and political and social institutions of his own country as fell to the lot of the capital and the institutions of France at the end of the last. But even the optimists among them cannot but be aware that of late years, since the last extension of the franchise, and the passing of the Ballot Act, the affairs of their country are being precipitated at a fast rate down a steep incline towards an abyss, the nature of the bottom of which is as unknown as was a similar one to the Frenchmen of a century ago. The truth is, the lowering of the franchise and the Ballot broke down between them a barrier that for some years previously had been keeping back a seething mass of discontent, but which, now that the barrier has been removed, is being directed with greatly augmented force against the capital and the institutions of the country.

The question now crops up—what is the best kind of weapon with which to meet the mass of discontented labour now pressing on under determined leaders of republican sympathies to destroy the capital and institutions of the country? Is it to be one of concession or coercion?

Capitalists and those whose interest it is to uphold these institutions may say coercion. The difficulty that has been occurring in even passing a Coercion Bill for Ireland, scarcely holds out a satisfactory prospect that any permanent good would result from coercion. It alone at all events, it may be relied on, would not appease the discontent of givers of labour at the manner and amount of its remuneration. It is only putting up another barrier feeble than former ones on account of the much greater increase of force that can be brought against it. A Coercion Bill is, besides, calculated to exasperate those whom it has been passed to coerce. The putting up a too feeble a barrier to keep back those exasperated by its erection, may result in only making matters very much worse. It may be carried with a rush some day, and then, as in France, after the rush at and capture of the Bastille, now nearly a century ago, the capital and the political and social institutions of the country would very possibly be trampled under foot not to rise again for a decade or two, and then perhaps only after seas of blood had been shed.

Coercion is well enough, so long as the better disposed among the seething masses of discontented givers of labour are satisfied that it is only a preliminary step to altering the conditions, on which the commodity at their disposal has been standing towards capital. So far as is yet publicly known, behind the Coercion Bill of the present Government lurks a concession to the demands of discontented givers of labour in a measure for the establishment in Ireland of a peasant proprietary. Already has enough been said in this work to convince most people, if not all but those who do not mean to be convinced, that such a measure would not give satisfaction for any length of time to givers of labour. Inasmuch as it is based largely on confiscation, it may give satisfaction for a few years, till the novelty from an unusual source of gain

is worn off, and the many drawbacks of the system become more fully revealed.

It is easy to see why the benefit to be had from confiscation on the large scale this measure portends to be, will be of short duration. Confiscation of capital means its waste. Fructification not waste of capital is wanted, if givers of labour are to get the large share of it they are seeking for. As the establishment of a peasant proprietary would not do away with that curse to a country small farms, it would be of no benefit to the cultivators of the land. It would be of benefit only to professional money-lenders, bill discounters, and shareholders of Joint Stock Banks. It would bring gain to this class to an enormous extent. Givers of labour do not want this middle class of money-lenders thrust in between the capital of the country seeking a moderate rate of interest upon it and their labour. They want some measure, parliamentary or otherwise, that would have the effect of bringing this kind of capital to help their labour in such a way, that after a fair rate of interest had been paid upon it, the balance of the profit made by its use and their own labour may go to themselves and not to middlemen, whether money-lenders, bill discounters, or employers of labour in the three great industries of the country farming, mining, and manufacturing. Anything short of this would have no permanent effect in preventing the waste and perhaps the annihilation of the capital of the country such as took place in France towards the end of the last century; and this for the simple reason that nothing short of it would be likely to make it worth the while of the working classes to dissolve their organisations for making war on capital.

It does not follow that because the present representatives in and out of Parliament of discontented givers of labour are advocating a peasant proprietary, these latter would gain by the confiscation, which the passing of such a measure would involve. The interests of the two may be totally opposed to

each other. How detrimental to the interests of the labouring classes would be a peasant proprietary has been already sufficiently pointed out. On the other hand, this system of land tenure and cultivation would be most advantageous to those making a profession of espousing the cause of the working and labouring classes, inasmuch as, while seeming to better their condition and to make them more independent of capitalists, it actually makes it worse and them more dependent on the most exacting of capitalists, the money-lender. Their condition being made worse in both respects by the system they become more dependent than ever on their representatives, and accordingly more docile supporters in whatever course these may think proper to take. This course in countries having a peasant proprietary has been to try to disintegrate as much as possible their capital and political and social institutions by means of a series of confiscation processes.

That these trials have not oftener developed into accomplished facts has been due to the presence in these countries of immense armies.

Until the system of small farms has been established and at work in a country these processes of disintegration and confiscation could not be thoroughly carried out, since till then the discontent to which these small farms give rise, could not be sufficiently widespread and intense. Hence the prevalence in the countries of small farms in Germany, Russia, and France of Socialism, Nihilism, and Communism, and in Ireland of Fenianism, etc.—all organisations set on foot for purposes of disintegration and confiscation.

Though the actual tillers of the soil in England are as discontented as cultivators of small farms in other countries, yet they have not threatened to any great extent through their organisation to overturn the capital and the institutions of their country. This may have been partly because there are so few farm labourers, and partly because these few have been too

scattered, too uneducated, and not enfranchised. But should a peasant proprietary be introduced into this country there would be introduced with it to get a living off the land a population four or five times more numerous, all rendered none the less discontented by the amount if not the manner of the remuneration of their labour; and as all would possess the franchise they would all join, as are now doing the small farmers in Ireland in sending representatives to Parliament to confiscate the capital and to disintegrate the political and social institutions of the country. It would only want these new forces of discontented labour to be added to the already discontented labour of mines and factories represented by 'Trades' Unions to put the capital and the institutions of the United Kingdom completely into the hands of the representatives of the owners of this labour.

Any one at all observant of the policy of these representatives, and of their proceedings in carrying it out, must have noticed how they all tend to the confiscation of capital and existing interests. This confiscation evidently forms a part of what may be called a general policy of disintegration, which these representatives of discontented labour have been aiming to carry out. It seems as if these men wanted to reduce as fast as possible to its primary elements everything that it has been taking centuries to build up. Their object in carrying out this policy of disintegration is apparently to put every person in respect to the possession of property, of attainments, and of social position on one dead level, with the exception of a few choice spirits placed above to direct the ways of those composing this dead level. Who these few are to be their modesty forbids them to say. In short, with this trifling exception their idea is represented by the French Revolutionary cry of "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity."

The capital and the institutions of the country are not the

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only things at which this policy of disintegration is aimed. It is carried even into the family home by these representatives of discontented labour. These are the men who have been advocating the granting facilities for divorce and what they call the enfranchisement of women from the influence of their husbands, so that a man and his wife may be no longer closely allied together as enjoined in the Bible as if they were one. By the bye, to the disintegrating notions of such people what is enjoined in the Bible is hardly likely to be much of a stumbling-block. With facilities for divorce and independence of women come as a natural result the further disintegration of what ought to be the family tie by the separation of the children from one or other of the parents.

When these representatives of discontented labour are prepared to join in disintegrating family ties, and in performing a further process of disintegration on these separated living atoms by separating each from his Maker, it is not to be wondered at that they are bending all their efforts to disintegrate under one pretext or another, the vast empire of which they are supposed to form a part. In the present Parliament a large section of these representatives of discontented givers of labour in the form of small farmers have been agitating for a disintegration of the British Empire by the separation of Ireland from Great Britain. Other sections of the representatives of discontented labour have advocated at various times the separation of the colonies from the mother country, and more recently, of the Transvaal in South Africa. Others again, if they have not been shouting out at public meetings, "Perish India," have been more insidiously at work to effect the same object of separating that dependency from the British Empire by insisting on the abandonment of strategical positions, such as for instance Candahar, absolutely necessary to be retained, if India is to continue a portion of that empire. Even those representatives of discontented labour, who have not yet ventilated

their disintegrating notions, so far as to recommend the separation of India from England, have some of them insisted on the necessity of disintegrating the Government of that dependency into several separate ones. Thus, the keynote of the whole policy of these representatives of discontented labour is the disintegration of every institution into as many separate atoms as possible, and this from family ties up to those connected with the government of a vast empire.

Is it not quite time that the people of England should begin to ask themselves whither is this policy of disintegrating every institution tending, and when and where is it all to end? Is it to be still further extended by the introduction into Ireland of the system of a peasant proprietary, which might possibly lead to its being introduced into England and Scotland, not on its merits, for the one or two of these would be greatly overshadowed by its many demerits, but from the power which it would place in the hands of those seeking to disintegrate still further the capital and the institutions of the country. Not yet happily is it too late for a stop to be put to it all, though it may be so, when the system of small farms has been extended in one country and introduced into another, which would be sure to be the means of there being returned to Parliament a vast accession of representatives of discontented labour bent on carrying out to the full the policy of disintegration.

If the people of England have really made up their minds to put a stop to this speedy process of breaking up this magnificent empire of 300 millions of people into countless atoms, they should first of all ask themselves what it is that has been giving vitality and coherence to what would otherwise have remained but an abstract idea? To such a question there can be but one answer, and that is the discontent of givers of labour at the manner and amount of its remuneration. Without the existence of this discontent givers of labour would not have organised themselves into Trades

Unions to make war on capital, and on the institutions of the country by sending representatives to Parliament to that end. In speaking, however, of these representatives, the half-dozen men connected with Trades' Unions returned since the lowering of the franchise, and the passing of the Ballot Act, are not the only ones alluded to. These men have not yet been long enough in Parliament to be able to do much mischief, though they are trying all they can to make up for the time they have been shut out. The men who have been doing so much of the disintegrating mischief have been employers of labour who have been posing as representatives of discontented labour. These men, conscious of the false position they have been in, have been deeming it to their interest to cover it as much as possible by diverting the attention of their working men constituents to the disintegration of every institution in the country but that one, which of all has been the greatest cause of their discontent—an employer of labour.

A large portion of the working classes have been represented by employers of labour for now many years. What good have they gained after all the disintegrating processes the country has been going through more or less during these years? Are they yet masters of their own labour? Are they satisfied even with the amount of its remuneration? If they are, why do they not dissolve their Unions, and out of the increased wealth thereby obtained pension off the leaders of these Unions? Why, instead, do they go on wasting millions of capital year after year in strikes, if they are so satisfied with their condition? Can they mention a single one of these disintegrating processes by which their condition has been made better? Take, for instance, that of free trade in land produce. That measure by which the farming interest of the country has been thoroughly disintegrated, was passed for the benefit and in the name of the working man. Now, what

has he been the better for it? Admitted that he gets his loaf somewhat cheaper than he otherwise would have done—and even about this there is a doubt, since, had there been a sliding scale duty, it is quite possible it would have given encouragement to ways of making the land twice as fertile as it now is without such a duty—is his condition on the whole bettered through it? Has he a better house to live in? Is he surrounded with more home comforts? If so, why does he take refuge in public houses and in drink? Are all other things than the loaf correspondingly cheaper? Are his wages higher? In a word is he contented?

CHAPTER XXIII.

CO-OPERATION, CONTENT, CONSTRUCTION.

Appeasement of discontented Labour by Co-operation—Education of Labourers for Co-operation—Prince Bismarck's Policy for contenting Labour—Discontented Labour in the United States—Inability of Labourers to Co-operate by themselves—Middlemen Usurers and Employers of Labour—Land Committees Landowners, and Managers of Farms—More willing Labour wanted on the Land—Rising Generation of Owners of Land—Horse-racing and Party Politics—An Appeal to Capitalists—The Arts and Sciences and contented Labour.

LET us now reverse the picture and see what is on the light side of it. We have had enough in all conscience of the disintegrating policy. Let us now turn our attention to an integrating, or building up one by means of co-operation. Fortunately, disintegration has not yet been carried to such an extent that the country cannot recover from its effects through the opposite policy of co-operation.

Briefly, then, respecting the chief points in the plan of co-operation here suggested, by which the present discontent of labour both as to the manner and amount of its remuneration is to be appeased. According to the plan owners of labour, as under it they ought to be called, would have that commodity so necessary to the production of wealth completely at their own disposal so as to allow of their being placed in a position to use it to the greatest advantage for their own profit. They would have of course to pay first the interest on the capital lent at a fixed rate by the investing public; but this being paid, whatever profits accrued afterwards from the working of the undertaking are to be shared among the co-operators, and not to go to employers of labour, or through them to professional money-lenders. Thus the responsibility attached

to the carrying on of every co-operative undertaking would be thrown on the owners of labour and not as hitherto on the owners of capital.

In this very point of the scheme would it be that so much of its success, it is anticipated, would lie, since it would lift the owner of labour all at once into quite a different atmosphere, and out of the grovelling wage-fund doctrine of what is called political, but what ought really to be called employers of labour economy. For the first time in the history of manual labour the owners thereof would be treated not as if it were merely a matter of id. an hour more or less—as of a bag more or less filled of oats as payment to a horse for his labour—but as beings endowed with a mental capacity as well as with muscular power.

The question now arises as to whether these owners of labour are to be trusted with the capital of the outside investing public. The doubt would not be about their honesty since under the working of the plan it would be decidedly to their interest to be honest, but about their capacity to carry on with success an undertaking on a large scale like that of co-operation, and in which a large amount of capital, including their own, would have to be invested. It is scarcely necessary to say that the capital lent by investors at a fixed rate of interest would be protected as far as possible by legal measures, so that but little if any of it would be lost even by the failure of the whole co-operation. As these investors would be owners of land, farm buildings, and tramways, in the case of co-operative farms and of buildings and machinery in that of factories, they would in the event of a failure have the first claim on everything belonging to the co-operative estate in liquidation. But there would be so many circumstances favourable to the successful working of either co-operative farms or factories under the plan proposed if carried out in its entirety that a failure could take place only through very gross

incapacity on the part of the co-operators. Indeed, so extreme must it be in the case of co-operative farms that it may be safely predicted there would not be more than one such in a hundred, and this only in a score of years.

In respect to their capacity for carrying on a co-operative undertaking, be it remembered that owing to the education that future owners of labour are even now getting at National and Board Schools, they will be educated enough for the purpose. Indeed, the lads of farm labourers are being taught at these schools quite as much and quite as well as are the sons of employers of labour farmers. Even touching factories, these are generally managed by a foreman or junior partner taken from the ranks of the working classes. Owners of labour are, besides, being trained for carrying out the principles of co-operation by their organisation into 'Trades' and Labourers' Unions. If they can co-operate sufficiently through these Unions both to make war on the capital of their masters and to disintegrate the institutions of their country, they would surely be able to co-operate enough together to carry on with success either a co-operative farm, factory, or mine.

It is noteworthy that the very qualifications that make workmen and labourers fit to carry on either a co-operative farm, factory, or mine, make them all the more dangerous as men discontented with the manner and amount of the remuneration of their labour. These qualifications, as just now observed, have been promoted by education and their organisations. These men are getting a better education every year through National schools and a cheap press, and no doubt their mental training is increased by being called on every now and then to exercise their voting power. For one thing, it gets them to take an interest in most subjects relating to the politics of the hour. Is all this mental training, one is tempted to ask, to be used in support of the capital and the institutions of the country as it would be when employed in co-operation, or to be continued to be used

against both as now under their leaders? Owners of labour, again, are better organised every year for co-operating together in industrial pursuits through their Unions, and may be also through their drillings in the army under the short service system. At any rate, in their short period of service there they learn to act in bodies and to use with effect the deadliest weapons, both of which might, when in the power of men discontented about their labour, be mischievously made use of by unscrupulous leaders.

Prince Bismarck, it appears, is now engaged in working out a scheme for giving contentment to the working classes of Germany, in order to be able to break up the many organisations that exist for the spread of Socialistic ideas and aims in that sorely-distracted empire. It is, however, to be feared that he has hardly gone the right way to work for bringing about so desirable an object. His plan is to compel the masters to make provision by an Insurance fund against the accidents and varieties of sickness happening to their men, and to mitigate the losses to their families by their premature death. The reason to fear the failure of this scheme lies in this, that the compulsion will turn out in working to be simply a tax on wages, against which employers of labour would be able to guard themselves by reducing their rate in proportion to the amount of the tax. Had the Prince, on the other hand, made use of the plan of co operation treated of in this book, he would have done away with the wage-fund principle altogether, by doing away with its practical users at all events in certain branches of industry, in which large masses of men are employed; and it is probable amongst these masses that Socialism in its most dangerous form is to be found. He may rest assured that nothing that he can do to put down Socialism for any length of time in his country will avail, so long as trade organisations among working men exist to keep it alive. Socialism in Germany, like Communism in France,

Nihilism in Russia, Fenianism in Ireland, and Trade Unionism in Great Britain, can be put down only by those making up these organisations, and these are not likely to dissolve them so long as they are discontented with the manner and amount of remuneration of their labour. It is in the making such contented that the plan of co-operation here proposed bases its claim to the consideration of those wishing for the stability of the capital and the institutions of the country.

However suitable may be Prince Bismarck's plan for giving contentment to the givers of labour in the German empire, it could not be carried out in this country, because it is to be done only through State action. The plan of co-operation here proposed can, on the other hand, be carried out without State interference. In a country like this, whose people take a pride in their freedom from State control—except, by-the-bye, that portion of it in which small farms prevail—this feature of the plan is not the least of its merits.

The leaders of the Democratic party in the United States are, it is said, endeavouring to solve the same problem that Prince Bismarck is trying to do for Germany. What steps they intend to take for this purpose have not yet been made known. They are, however, not likely to succeed in their object any more than is the German Chancellor, unless they go on the lines of the plan of co-operation, so that the capital of the country engaged in the three great industries in which manual labour is most employed is used merely to put the owners of such labour into a position of helping themselves. The Pittsburgh and Baltimore riots showed pretty plainly that there is a festering mass of discontented labour in that country, though it is a new one of immense extent, of immense natural resources, and not burdened with old institutions to be disintegrated. There has been no great manifestation of this discontent for the last year or two; but this has been owing to the extraordinary prosperity in every branch of industry in that

country. But let a check be put to this prosperity, which may come any year from an indifferent harvest in the Western States or from a bountiful one in Europe, and then all the isms of Europe would burst again into a petroleum flame in that republic of "Bossdom."

In case it should be objected against the plan of co-operation that under its working the capital of the country would not be augmented at so fast a rate, and to so great an extent as it is doing under the present state of things, a word or two will now be said to put any fear that may exist on that point quite at rest. In the first place, capital can be added to only when it is secure. But it has been shown on sufficient grounds that under the present state of things capital is becoming less secure every year. Placed as it now is, it is being constantly exposed to confiscation if belonging to the investing public, and if to employers of labour to shrinkage through the strikes of their men. On the other hand, by the plan of co-operation, based as capital would be on the responsibility of owners of labour to see to its safety, it could not be otherwise than secure.

These owners of labour, besides making the capital of the country more secure, would increase it at a faster rate from the fact of their being owners of labour. Capital is after all nothing but realised labour represented by coin and paper. The vigorous labour, stimulated by the expected profits therefrom, which the co-operating partners would be constantly putting into the land, and the attention unremittingly paid by them to the rearing of animals and poultry, would together form a machinery for adding to the capital of the country on an enormous scale. What makes strikes and lock-outs so disastrous to the capital of the country is that they not only destroy that already existing, but so long as they last there is a cessation in making new.

But security of capital and its rapid increase from a greater development of labour are not the only advantages to be gained

from the plan of co-operation. The field for its investment would be enormously expanded by the plan. Take, for example, co-operative farms alone. It would be no exaggeration to say that through the instrumentality of these farms there would be room for the employment in cultivating the land alone of twice as much capital as is now employed under the present system ; and this would be independent of the capital to be laid out in farm buildings and tramways. A great deal of this capital would, it is admitted, belong to the co-operating labourers. Still it would be the capital of the country as much as the fixed portion invested in the same farms belonging perhaps to millionaire landowners.

With all these scores, if not hundreds, of millions sterling invested in the tillage of the land there could not fail to result plenty of fresh openings for the investment of capital in co-operative factories. It may be safely assumed that the well-off co-operating labourers would not be satisfied with wearing nothing but what has come off the farm, as is the case with so many peasant proprietors on the Continent. Having by means of their tramways direct communication with the people of towns selling manufactured goods, they would much prefer to exchange their farm produce for the cotton and woollen fabrics of the co-operative factories.

The fact that the partners in these co-operative factories would own a considerable portion of the capital employed therein would not make it of any the less value. It certainly would not have the effect of taking the capital out of the country. If the possession by workmen of a large portion of the capital of a co-operative factory did no other good than act as bail for the security of the fixed capital of the investing public invested therein as well as to the capital of the country at large, it would be something to rejoice at rather than lamented over.

The co-operative farms in the United Kingdom would not be the only sources of demand for their goods that the partners

of co-operative factories ought to have to look to. There would be, besides, the well-to-do partners of the co-operative farms in India and in the colonies in Africa and elsewhere having a Land Department much preferring to have the manufactured goods of the co-operative factories in England to neglecting their farmwork in vain attempts to make up the skins of the animals reared on the farms so as to look smart and be comfortable in them. The openings for supplying all these demands that would be presented for the employment in co-operative factories of the capital of the English investing public at a moderate rate of interest would also be counted by scores if not hundreds of millions.

These fresh openings for the investment of hundreds of millions of fixed capital on an undoubted security at a fixed rate of interest in co-operative farms and factories, would be all in the United Kingdom. But if the plan of co-operative farms be carried out as suggested in Africa and India there would be more openings still for the investment, not of hundreds, but of thousands of millions of British capital on the same terms. Be it remembered that the Land Department of India would alone want in the course of fifty years no less a sum than £1,000,000,000 of the investing public for the setting on foot of co-operative farms, and for the outlays in making tramways, putting up farm buildings, and laying foundations for new towns at some of the junctions of the tramways with the railways—all necessary for the successful carrying on of these farms. This would be only the departmental work of the Government for laying the foundations of the co-operative farms. The co-operating ryot cultivators would want capital lent them at not too high a rate of interest for enabling them to work these farms such as for the purchase of implements and perhaps machinery, etc. What has been said of India is applicable to the colonies in Africa and elsewhere. All these fresh openings for the investment of English capital at a moderate rate of interest and on unques-

tionable security to be reckoned in the aggregate by thousands of millions, would be created solely by the building up plan of co-operation, while they would be utterly closed by a continuance of the opposite policy of disintegration. Such is the difference in results between labour contented and discontented with the manner and amount of its remuneration.

At first sight the outline just drawn of what are likely to be the results of the plan of co-operation, may appear somewhat exaggerated. When, however, are taken into account the many advantages that cannot fail to proceed from the co-operation of labour assisted and not preyed upon by capital, it is no longer a matter of wonder that it should prove so great a success. Co-operation is recognised by capitalists to have considerable merits, or else it would not be employed by them to the extent it is. It is made use of in Insurance Offices and in Joint Stock Companies, such as those of Banks and Railways, carried on by the capitalist shareholders. Indeed, some of these are on so large a scale that they could not well be carried on by individuals acting only as such. Why, then, should not co-operative farms at all events, if not factories, be carried on by the co-operation of the labourers engaged in them? Under the plan here given the co-operating labourers, not only in the United Kingdom but in the dependencies, are to be capitalists, and as such to furnish a large portion of the capital employed in their co-operative undertaking, as well as all the labour. But is not labour capital too? At any rate employers of labour cannot hire it except by the employment of capital.

It must, however, be admitted that co-operation among labourers alone could never be carried out, for the simple reason that they are not capitalists on a large enough scale to start a co-operative undertaking by their own unaided efforts. Of the truth of this the many unsuccessful attempts that have been made by them is a sufficient proof. To be able to take the initiatory step they must have the aid, and this to a large

extent, of the investing public on such terms as would not stifle the undertaking with too heavy a burden. This aid they cannot get except through the cordial co-operation of those giving with those receiving it.

Even when the investing public have started a co-operative undertaking, the labourers, it must be further admitted, would not be able to carry it on with the success, with which it ought to be carried on, without the help in various other ways of those lending their capital. This helplessness on the part of givers of labour springs from two causes. The one is the peculiar nature of manual toil, which by engrossing so much of the time and strength of the givers renders it impossible for them to look sufficiently after the interests of their labour. The other is that owing to the frailty of human nature, there is a very large class of men, who, in the character of middlemen, are ever on the watch to prey on this helplessness of givers of labour. In fact, this large class may be said to have no other way of getting a living. The unfortunate feature in this state of things is, that the harder men work at manual labour, the more are their time and thoughts engrossed in it, and consequently the less are they able to protect the interests of their labour from being absorbed by these middlemen. It is this feeling of helplessness on their part that has caused them to combine into Unions, first to make provisions in accidents and sickness to mitigate the hardship of this absorption, and subsequently to make war for the protection of their interests on the capital of these middlemen; and it is on account of it that so many in despair of improving the condition of their labour even through their Unions give themselves up to drink. Wherever they are at work they find the middlemen in a variety of ways stepping in between their labour and what they deem a just remuneration for it.

In farming in England and Scotland, it is the middlemen farmer who employs, hires, or farms their labour that thus steps in between.

In Ireland, on the other hand, and in the countries on the Continent having a peasant proprietary, the middlemen who intercepts the profits rightly belonging to the cultivator of the soil is not the hirer of his labour, but the Gombeen usurer, through whose loans he has been able to buy the land. In the chapter on a peasant proprietary it was shown how deeply indebted to these usurers are peasant proprietors. From a disinclination to encumber the work with statistics, but few examples of such indebtedness were given out of many at hand. Of these latter, one states that in Austrian Galicia alone no fewer than 13,000 small farmers were evicted in 1879 by usurers. Even more convincing proof does that country of a peasant proprietary France give of the wholesale scale, on which middlemen usurers fleece cultivators of small farms of the fruits of their unremitting toil. In that country there are on an average 600,000 land transfers every year. The greater part of these must have been the result of evictions brought about through dealings more or less direct with middlemen usurers. It is then no wonder that Mr. Richardson says in his work, "The Central and Eastern Districts of France:—" "In these districts the labourer is far better off than the small proprietor, and the artisan than either, and that consequently the rural population is diminishing in fair France as in royal Meath." M. Lavelaye, in his letters from Italy, published in 1880, states that in Italy in the five years ending 1878, there were more than 62,000 peasants evicted from their farms. They were, it is true, evicted by the tax-gatherer, but one cannot help suspecting that they had been brought into this state of inability to pay taxes by the exactions on the fruits of their labour of middlemen usurers. If this were not the case, the only inference left to be drawn is, that so unprofitable is the system of small farms, that even without the burden of usurers' exactions upon their labour the cultivators of these small farms are unable to make a living off them. Not

surprising, then, is it that in countries of small farms there is so much discontent among owners of labour at the amount of its remuneration, and that in them exist a military force on a vast scale to keep this discontent from breaking out into outrages connected with Socialism, Communism, or Fenianism.

As a further protection, then, to the owners of labour to prevent its fruits from being appropriated by middlemen, it is most essential that the part of the plan relating to the Land Committees and the Joint Stock Companies corresponding in respect of factories to the Land Committees, should be carried out. If the members of the Land Committees and directors of the companies were to perform the part set them in the plan, the co-operating partners in both farms and factories would then run no danger of having the profits of their labour taken from them by middlemen of any kind. Feeling secure on this point, they could then bend all their thoughts and muscular energies to the task of making their co-operative undertaking extremely profitable to themselves.

The chief business of the Land Committees, it will be remembered, will not be to interfere with individual farms beyond receiving the rents or interest on capital, seeing that the conditions of contract in other respects are fulfilled, and acting as impartial arbitrators in case of disputes between the co-operating members. Even in these cases, the communication between the committees and the co-operating members would be through the manager, who would act in the double capacity of agent for the one and of delegate for the other.

The work of these committees would lie chiefly in forming a connecting link between all the co-operative farms in each county, and in the case of the superior Land Committee, between all the co-operative farms in England, Scotland, and Ireland, and perhaps of a higher one still of all the co-operative farms in all the three kingdoms taken collectively. This connecting link is to be maintained by several modes of

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co-operation, but mainly by means of one colossal Insurance and Benefit Society, to which all the co-operating members of every one of the supposed 60,000 co-operative farms in the three kingdoms are to contribute. Another connecting bond would be a lending library, to furnish the clubhouse of every co-operative farm with a supply of fresh books, say, every twelve months. This would give the men a variety of reading without the cost of maintaining a large library at each clubhouse. Another bond would be the publication by the committee's press of a weekly newspaper on farming matters, containing information respecting the doings in the different farms of the co-operating members. By means of such a paper improvements in the working of the plan of co-operation, both as regards getting larger crops and disposing of them to better advantage to consumers, might from time to time be effected. The ventilation of these and kindred subjects by correspondence in this paper between the members of the different farms, would greatly conduce to the good feeling and profit of all engaged in agriculture. When once an organisation like that of the Land Committee is in existence, experience would no doubt suggest other ways of cementing the harmony between capital and labour employed in husbandry, and in safeguarding the interests of both.

The members of the Land Committees ought to be paid on a sufficiently liberal scale for their services, and the fund, out of which such payment would be made, would have to be contributed by the landowners. The position of a member of one of these committees would be one to be coveted, not so much perhaps on account of the pay as of the political and social influence it would give. The landowners ought in consequence to be able to command the services of some of the most talented among them to fill the post of a member, and this would be all the more necessary on account of the heavy responsibility connected with it.

What has been said concerning the duties of members of the Land Committees and their qualifications for the post, would be equally applicable in respect of the duties and qualifications of the directors of Joint Stock Companies to be started to perform functions of a somewhat similar helping kind for the co-operating workers in factories.

So much for the members of Land Committees. As to the owners of land themselves, these would be amply compensated for the yearly outlay, to which on account of the Land Committees they would be put, by receiving their rents from the managers of the co-operative farms in full without any abatement for bad seasons or on any other pretext. If report be true, one noble Duke has had to remit on the score of a bad season out of one year's rent a sum large enough to more than cover what would probably be the whole of the outgoings for a year of the Land Committee of the county.

There may be some among the landowners who would not like to have their co-operative farms managed by other landowners through the machinery of Land Committees. There ought really to be no occasion for such dislike. If they are capable men, they would themselves be appointed members of the Land Committee of the county in which their estate would lie, and in that capacity take part in the management of other estates as well as their own. On the other hand, if they are incapable from any of the many causes not necessary to specify, they ought to be only too glad to have their estates managed for them in an efficient and inexpensive manner. There can hardly be a doubt that the land of the United Kingdom would be managed much more efficiently for the benefit of the country at large and of its owners in particular, and at a much less cost to these owners, if it were managed through their co-operating together into as few bodies as possible for the purpose. It would then be managed much nearer than it is now to the efficiency and economy, with which the land of India under a

Land Department ought to and presumably would be managed. Of the necessity for such co-operation the owners of land in England must have been convinced of late in the difficulty they are meeting with in respect to the protection of their land from the floodings of rivers.

Landowners whether or not they like this part of the plan requiring them to make over the management of their estates to a body chosen from among themselves have scarcely an option in the matter. Unless they do they cannot carry out the other part of the plan; and if they do not have recourse to the system of co-operation in tillage on the lines here proposed, they cannot give contentment to givers of labour now dissatisfied with the manner and amount of its remuneration. This discontent is now being directed by the representatives, true or false, of these men against owners of land as a class as being the cause of it all. If this discontent lasts, landowners will find themselves in no long time in the dilemma of having either to yield to the concession demanded of them by the Farmers' Alliance, which would infinitely more injuriously affect their interests than could possibly do the handing over to a Land Committee the management of their estates, or to give up their land altogether to enable the State to introduce into the country the system of a peasant proprietary. Independently of their being much greater losers by their being compelled to accept either of these alternatives, there would be the additional mortification of finding givers of labour as far off as ever from being contented, and therefore of finding the rest of their capital exposed to as great a danger as ever, to say nothing of the political and social institutions of the country.

By consenting on the other hand to have their estates well managed by an efficient Land Committee the rest of the plan could be carried out, which would effectually put in the way of workmen and labourers a remuneration for the commodity

at their disposal fully contenting them both in its manner and amount. Thus would landowners have it in their power to make an end of those as a class now seeking to make an end of themselves as one.

But independently of giving content to workmen and labourers the solution of the land question through co-operation on the plan here laid down is, it can hardly be doubted, the one that would produce most good by far to most interests in the country, inasmuch as it is based on looking after the interests of labour, which is the foundation of all its wealth. Anything therefore that would call forth that labour to exert itself to the full extent of which it is capable could not be otherwise than beneficial to the country at large. By the system of co-operative farms especially would this vast power of augmenting the wealth of the country have full scope given to it, and thus be kept from being greatly deteriorated through the demoralisation attendant on the present mode of remunerating labour.

As regards an old country like England it is not a dearth of capital that it suffers from so much as of the sinews and muscles of labour, and most of all under the present conditions of its remuneration from the want of willingness of the owners of these sinews and muscles to use them to the utmost of their power. All these sources of wealth to a country the capitalists owners of land in the United Kingdom have been placidly contented to see pass away from off their land into the United States to the impoverishment of their own country, but most of all of themselves. Under the system of farming they have been countenancing they have allowed to be lost to the tillage of the land of the country the very men that ought to have been retained for such work. If the system of co-operative farms should do no more than keep in the United Kingdom for tilling its land the tall, the well-shaped, the robust, the manly, and the open-browed

among the sons of farm-labourers instead of as now driving them out of it, this book will not have been written in vain. With a system that would offer sufficient inducements to such men to stay to cultivate the land of their estates, owners of land may rest assured they would hear nothing of such things as bad seasons and requests for abatements of rent.

Is it not quite time that owners of land should ask themselves whether they have been acting wisely in allowing so many interests to crop up between themselves and its actual cultivators? That the two interests have come to be completely divorced is only too palpable from the present state of things in Ireland. May not what is now happening in Ireland take place before long in England? Who would have thought two years ago that the present reign of terrorism against landowners could have come into existence in that island in so short a time. It never would have existed had the relation between capital and labour been on the cordial footing that would come of the establishment of co-operative farms over the country. To say nothing of their working the very existence of such farms would imply on the part of capital a good feeling extending to actual practice towards labour.

If the capital of owners of land is to work in cordial agreement with labour for the benefit of both, these owners must be, as said before, something more than mere rent receivers. They must co-operate together in the ways and for the purposes already pointed out. In doing this they ought to find no difficulty, since most of them already co-operate together as magistrates at the Quarter and Petty Sessions, as members of both Houses of Parliament, and some as members of the Cabinet of Ministers for governing the country. Why then should they not co-operate together for the settlement of all questions in connection with their own landed property? By doing so they could not but be very great gainers. For one thing, when the management of all the land of the country

is in the hands of the Land Committees, it would be in the hands of the most capable among the landowners, and being so, many of the objections now urged against primogeniture and settlements by so-called land reformers would be deprived of all force.

It is possible that these Land Committees could not act without the sanction of Parliament having been first of all obtained. Nor, for the matter of that, could the passing of laws for doing away with inheritance and settlements. It is not meant to be implied that no alteration of the present land laws is necessary; for some may be wanted to facilitate the formation of Land Committees and the carrying on the work sketched out for them in the plan. These committees should have a legal power put into their hands of managing for the interests of co-operation at any rate, if for nothing else, the landed estates of minors, idiots, and lunatics, besides those incapacitated in other ways, as from want of leisure, absenteeism, and sex.

By means of these committees, moreover, a training-ground for the business qualities required in statesmanship, and therefore to govern the country, would be opened out for the clever sons of landowners. Their success in this path of duty to their country would be to no little extent a guarantee for their success in the other. How much nobler a field would this be for the sons of owners of land to show their abilities in than the betting ring on a race-course? In this latter capacity they see the class that ought as workmen and farm labourers to be contributors to the wealth of the country in a most demoralised state, while as members of Land Committees they would come into contact with the manual tillers of the soil, made through the qualities developed by co-operative farms beings of a totally different stamp.

Not only ought landowners to put their foot down on horse-racing and the many abominations springing therefrom, but it is a question whether they ought not to give up party politics.

To carry out the system of co-operative farms in the manner and to the extent of which it is capable would require the united abilities and energies of the landowners. By divisions among themselves, whether created by politics or anything else, they would only let in a hostile third party between the two interests that ought to be kept closely united on equal terms, neither dominating over the other. Ceaseless will be the attempts made by many possessing neither capital, with which to assist labour, nor the will to labour; to separate these two interests, and to thwart these attempts must the vigilance of the members of the Land Committees be as ceaseless. To thus throw their shield before labour that it may not be deprived of what is its due is not only in accordance with their own interests, but it is an obligation due on the part of capital to the country and to the stability of its institutions; in fact, to everything that may be said to constitute the civilisation of mankind.

Landowners should constantly bear in mind the saying attributed to the great Burke, that "Party is a loss to the many for the gain of the few." When owners of land are allied through co-operative farms with owners of labour, and by means of these, in sympathy with the miners of co-operative mines and with the workmen of co-operative factories, they would be allied with the many who, according to Burke, are losers by party politics.

If owners of land would but look back on the past political history of England for the last century, they would find they have not as a class been very much of gainers by the political warfare carried on during that period, and that the combative spirit of Englishmen among them has been taken advantage of to promote party strife by those who have used it for their own advancement. They would have been in a very different position from that in which they now are, had they, instead of spending all their energies and great abilities in trying to dish

one another, co-operated together to look after the interests of labour. This was a responsibility they ought as owners of land to have taken upon themselves in matters of husbandry and mining, both being under their own control. It is probable that, had they done so, the example thus set would have been followed in towns, in manufactures, and all these in the colonies, and perhaps in the United States as well as in the United Kingdom. Moreover, had they done this, it is probable that the capital of the country would have been more than twice as large as it is now, since it would, for one thing, not have been restricted in its expansion by the actions of Trades' Unions, nor would their own capital, as owners of land, ever have been in danger of being taken from them to make good the deficiency. Fortunately, it is not yet too late for them to remedy the evils due to their past neglect of the interests of labour. By the plan of co-operation, by which they would treat with owners of labour through Land Committees and the managers of co-operative farms, and not employers of labour as heretofore, they would have at their disposal the means of making up for the oversight committed in the blind fury of their party strifes.

The above appeal to the landowners of the United Kingdom has been made in no class spirit, for it has been made by one not owning land. It would not have been made if it had been thought that any large class of the community would be sufferers from the object of the appeal being carried into effect. On the contrary, there is no considerable body of men or women that would not be benefited, whose prosperity depended on the maintenance of peace and order throughout the empire; and there can be no peace and order until the relation between capital and labour be put on the satisfactory footing of co-operation. The co-operation, as will be gathered by this time, is to exist not merely among labourers and among capitalists, but between these co-operating capitalists and co-operating labourers.

Nor need any classes be envious of the new position here recommended for capitalists owners of land to take up. Those who are capitalists, and are satisfied with an investment for their money averaging three per cent., can always, by buying land, join the coveted circle of landowners. Employers of labour, too, would always have it in their power to invest their capital in co-operative factories on similar principles to those on which the capital of owners of land would be invested in co-operative farms. They would then share with landowners the great credit of putting the final touch to the emancipation of the working classes from what has been called the thralldom of capital—a process that has been going on for years through Board Schools, the franchise, Trades' Unions, and such like, and now the Employers' Liability Act. By thus joining with landowners in crowning the edifice whose foundations have been laid by these agencies, they would place their own capital securely out of the reach of those anxious to get hold of it by the short-cut of appealing to the passions of the masses, now become, through the lowering of the franchise, the most powerful section of the community in the country. With capitalists lenders of land, and capitalists lenders of factories working cordially in agreement with capitalists farm labourers and capitalists operatives, the wealth of the country could not but advance by leaps and bounds to an extent altogether unprecedented in its annals. This advance would endure without check, for it would be founded on the content of labour by reason of its more satisfactory participation with capital in the profits of such an advance, and not soon come to an end as did the leaps and bounds of progress in trade of a few years ago, which were brought about by speculation and the plunder of the investing classes, and which, alas, left the working classes worse off than before.

It need hardly be said that it is only when capital is secure through an amicable understanding between it and labour,

that the arts and sciences can flourish, and, in short, that civilisation in its many other aspects can make any progress. In the times of convulsions or upheavals of the social fabric, brought about or fed by the discontent of the working classes, some of the first interests to suffer are those connected with the professions. At such times there is no law, no religion, and very little money at command for rewarding medical and other kinds of professional skill. As for painting, sculpture, and the various fields of literature at such times, they are simply non-existent. Those Englishmen now advocating the introduction into their country of a peasant proprietary should not, if they are orderly disposed, lose sight of the fact that it was in a country in which that form of land tenure existed, that its national collection of works of art, one of the finest in the world, was within an ace of being utterly destroyed in 1870 by the petroleum fires of incendiary Communists. If a peasant proprietary gives so much satisfaction to the artisan and labouring classes as we are urged to believe it does, how is it that the Communists of Paris, who made so much havoc of everything connected with the Fine Arts they came across in 1870, should be still so numerous as to be able to force the French Government to procure the return from exile of their comrades in that work of destruction? It cannot be with the form of Government of their country that this Communist offspring of a peasant proprietary is discontented, for it is a republic.

What, may one ask, is the use of employers of labour amassing large fortunes and laying out those fortunes, as some to their credit do, in works of Art to give to the nation, if the system by which the fortunes are made, causes so much dissatisfaction among the working and labouring classes, as to lead them in their fury to destroy these works of Art with the Museum or Louvre in which they are contained? Employers of labour would in the long run do much better to make smaller

fortunes, if in so doing, the owners of the labour hired by them were made better contented with the amount, if not the manner, of its remuneration, inasmuch as their continued possession of these small fortunes would never be put in jeopardy. Nor for the same reason would the nation in respect of its collection of antiquities, objects of vertu, etc., be a loser in the long run if fewer and less costly works were presented to it.

In an era of co-operation with the exercise of the most ordinary precaution, there would not be the least fear of any convulsion or upheaval of the social fabric leading to the destruction of public any more than private wealth. When capital would assist labour to help itself, as it would do under the working of a proper system of co-operation in lieu of trying to get out of it all it can, the arts, the sciences, and the other intellectual outcomes of capital would, like capital itself, rest on a foundation as firm as a rock, instead of the tottering one they all now do. They would rest on the intelligence of the most numerous and best part of the masses, not only able to appreciate their value, but not tempted, despite such appreciation, to destroy them out of a feeling of revenge towards capital, which they would represent in only too tangible a form.

CHAPTER XXIV.

AID OF CO-OPERATIVE FARMS TO GOVERNMENTS.

Aid of Family Groups to Governments—A Co-operative Farm made up of Family Groups—Manager of Co-operative Farm Head of Family Group—Aid of Co-operative Farms to Indian Government—Cause of India being too unwieldy to govern—Ireland difficult to govern from same cause—Cause of Embarrassments to all Governments—Labourers of Co-operative Farms as Defenders of India—Government Control through Co-operative Farms—Large Farms of Co-operation and Large Farms of Employers—Large Farms of the Transvaal and a Land Department—Aid of Investors to Government through Co-operative Farms.

THE subject of co-operation in general and of co-operative farms in particular ought not to be dismissed before a few remarks are made respecting the enormous advantages the Government of a country would not fail to receive from their working.

It is the opinion of most writers who have made the subject their study, that the primary element in the government of a country is the family group, formed by the individual members under the paternal head. It is to this head that the Government looks for the orderly behaviour of the individuals composing the group, and for the payment of taxes and such like. If instead of looking to the head of the family group for the whole, the tax-gatherer had to collect from the wife, children, and other members of the family living under the same roof, their separate contributions towards the maintenance of the government of the country, the scope of State action would be greatly enlarged. By the father of the family taking all the responsibilities on his own shoulders the Government is relieved to that extent. When all this is multiplied by the number of family groups in the country, some idea may be formed of the

immense saving in work and responsibilities these groups cause every year to the Government of such country.

Under the plan of co-operation this great saving to the Government would be increased by as many times as there are family groups in a co-operative undertaking. In a co-operative farm, for instance, consisting of its forty members, there would be on an average about thirty-five of these family groups. Counting the single men as well there would be in each co-operative farm of 1,000 acres a group not very far short of 200 persons. These well-nigh 200 persons forming what may be called a co-operative group ought not to and most probably would not give the Government any more trouble than does now a single family group. The manager of a co-operative group would take upon himself the responsibilities of all transactions between the members and their families and the Government, as if he were the head of only a family group. He is to do the same, be it remembered, between the members and the Land Committee of his county.

This deputing to the manager to do what each of the co-operating partners ought to be only too glad to be spared doing, would not in any way limit the freedom of thought or action of the latter. Nothing would be done by the manager that had not been talked over by all the members at one of the quarterly meetings. This particular deputing would, after all, form only one of the many kinds that would have to be done every year in the ordinary course of business connected with the farm, such as in buying implements, machinery, seeds, etc., and in selling its produce in the markets. In fact, it is this principle of delegation that would constitute one of the advantages in the working of large co-operative farms over small farms, the cultivators of which have to do each for himself what a delegate would do equally as well, in as short a space of time, for the whole of the forty members of a co-operative farm. However, on this matter workmen and labourers at any rate

have nothing to learn, since they well know from their Unions how necessary a part of co-operation is the principle of employing delegates to represent themselves. But all this neither the Government officials nor the Land Committees would be supposed to know anything about. They would only officially know the results of whatever deliberations the co-operators had come to at their meetings through the manager. This manager, it must not be forgotten, would be a man who had gone through all the classes of shareholders, and had consequently often joined in deputing former managers.

To fully appreciate the greatness of the aid which this grouping of nearly 200 individuals into one co-operative farm under one responsible head would give to the orderly government of the country, that portion of the plan respecting the part which owners of land are to play through their Land Committees, should be taken into account. Through the Land Committee of each county all the co-operative farms therein are to be grouped or federated together for the carrying out of certain objects already spoken of, all conducive to the efficient yet economical management of county affairs. Again, through the one Land Committee of each of the three kingdoms, all the co-operative farms of each county therein would, by the agency of the county Land Committees, be grouped together for certain purposes, all of an orderly nature, and all such as could be made use of by Government as a means, whereby it could reduce the taxation of the whole country, as well as of the agricultural interest, to a minimum.

What has been said of the advantages to be gained by the Government through the grouping of families into co-operative farms and the further grouping of these co-operative farms under the Land Committees is, to a certain extent, applicable to co-operative mines and factories, the latter through the agency of the companies already spoken of that are to correspond to the Land Committees for co-operative farms and mines.

So much for the assistance in the orderly and therefore efficient and economical government of the United Kingdom the English Government would obtain from the principles of co-operation being carried out on the plan proposed. But this Government rules over more than the two small islands comprising the three United Kingdoms. It governs, besides, a vast empire scattered over the face of the globe. Now, in the government of this vast empire co-operation on the plan here proposed, especially in regard to farming, would be of incalculable help to the English Government. For one thing, by its work, its responsibilities, and its anxieties being reduced at home by the plan to a minimum, as they would be, there would be more leisure and thought set at liberty to devote to the care of the dependencies.

As in the United Kingdom, so in the dependencies it would be in the grouping principle of the plan that the Government of England would get from it so much help, not only in the maintenance of order in these dependencies, but in their efficient yet economical government. It is, in fact, through the grouping and other advantages of the co-operative farms of the plan, that these dependencies are to do a great deal more than support themselves from their own resources. This grouping, be it remembered, is to be done not as in the United Kingdom, through the agency of Land Committees, but of a Land Department of State.

Let India be taken as an example of the help the Government would be likely to receive from the grouping part of the plan in its work of maintaining order through that immense country, of obtaining large surpluses in its annual budgets, and of promoting generally the prosperity and happiness of its more than 200 millions of people.

The members of the disintegrating school of politicians when they say, "Perish India!" do not of course wish all these millions to perish, but simply that the rule of England

over them should perish ; though, by the way, the former is not unlikely to be the result of the latter. The ostensible reason given by these men for this abandonment of India by their country is that it is far too unwieldy to govern. It is possible that this is the real reason, if one may judge from the eagerness of the same party that their country should retire from the occupation of Afghanistan, though its conquest has cost so many millions, rather than add the burden of governing a new country, with its millions of people, to that of the government of India, already, as they deem, much too unwieldy. How unwieldy the disintegrating school think the Government of India is already, they plainly make manifest by their wish to have it partitioned into six or more separate Governments.

If India is so extremely unwieldy to manage as it is made out to be by those wishing either to have it cut adrift from their country or to have it chopped up into several separate Governments, what is it that makes it so? It cannot be on account of its size, large as it is, for Ireland, which is even more difficult to manage, is not the fiftieth part the size of India. Neither can it be that India is too far off: for Ireland that is more difficult to manage is comparatively within a stone's throw from England. Yet, Ireland that is comparatively so small and so near requires in it a large army of picked English and Scotch regiments, a large constabulary force armed as soldiers, a Coercion Bill, an Arms Bill, and other means of repression to keep its people from breaking out into open rebellion.

The truth is, neither size nor distance from the mother-country has anything to do with it. What really makes both India and Ireland difficult to govern is the existence of small farms. They both prove the truthfulness of what has been said of the countries of small farms on the Continent that they can be governed only through the maintenance of an immense

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military or police force to coerce the discontent to which these small farms give rise. That the cultivators of the small farms of India are kept from breaking out into open rebellion with very much fewer troops in comparison with their numbers than are wanted to keep down the cultivators of the small farms in Ireland, Germany, France, etc., is partly owing to their not being allowed to have firearms of any kind, but mainly because they do not possess the franchise. Did they possess it, as do the cultivators of small farms in other countries, it would then be worth the while of agitators more ambitious than scrupulous to inflame their passions through a vilifying press against the Government of their country, and to organise their discontent so as to make it a constant menace to its capital and its institutions. Hitherto happily it has not been worth the while of such men.

In every country, the people of which are civilised enough to have a form of government even of the most rudimentary kind, there must be some sort of grouping, federation, or co-operation of individuals to carry it on. This co-operation has been found to be essential in the carrying on of even the loosest type of Liberty, Equality, Fraternity Governments in the most anarchical periods of their existence. Indeed, nothing that is beyond the power of an individual to do can be done without co-operation. Even those of the disintegrating school cannot put their theories into practice without co-operating for the purpose. Not even can that model of excellence of the same school, the owner of a small farm, work it without the co-operation of all the members of his family. He certainly could not express to any purpose his discontent at the little profit he is able to get out of it without co-operating with other small farmers equally discontented with himself to choose representatives to make war on the capital and the institutions of the country. The 600,000 small farmers of Ireland must have co-operated together to establish their Land League branches

over that country, and to send so many Home Rulers to Parliament.

As then there must be co-operation of some sort made use of in every undertaking of any magnitude, more especially of one on so large a scale as the government of a country, how much wiser would it be to use a form of co-operation that would greatly ease the work of such government than one that would do nothing but strew difficulties in its way. Of this latter kind is the co-operation produced by the discontent of cultivators of small farms, whether those be nominal owners or merely renters of such farms. This obstructive form of co-operation naturally throws much additional work and responsibility on the Government of the country in which it takes place. It forces the Government to take the able-bodied of the country from industrial pursuits in order that they should co-operate together as soldiers and policemen, and to complete the viciousness of the circle this co-operation of soldiers and policemen is done mainly to prevent the co-operating of discontented owners of labour to destroy the capital and the institutions of the country.

The co-operation, on the other hand, of owners of labour on large farms like that on the plan here proposed, by which they would be thoroughly contented, would be one for the sole purpose of carrying on an industrial undertaking, giving no trouble whatever to the Government, and putting it to no unnecessary expense. When there would be a co-operating together for no other object than to carry on industrial pursuits, in which capital and labour would be at one and not at variance, the Government would not have much else to do but to collect taxes. Even this work would be light, when a large portion of the capital of the country would not be heavily taxed for the maintenance of a large army and a large police force to preserve the rest from being destroyed.

It is this necessity to keep on a permanent footing a large

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repressive force, whether of soldiers or policemen in countries, in which owners of labour are discontented with the manner and amount of its remuneration that constitutes so many of the difficulties of their Government. It may be safely said that whatever financial difficulties they labour under proceed well-nigh, if not quite all of them, from this necessity.

To the above rule the Government of the United States can scarcely be said to be an exception, though that country has so small an army in proportion to its population. The financial difficulties, out of which that Government is only just beginning to emerge from once having a debt of an enormous magnitude, were caused by the necessity it was under to coerce the rebellion of nearly half the States. But what gave rise to this rebellion but labour discontented with the manner, if not the amount, of its remuneration. It was the labour in the form of slavery that provoked the hostility that existed for so many years between the Northern and Southern States, and which culminated in the gigantic Civil War. But the Government of that country has in store a far greater difficulty still that may some day grievously embarrass its finances, and this is the discontent, not of coloured owners of labour, but of white. White labourers are not only far more numerous in that country than coloured ones, but they live in the very midst of those, against whom it is to be feared they will before very long wage an internecine war that may cost to the country at large a sum even greater than the £600,000,000 spent by the Northern States alone in the four years Civil War carried on to free coloured labour from the stigma of slavery.

The great difficulty the Government of India has been meeting with has been in finding sufficient revenues to enable it to keep on foot a military and police force large enough to keep order among its people. So great a strain on its revenues does the Government find this to be, that to ease it it is actually obliged to ignore the great danger to the maintenance

of English rule in India consequent on the continued advance of the Russian dominions towards its north-western frontier.

How the very reverse of this would be the state of affairs in India under the regime of co-operative farms has been pointed out in the chapter on the subject. So far from the 24,000,000 of contented labouring partners of the assumed 600,000 co-operative farms therein wanting a large army of soldiers and policemen to keep them from breaking out into insurrection, they would, on the contrary, afford an immense volunteer force, from which the Government could always draw to repel the Cossack, Turcoman, and Affghan hordes Russia is destined sooner or later to bring against the north-western frontier of their country. The value of such a volunteer force would not be confined to numbers. The men, be it remembered, are to be drilled and manœuvred after every harvest. They would not, moreover, be the narrow-chested, spindle-shanked, half-starved, discontented sepoy such as are now taken from small farms, but the stalwart, well-fed, contented co-operating partners of large farms capable of coping with the men of fighting physique of Central Asia. As to the willingness of these co-operating labourers to fight in defence of their country the Government would have no more reason for doubt on that point than on their capacity. The books on Russia they would read in the clubhouse of their farms would tell them how very different would be their fate under the same rule as that, under which the miserable cultivators of the land in Russia live, from the contentedness they would themselves be enjoying under the ægis of their provident Land Department helped by the capital of English investors.

Such are some of the marvellous results in the way of help to the Government of India that co-operative farms would bring about. But co-operative farms would be powerless to do it, were it not that the co-operating partners in them were owners of labour contented with the manner and amount of its

remuneration. This would be the keynote of their success. By the plan under which the partners would co-operate, being such as to enable them to reap the fruits of their labour, it would be to their interest to have such plan carried out in all its completeness. As this could be done only by means of the Government acting through its Land Department and supported by the money of the investing public in England and India—not a shilling or a rupee of which would the co-operators ever be likely to get except through such a department—it stands to reason that it would be decidedly to the interest of the co-operators to give all the support they possibly could to the Government.

The Government and the co-operating labourers would, in fact, mutually help each other by keeping off certain classes of middlemen injurious to the interests of both. By its co-operation with capitalist investors the Land Department would help the labourers of co-operative farms to hinder middlemen usurers, and others from getting between themselves and the fruits of their labour. On the other hand, the co-operating labourers, by being made contented, would be far from wanting middlemen agitators to get between themselves and their Government, and this on very good grounds. They would know they would be much the greatest losers from reversing a state of things under which they would be highly prosperous as cultivators of the soil.

The co-operative farms would help the Government of India in another way than by not giving it unnecessary trouble and putting it to a large annual outlay in the maintenance of an army and police force. They would act the part towards it of 600,000 milch cows with distended udders. This they would do both directly and indirectly. Besides the vast revenues already spoken of, coming directly from the annual rents of these farms, there would be the annual ground-rents from the towns which the farms would bring into existence. To be

added to these sources of revenue would be the profits the Land Department would make from the traffic on its rail and tramways, by which the produce of the farms would be conveyed to home and foreign markets, and by which the products of the co-operative looms in England would be taken to the farms.

By reason, then, of labour employed in agriculture being fully contented in the manner and through the ways pointed out, it may be safely assumed that the 600,000 large farms of co-operation India could contain would not give anything like the trouble and vexation, to say nothing of the vast expense, to its Government that the 600,000 small farms of Ireland have been giving, and, it is to be feared, are still destined to give to the Government in England, though India is more than fifty times larger than Ireland. To account for this enormous difference in the effects of large and small farms in their influence on Governments many reasons might be brought forward, to go into which, however, would be only to go over again a great deal of what has been said in favour of the one and in condemnation of the other.

If the suggestion be carried out of having every co-operative farm connected by a tramway with a railway, and of having a railway extended into every district to allow of this being done, both of which ought to be done by the Land Department so as to be highly remunerative, the value of the aid to be given by large farms to the Government would be still further increased. There would then be no difficulty in laying down telegraphic wires between the district offices of the Land Department and every large farm within each district. As there would be telegraphic as well as railway communication between all these district offices and the central one of the Department, the central government of the country, wherever it may be, would be thereby put in immediate contact with every large farm throughout the country and through

the manager of that farm with every one of its co-operating members. Thus, by means of these large farms, their manager, and the Land Department, the Viceroy and his council would have the immediate touch—to use a half-military and half-sporting phrase—of every individual irrespective of sex and age more or less connected with the agriculture of the country. Considering that in the 600,000 large farms of India there would not when taken together be fewer than 120 millions of living beings, some idea may be gathered of the value of such an organisation in the economical government of the country. Its value would not be lessened by the fact that the twenty-four million co-operating members of these large farms would be thoroughly contented with both the manner and the amount of the remuneration of their labour.

If all this can be done in India, why, may one ask, could it not be done in the United Kingdom? If the assumed 600,000 large farms of that dependency could be brought every one of them into railway and telegraphic communication with its one Central Government, why could not the comparatively small number of the assumed 60,000 large farms of the United Kingdom be every one of them in telegraphic and railway communication with Downing Street? The large farms of co-operation would make it practicable in both countries, so that even the remotest of these farms could be brought under the immediate control of the Government as much as the nearest. The only difference would be in the substitution of Land Committees for a Land Department. Thus, if the Land Committees of the western counties of Ireland were to perform the part set them in the plan, the remotest large farm of co-operation in Kerry, Galway, or Donegal would be practically as much brought within the close touch of the Central Government in London as a farm of the same kind in one of the home counties. With the farm would be brought through its manager every co-operating member, and with him every one

of the family group, of which he is the head. All these members, be it remembered, are to be actual tillers of the soil contented with the manner and amount of the remuneration of their labour, and not exposed to have its fruits taken from them by middlemen, whether these be Gombeen usurers or Land League or Fenian agitators.

So great indeed is the help, it is anticipated, these large farms would give to the Government of India, that there would not then be the least need to divide it into six or more separate Governments as is recommended to be done by some of the disintegrating school. So far on the contrary from India being too large to be ruled by one Government and from one centre under the regime of large farms, it would be nearer the truth to say that the whole of South-Western Asia, from the Mediterranean and Black Seas to the Bay of Bengal, might be thus governed without very much difficulty, should the inhabitants of the districts in question ever wish to be absorbed within the same empire—a not improbable contingency when the results of the working of co-operative farms became known to them.

A Land Department performing the functions set it by the plan would be especially useful in helping to govern the nations of Asia and Africa. For one thing it would be the medium of investing with perfect safety the capital of civilised Europe in the civilisation of the people of both these regions. Again, both Asia and Africa are inhabited by peoples addicted, above all, to agricultural pursuits. The Land Department of the Government ruling over these regions, having the ownership and management of all the land therein, it would be its mission to see that no middleman hindered the labour employed in tilling it from reaping the fruits thereof, and so from being contented with the manner and amount of its remuneration. Thus the Land Department in the process of civilising the peoples of Asia and Africa would begin at

a point in civilisation that those of the most civilised nations in other parts of the world have not yet reached, and which the owners of labour in these countries are groping about to reach through Socialism, Communism, &c. The machinery that would be employed by the Land Department for effecting all this wonderful transformation in the natives of Asia and Africa would be large and not small farms.

But the large farms that would give content to the actual cultivators of the soil, whether in Asia, Africa, or the United Kingdom, would be those of co-operation on the plan proposed, or, at any rate, those based on the principles of such a plan. It is not every kind of large farm that would accomplish so much good. Large as the 500 acre farms of co-operation in India would be in comparison with the little plots the ryots now cultivate, they would be small compared with many of the present large farms in England in the occupation of employers of labour, and these latter have been doing anything but give content to the labour employed on them. The outcome of the failure of such farms to give content to the labour employed on them has been to throw very many of the occupiers thereof into bankruptcy, and to drive others to leave their farms to avoid it. So far this failure has not affected the Government of the country in a financial point of view beyond diminishing the revenue receipts, because the landowners have had to bear a great deal of the loss. On a great increase, however, in the number of the large farms of England that are being thrown out of cultivation, the Government must be ultimately a great loser. The troubles in store for the Government on account of the discontented labour on these large farms are not likely to come in their fulness till the owners thereof have received the franchise.

It has been suggested that the real and only cause of the failure of large farms in England has been the insufficiency of capital employed on them, and that this difficulty could be got

over by means of Joint Stock Companies, through which almost any amount of capital could be raised to put into the large farms of the companies. But Joint Stock Companies would no more get rid of the labour difficulty by getting rid of Labourers' Unions than single employers of labour have been able to. Indeed, for the reasons given elsewhere, the difficulties connected with labour are more likely to be increased under Joint Stock Companies.

In other quarters of the globe large farms have been to a certain extent failures on account of the discontent they have caused to the givers of labour employed thereon. In California, for instance, the owners of large farms have been meeting with so many difficulties in respect to the labour for working them of discontented Americans and emigrants from Europe, that they have been driven to have recourse to the employment of Chinese labour. As this competition of Chinese migratory labour has the effect of greatly increasing the discontent of owners of labour possessing the franchise, and wishing to get upon the land to till it as masters of their own labour, it must eventually become a source of disquietude, to say the least, to the State if not to the Federal Government, of which they have already had a foretaste in the riots of the Irish population of California under its leader Kearney.

It has again been put down to the system of large farms that dead-locks have occurred of late in the wheel of legislation in the Assemblies of Victoria, Australia. These large farms have not had the quality of bringing on to them in any great numbers tillers of the land contented with the manner and amount of the remuneration of their labour. They form, on the contrary, huge obstructions to the settlement of the districts further away from Melbourne and the other large towns. The result of these obstacles to the filling up of the country with settlers has been the dissatisfaction of those unable to get upon the land at all, to say nothing of being able to cultivate it as

masters of their own labour, and which from their possessing the franchise has become a source of embarrassment to those attempting to carry on its government.

No one can say with truth that the system of large farms in South Africa has been such as to give very much help to the Governments of the different colonies in that region in which such large farms exist. It is now more than 200 years since the country was first settled by the Dutch, and the relations between the Dutch farmers and the coloured natives are on no more satisfactory footing now than they were 200 years ago. During all this period the natives have never been allowed and certainly not encouraged to settle on the soil as masters of their own labour. Whenever they have made the attempt, they have had to obey, on some pretext or other, the summons from the Dutch farmers to move on, to allow of the absorption of more land for farms, or rather cattle-runs and sheep-walks on a large scale.

The colonies in South Africa have now been under the dominion of England for more than half a century, and during nearly all that time her Government may be said to have been waging war against the native tribes at the bidding of these encroaching owners of large farms. In these wars the people of England must have spent many millions sterling, and what good have they been effecting through this vast outlay? Have they benefited in any way the natives, who ought in strict justice to have been the first objects of their solicitude? Quite the contrary. They have helped the owners of large farms to exterminate the most of them, and those thus rendered more helpless not got rid of, they have caused to be brought more than ever under the uncontrolled and merciless grip of these owners of large farms. They have not even earned the gratitude of the owners of large farms, on whose account they have spent their millions. In spite of all their expenditure of money and lives, never was their hold on the colonies of South Africa more precarious than it is now.

The wars waged by England against the natives must, from first to last, have cost the country almost as many millions as would have covered no little part of South Africa under an efficient Land Department with co-operative farms, railways, tramways, and well-laid out towns, even by this time. Had this been done, the English Government would have been in a very different position from that in which it is now in regard to this dependency. Instead of having to sue for peace the rebellious owners of large farms, to avoid involving itself in financial straits by continuing the present war, it would be receiving very large annual revenues from its co-operative farms, railroads, &c. The greater part of these revenues it would be laying out again every year through its Land Department in settling more natives on co-operative farms and in making railroads and tramways for conveying the produce of these farms to markets, and in creating fresh markets by laying foundations for well-laid out towns. This would go on year after year till the whole of South Africa, from Cape Town to the Zambesi River, had been thus absorbed.

Perhaps the most unsatisfactory instance of all of large farms is that of the Boers in the Transvaal. This country, as large as France, is occupied, it appears, by the farms of only 10,000 Boer farmers. Imagine the land of France to be occupied by no more than 10,000 farmers. The Land Leaguers make it a subject of great reproach that there are only 10,000 landowners in Ireland, monopolising, as they say, all the land therein. Much as they do this, they somehow contrive to let more than five millions of people live in their country besides themselves. In the Transvaal, on the other hand, though more than ten times as large as Ireland, there are only five or six hundred thousand natives not in slavery besides the 10,000 owners of its land and their families. A result such as this, of large farms, can hardly be satisfactory to any but the 10,000 owners, and even as to these there must be

some alloy mixed with their satisfaction ; for they seem to be able to retain their monopoly of the land only by a free use of their rifles.

Owing to the mania the Boers of the Transvaal have for farms on a large scale, the agricultural population of their country cannot be increased without its area in a similar disproportionate manner being increased too. It is this necessity to be constantly increasing their territory to provide fresh openings for their younger sons, that is ever impelling them on to make war on the native tribes around. There can hardly be a doubt that the Zulus would ere this have in like manner been exterminated or driven northward, and their country turned into large farms, had not the well-disciplined battalions of Cetewayo proved too strong for the Boers.

The farms of these Boers in the Transvaal are said to average 8,000 acres. Now if this region were under a Land Department an area of 8,000 acres would be covered by 16 co-operative farms of 500 acres each. As each of these farms, if worked by the coloured natives, would contain forty members, and so a population altogether of nearly 200, there would be living on the 8,000 acres about 3,000 persons. More even than this. On every second Boer farm of 8,000 acres there would, under a Land Department, be a town, and each of these towns would contain more inhabitants than any single town now existing throughout the Transvaal except perhaps Pretoria. At present, in the 8,000 acres taken up by the one farm of a Boer, there are probably not more than fifty persons, including the family of the Boer and the slaves kidnapped as children in his raids upon neighbouring tribes.

It is not a little strange that those persons now wishing their country to retire from the Transvaal should be agitating for the introduction of a peasant proprietary into Ireland. The effect of the introduction of a peasant proprietary into Ireland

would be to sub-divide the farms that are now comparatively large for that country, into many small ones. Possibly the small farms in that country would be increased by such a subdivision from the present number of 600,000 to 1,000,000. Yet the Boers of the Transvaal, whose wishes are studied by the members of the disintegrating school at the expense of their country, were they to occupy Ireland with their large farms, would not find room in it for more than 1,500 of these farms. So great an instance of inconsistency would be past comprehension were it not reconcilable with the fact that a peasant proprietary would increase, by the number of farms to be augmented by such a tenure, the discontent that is even now causing that country to be connected to the British empire by the slenderest of ties.

It is evident that something more is wanted of farms than that they should be on a large scale. Unless large farms cause a large population to settle on the land to cultivate it thoroughly with profit to its actual cultivators, they afford no more help to the Government of the country in which they exist than do small farms, if as much. The fault of small farms is, as we have seen in this respect, that they bring much too large a population on the land to allow of its being contented with the fruits of its labour in the cultivation of this land. The large farms of co-operation, on the other hand, would hit the happy medium. They would bring a large population, yet not so large that, aided by the advantages of co-operation among themselves and with capitalists on favourable terms and in other ways through the agency of Land Committees or a Land Department, this population could not fail to get a very satisfactory remuneration by its labour. A system that would bring a large population to cultivate the land in such a way as to cause it to be contented, could not be otherwise than most helpful to a Government.

It has been seen that the great help the Government would

get from the large farms of co-operation would be due to the action in the United Kingdom of Land Committees and in the dependencies of a Land Department. It is to be through these two human agencies that the large farms of co-operation are to attract the capital of the investing public for the development of agriculture. The capital thus attracted would be devoted more or less directly to helping the Government, and so rendering its work of governing much easier. The very fact of this capital being the medium of giving content to all engaged in the actual tillage of the land would be of incalculable help to a Government. It must make a very great difference in the anxious cares of a Government whether it has nothing much to do but receive sufficiently ample revenues, whether in the shape of rents or taxes, or both, from thousands of the large farms of co-operation, or whether it cannot even collect taxes wanted sorely to keep down vast masses of labour discontented, as in the case of small farms, with its remuneration except by having recourse to the confiscation of the property of whole classes.

In the case of small farms no little of the capital of the country reaching the land under that system would do so in a way that would greatly increase the embarrassments of the Government, since it would reach it only through the agency of exacting money-lenders. Through this agency very much less—perhaps only one half of the capital—would be invested in the land of small farms than would be invested in the land of the large farms of co-operation through the agency of Land Committees or of a Land Department. What is meant by capital reaching or being invested in the land, is its profitable employment in its actual tillage. Accordingly, that of it which goes in paying a high rate of interest cannot be said to be invested in the land for its cultivation, nor can that part of it that is paid for its ownership, especially when the price is excessively high, as is so often the case with land bought by peasant owners. It

is doubtless owing in a great measure to so little of the capital of the country being invested in the land for its actual tillage, and to this little being so heavily weighted, that the cultivators of small farms have so great a difficulty in making a living off them, and that they display the discontent caused thereby in a manner so embarrassing to the Governments of countries of small farms.

So great indeed would be the help to the Government through co-operative farms, that every investor in the bonds of the Land Committees, or of a Land Department, would be justified in deeming himself well-nigh as great a helper of the Government in the maintenance of order, and in the preservation of the capital and the institutions of his country, as if he were in its employ. Indeed, so much would this be the case, that every investor for the development of co-operative farms would virtually render more aid to his Government for the above purposes than he could do as a soldier or policeman under a régime of small farms, were he to give his time and services gratuitously.

The investor for the development of large farms on the co-operative principle would have the satisfaction of being the means of giving content to the labour employed on the land through his capital, without running the least risk of losing any of it. On this latter point his mind may be set quite at rest. According to the plan, the labourers of a co-operative farm are to be capitalists themselves. Before these men are entitled to share any of the profits made every year in the co-operative undertaking, beyond the wages to be paid in advance, the interest on their capital would have to be paid, and before this interest is paid, the claims of the Land Committees or a Land Department, as the case may be, representing the bondholders, would have to be met. Thus the security the bondholders would have for their capital would rest on a double basis—the capital of the co-operators and their profits, and, underlying

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both these as an additional foundation, would be the labour of the co-operators given in no niggardly manner. As to what the profits of the co-operating labourers are likely to be, through the capital borrowed of the bondholders being laid out in such a way as to prevent the labour of these co-operators from being burdened with a high rate of interest in building tramways, and in India and Africa railways as well, to take their produce to markets, and in other ways, some idea has been already given elsewhere.

Concerning the upper foundation for the security of the bondholders' capital—the capital of the co-operating labourers, it is to be remembered that this particular capital in each of the farms in the United Kingdom is to amount to £5,000. This, for the 60,000 farms, would come altogether to £300,000,000. As, again, the capital of the co-operating labourers of each of the 600,000 farms assumed to be in India is to come to £1,000, the capital of the whole would be £600,000,000. With the two then added together, there would be a capital of nearly £1,000,000,000 invested by the actual tillers of the soil in working it alone. Thus nearly £1,000,000,000 would form a basis of security, on which the accumulated capital of English investors could be lent for the further development of the land in the United Kingdom and India in such a way as to greatly help the Governments of the two countries by giving content to the tillers of such land.

In the above computation both Africa and Australia are left out, as in both there is a much greater element of uncertainty. Both these immense regions are at present under the régime of owners of farms on a large scale. It is not at all improbable that these owners may some day find it greatly to their interests to form themselves into Land Committees, in the way it is here recommended that the owners of land in the United Kingdom should do, to promote the establishment among them of co-operative farms. On the other hand, if they

will not take the initiative in the matter, the power of doing so may be taken from them by the masses in virtue of their possession of the franchise. Possibly, when the rulers of the colonies in these regions, the representatives of the masses, hear of the beneficial working of co-operative farms in the United Kingdom, whereby the labour employed in agriculture has become contented, and when they find that on account of these farms they are not getting the pick of the agricultural population as immigrants into their country as heretofore, they may establish a Land Department on the plan here proposed, and through it appeal to English investors for their capital.

It may be pretty confidently stated that whichever of the two regions, Africa or Australia, should adopt the plan of co-operative farms through the agencies of either Land Committees of owners of the land or a Land Department would monopolise the greatest number of those annually emigrating from the country to live by agriculture. It would be hardly too much to say that the co-operative farms in either Africa or Australia would divert southward the greater part of the vast stream of emigrants from the United Kingdom and Germany that has been for now so many years going westward.

CHAPTER XXV.

CO-OPERATIVE FARMS AND ENGLAND'S FUTURE.

The British Empire and its Dismemberers—England as an Outlying State of a Republic—England's Future Policy as Ruler of Dependencies—British Empire one of Peace under Co-operation—The One Drawback Compensated—Careers for the Educated Classes in Dependencies—Russia and the Educated Classes Therein—Causes of the Aggressive Policy of Russia—Failure of Emperor's Act of Manumission—Connection of Russia with England's Future—England's Great Act towards Freeing Labour—Republics, and their Treatment of Coloured Labour.

THE subject of co-operative farms cannot be dismissed without a remark or two being made as to the effect they would be likely to have on the future of England.

Mention has already been made of a school of politicians who are seeking to dismember the British empire. Strange to say, the members of this school claim to form a portion of it. Various are the pretexts used by these men for such dismemberment; some on the score of morality, others on that of economy. Not less various seem to be their ways of proceeding. Some of them are satisfied with a general process of undermining, so that when the appointed time comes for the disintegration of the empire it may appear to fall through its own inherent weakness. There are, however, not a few of the same school to suit whose views this undermining is much too tedious a process. These impatient dissectors are not contented with having one outlying province lopped off in Asia, and another in Africa, and the people in other dependencies stirred up to seek a separation from the mother-country; they actually are agitating for a portion of the empire so near the centre of its Government as Ireland to be forthwith cut adrift. Obviously, if the members of the disintegrating school are

allowed to have their way, there can be but one outcome of their efforts to carry out their principles ; and this, to reduce the present magnificent empire of England, upon which so many Englishmen are proud to believe that the sun never sets, to one comparatively small island in the Atlantic Ocean.

It is much easier to fathom the tendencies of the actions of the disintegrating school than their motives. What can possibly actuate these men in their efforts to reduce the empire of which they are supposed to form a part to one island ?

Let us first of all take the pretext alleged by these men of immorality. It is immoral, say they, for England to rule over a people not unanimous in wishing for it. If such a plea as this were to hold good, there would be an end at once to all governments. It is not always a sufficient excuse for throwing off the rule of a government that the majority in a country are opposed to it. It is the business of a government to look after the interests of future generations, as well as of those already in existence. This is more especially the case of new countries extremely thinly peopled as still are most of the colonies of the British empire, and whose resources are hindered from being developed by those owners of land who keep the people from cultivating it for their own profit.

The plea of economy, on the other hand, may have a tinge of validity about it. Except on strategical grounds, for the defence of other portions, it is not easy to justify the retention of portions of the empire constantly entailing a large outlay, and in which there is no Land Department with its co-operative farms making its occupation highly remunerative to the empire at large. It is still less easy to justify the acquisition of new territories, costing many millions, above all when the cost of such acquisition and its subsequent maintenance is thrown upon the tax-payers of England. This, however, is an objection not against having territories, but against ruling them in such a manner as not to make them pay the cost of

their acquisition. Such an objection would be entirely removed by introducing into them a Land Department, with its two great accessories in its work of settling the people on the land to till it for their own profit, co-operative farms, and English capital.

Unfortunately, there is an extreme section of the disintegrating school whose objections to England having dependencies would be all the stronger the more prosperous they were. The dream of these men is that England should form one of a confederation of States under one republic, embracing all the present nationalities of Europe. They know that so long as England has dependencies her people would not be likely to fall in with an arrangement of this kind, and that the more flourishing are these dependencies the less likely are they to do so. The majority of Englishmen, on the other hand, who happily have the welfare of their country at heart, would know, from the history of the French Revolution, what becomes of rich dependencies on the proclamation of a republic in the mother-country. When everybody, under a regime of liberty, equality, and fraternity, is independent, such things as dependencies are entirely out of place; at all events, so must have thought the French colonists in St. Domingo when they revolted against France. Possibly the people of Algeria would have done the same in 1870, had they not been kept down by the presence among them of a large military force, and had their country not been so near to France.

Now who are these men that are constantly scheming to bring about, under one pretext or another, the dismemberment of the British empire? They are either already the representatives of discontented labour, or looking forward to be so. These men tell their dupes that the only chance they have of getting a more satisfactory remuneration for their labour is by the establishment of a republic in confederation with the other republics of Europe; the dismemberment of the empire being,

as we have seen, a condition precedent to the realisation of such a programme. The owners of this discontented labour know that their labour is dependent for its remuneration on wages ruled by the laws of supply and demand, whether the country is a monarchy or a republic, whether it has rich dependencies, or whether it has none. They, consequently, are prone to believe their representatives, when they tell them that a change from one to the other would effect an improvement in their condition.

Even if these representatives knew how to make labour contented, it would not be to their interest to do so. They accordingly play a safe game when they agitate for the break up of the empire of which they are supposed to constitute a part. Perhaps no men in the empire would less feel the loss of such a break-up. As a rule they have no labour of their own to be displaced, and no capital to lose by the convulsions which such a loss would create. Even in respect to statesmanship, the only commodity these men profess to have, none of them receive anything like sufficient training to fit them to take part in the rule of an extensive empire. Besides, as most of them have obtained their seats in Parliament through promises impossible to be fulfilled, and statements to be verified, they are constantly under the fear of losing them by the return of others pursuing the same kind of tactics, but to a still greater extent, by which they have been able to supplant their predecessors. Thus, from the very nature of their position, these representatives of discontented labour are rendered incapable of looking after the interests of the millions comprised in a vast empire like that of the British. It is no wonder, then, that these men are prepared to play fast and loose with such interests, rather than endanger their own seats in Parliament.

To most of the other classes in the empire its break-up would be an irreparable loss. In fact by such a break-up

England would lose everything and gain absolutely nothing. Let us try to realise what her position would be as a separate State under the supposed republic. But, before a transformation so humiliating in its results as this could take place, it is necessary to assume that she had been brought into a fit condition for it by losing all her dependencies. But, a revolution having such results would not be brought about without the previous loss of nearly all her capital and a very large portion of her population, leaving out of account the loss of all her institutions, through which she had arrived at her present high pitch of prosperity.

With, then, most of her capital and population gone, England would begin her new career of one of the States of the new European Republic. With her dependencies gone too, her power would be confined within the sea girding the shores of the island. Even this is only on the assumption that Scotland had not set up against her as a separate State. Certainly in the circumstances Ireland would be beyond her jurisdiction. Thus circumscribed in size she would be one of the smallest of the States, and even the Channel tunnel would not prevent her from being one of the most outlying of them. The smallness, remoteness, and isolation of her territory would of themselves reduce her influence among the confederated States to the very lowest point. They would be sure to prevent London from forming the capital of the new republic. England would in fact hold a position among the States of the supposed European republic not unlike that Florida holds in the American. Thus all the advantages she now possesses as an island thrust out, as it were, into mid-ocean, and which have been contributing so much to her greatness through her dependencies, would turn out to her detriment, when she has become only an outlying State of the continental republic.

Now, what renders it possible to take place all this disintegration of the British Empire, involving, as it most certainly

would do, the loss of hundreds of millions of capital, very probably millions of lives, and without question all its dependencies, with all their capacities for producing wealth through a Land Department and its co-operative farms, etc. ? It is the existence of labour discontented with the manner and amount of its remuneration and the privilege given to the owners of this discontented labour to send representatives to Parliament, setting more value on furthering their own interests and crotchets than the integrity of the Empire.

It behoves then English capitalists wishing to avert the break-up of the British Empire and the many deplorable consequences thereof to join in giving content to the owners of labour so as to disincline them to send representatives to Parliament to agitate for such break-up. When that is done, the privilege granted by the constitution to exercise the franchise cannot be too widely extended. It may be safely assumed that there would be no class in the empire wishing more for its preservation than the owners of labour made contented. How this content is to be brought about, it has been all along the object of this work to point out. In the debate the other day, on Lord Lytton's motion for the retention of Candahar, Earl Beaconsfield said that the key of India is to be found in England. He never said a truer word, but not altogether in the sense in which presumably he meant it to be taken. The key to the retention not of Candahar only, but of all India, and not of India only, but of all the other dependencies of the British Empire, lies in the owners of capital in England co-operating together in such a way as to give content to the owners of labour.

The policy of England in regard to her dependencies is not to acquire fresh ones except on strategical grounds for the defence of those she already possesses, till at any rate these latter have been filled up with co-operative farms, railroads, towns, etc., through a Land Department. It was only for the

defence of India that the two Afghan wars could have been justified, and for the defence of Natal the Zulu war. It was unfortunate that the necessity for these wars ever arose, and it would not have arisen, if India and Natal had been under a Land Department performing all the functions herein set it. Having the aid of such a department, neither the Government of India nor that of Natal would have been under compulsion to press on the English Government the urgency of undertaking a policy of aggression as a means of defence. The Government of India would have felt secure in its reliance on the immense volunteer force already spoken of to be developed by the co-operative farms. In the case of Natal, as the population would be allowed to settle only on the land of the co-operative farms annually got ready for it by the Land Department, there would be no earth-hungering land speculators constantly threatening to encroach on the territories of neighbours, thereby putting in danger the safety of the colony through a war of retaliation. Thus by means of co-operative farms the dependencies of the British Empire would be far less likely to provoke an invasion into them by a neighbouring people, and would be rendered many times more capable of resisting an unprovoked one.

It does not follow from this that the British Empire need be ultimately restricted to its present dimensions. It is only meant that before advancing further, it should remain stationary till the land in all its dependencies will have been taken up with co-operative farms. Long, however, before this time will have arrived, the people of the neighbouring territories, it is anticipated, will have importuned to be incorporated within the British Empire, cognisant as they would be of the prosperity the owners of labour engaged in tilling the land therein would be enjoying under the system of co-operative farms.

Thus through a Land Department and its co-operative farms the British Empire, and for the matter of that any other

empire employing the same means, could eventually people with most prosperous agriculturists all the waste places of the earth, without being under the necessity of exterminating beforehand their inhabitants, either by the speedy process of shooting them down, or by the slower one of demoralising them with firewater. Considering that the half of this globe even yet is not settled on by civilised peoples, that under the system of co-operative farms its land would be made far more productive than under any other, that consequently it would bear a much larger proportion of population upon it, and that the wealth resulting from this greater production of the land is never likely to be destroyed through the discontent of labour engaged in tilling the land, it can hardly be an exaggeration to predict that the system of co-operative farms would be by far the best solution of the Malthusian problem. The only other solutions are those that have been ruling for thousands of years, and which the Rev. Mr. Malthus, in drawing some of his inferences, could not have taken sufficiently into account. These are wars or starvation and other preventable diseases, by which the peoples of this globe have been brought down in number to the capacity for feeding them of the earth not cultivated on a co-operative system.

The only drawback to this peaceful method of retaining and ultimately extending the dominions of the British Empire would be that it would close up some of the present outlets to the educated classes for employment as officers in the army. As a counterpoise to this the Land Department would open out to the educated classes careers that might be made quite as honourable, though attended with less danger. Indeed, the Department would, in one sense, be a war department, since it would be making constant war on wild Nature to bring her under subjection, so that she should be compelled to give up the land over which she has been dominating for centuries, with a view to its being brought into a condition for its cultivation

by means of co-operative farms. For carrying on such a war, the Land Department would want educated men to command its battalions of navvies, and those officers who had been showing ability and zeal in their work of laying foundations for the civilisation of the natives, and providing for them the means of obtaining a sufficient remuneration for their labour in tilling the land, should be rewarded by pensions and K.C.B.'s as much as if they had been displaying the same amount of ability and zeal in a war for their extermination. Surely the work of the engineers of the Land Department, in laying down railways, tramways, in making bridges, wells, tanks, etc., and in laying out the co-operative farms and the foundations for towns, would be as interesting, and afford as great an opportunity for proving the possession of scientific attainments as in constructing or blowing up works of defence.

The work, however, of the educated officers of the Land Department of the dependencies in its war against Nature, would differ in this respect from that of the educated officers of the real war department of other countries in its war against men. These latter, in doing their work, destroy both capital and lives, or, in other words, labour. The work of the former, on the other hand, is to invest both capital and labour in a most productive manner. The effect of this constant re-investment of both capital and labour so productively would be to create every year many new openings in other walks for men educated at the universities. The more farms, the more lines of railway, and the more towns are rendered available for the people of the country to make use of, the more educated men must the Land Department employ to look after their management and to collect the revenues to be derived therefrom.

The educated officials of the Land Department would be few in number in comparison with the educated men the co-operative farms would be the means of attracting to the towns, and who would have no connection whatever with the

Department. The most numerous, perhaps, of these would be those engaged in educating the children of the co-operative farms around. If, as suggested, every one of these farms, wherever at all practicable, be connected with a town by a tramway common to several of them, the children could be taken to and from school in the town in cars, drawn by horses, or propelled by an electric battery, or some other inexpensive mode of propulsion. Thus by means of these tramways the members of the co-operative farms and their belongings would have all the advantages of living in towns, though carrying on their farming business some distance off.

It must, however, be acknowledged that the field for medical men and lawyers would not be so extensive in these towns as in towns in countries without a Land Department, because in the case of the former the towns having been laid out on hygienic principles by the engineers of the department would be healthy, and in the case of lawyers, there would be no proprietors of small farms in a constant struggle with financial difficulties leading to the many openings for the legal and other charges of the "hedge lawyers" incident to that system of land tenure. There would, however, be in each town a legal practice for a few respectable solicitors, for although the Land Department would hold all the land of the towns to allow of its laying out with the ground-rents therefrom foundations for new towns, it would possess none of the houses and the other kinds of property therein. But, in respect to both medical men and lawyers, it must be borne in mind that though there would be fewer openings in each town of a Land Department for both than in towns of other countries, yet there would be many more of these towns, and whatever openings there would be in them would be every one so much gain. Without a Land Department there would be in some regions no towns at all in which to have openings for an honourable career in either of these professions. In such the sites of the towns would

be roamed over by wild animals, having no occasion for either.

If in the towns of a Land Department there would probably be fewer openings for medical men and lawyers, there would not be likely to be any fewer for the ministers of religion. It may be safely predicted of the members of co-operative farms that they would form a religious community. They would certainly have occasion to thank God for the many benefits they would be enjoying through a system of co-operative farms, by which for one thing the fruits of their labour would not be appropriated by others. These farms would be especially suitable to allow of the Sunday being kept holy. The work absolutely necessary to be done on a Sunday, such as feeding, and otherwise attending to the animals, could be done by one-fourth of the members, thus leaving three-fourths available to attend religious services, and to refresh their minds by reading. By taking his turn in doing the indispensable farm-work of a Sunday, each member of a co-operative farm would have three Sundays a month entirely free for the performance of his religious duties, and not be compelled, as is the peasant proprietor, to toil every Sunday almost as much as on week-days. Should the Land Department construct tramways as recommended, to connect all the farms with towns, there would be no need for churches any more than for schools anywhere but in the towns.

It is to be hoped that what has been suggested here, about the wisdom of constantly finding new openings for the educated classes, will some day come under the notice of the Emperor of Russia. Most of the Nihilist conspirators are, it appears, educated men, having been connected, as professors or students, with the Universities of that country. Both Risakoff and Pyacheff, the miscreants who threw bombs at the late Emperor, one of which caused his death, are said to be of this class. One is led to think from this that, had there been

openings for the young men brought up at the Universities in some professional career other than that in the army, so that they might have settled down therein, it is more than probable that no attempts would have been made on the Emperor's life. The Nihilists have all along owned that they were seeking his life because it embodied a principle hateful to themselves, and which they were bent on destroying. May not what has just been stated have had something to do with this principle?

The unfortunate position Russia seems to be placed in is that in it facilities have been provided for educating its youths in universities out of all proportion to the outlets, in a civil career, by which the students could gain an honourable subsistence in professions congenial to their tastes as educated men. That this should be the case in Russia is all the less excusable, since no country in the world has so many opportunities for affording fresh outlets. No country has territories so extensive, so little populous in proportion to their extent, and the land of which is so capable of being made fertile for maintaining a large population. Had a Land Department, with its co-operative farms, been instituted, and had the hundreds of millions borrowed of the investors of other nations been spent through this department, instead of being spent through a War Department, that vast empire would be wearing a very different aspect from what it is now doing. For one thing, there would then be no Nihilist students dissatisfied at the prospect of nothing but a blank future before them, and laying the blame of such a state of things on the reigning head of the empire, and banded together to compass his death.

Much as would the continual opening out of careers in the professions for the educated classes of Russia allay the discontent of the numerous students yearly turned out of the Universities, there would always be a considerable body of them remaining dissatisfied so long as there would be no career open to them in politics. But these are the very men

whom it is the policy of every Emperor of Russia who sets any value on his life to conciliate. These are the men who, relying on a belief in their oratorical powers, aim at reaching the highest positions in the State. For such men an ordinary professional career has no charm. But the only chance such men have of emerging from their obscurity in a country having representative institutions is by posing as a representative of discontented labour. If there is no discontented labour to represent—as would be the case under a form of co-operation, by which labour would not be deprived of its earnings—the ambitious men wishing to represent it in Parliament would be no nearer attaining their object than as if there were no representative institutions at all in the country. But though it would make no difference to these men whether representative institutions under such a condition existed or not, it would make all the difference to the Emperor of Russia. The fault would not lie with him for not granting representative institutions, but with the millions of electors for having no grievances to be redressed. The Emperor would then cease to represent a principle odious to professors and students of Universities, become Nihilists from having no outlet in a political career open to them. It would be represented instead by millions of electors, too numerous to be killed off by bombs.

Were the Emperor of Russia to encourage in his dominions the system of co-operation in the three branches of industry—farming, mining, and manufacturing—on the plan here suggested, he would find that he could grant representative institutions to his subjects on the most liberal basis, without the least danger to his life, or to the stability of his throne, or to the capital and other institutions of his country. The owners of labour thus made contented, would take good care to send as representatives to Parliament none but those prepared to uphold the state of things whereby they had been made contented. The present horror of the Emperor of

Russia at granting a Constitution to his subjects could not be greater than would be the horror of the owners of labour in his empire, made contented through co-operation, at being represented by a Rochefort or, perhaps, a Gambetta.

The late Emperor has been greatly lauded for having manumitted several millions of his subjects from serfdom. So far as his motives were concerned, there is no doubt he fully deserved all the praise bestowed on him for the noble act. Unfortunately, the results have shown how little has been the success that has attended it. It is now more than twenty years since this act of manumission took place; yet the condition of things in Russia is now no further removed from anarchy than it was before. A most grievous mistake was made in separating the interests of the newly-emancipated serfs from those of their former masters. The two ought to have gone on co-operating together, only on totally different principles. The act of manumission ought to have been confined to bringing over the minds of the masters to treat their serfs in this much nearer relationship of equality for carrying on the cultivation of the land. Had this been done, the two would have been in a similar position to that recommended to be brought about in England between the owners of land and farm labourers. It is true that in England the farm labourers have for centuries ceased to be serfs to the owners of land; but whether they have to the employer of labour—farmer—is not by any means so certain.

The mistake made by the Emperor of Russia was something like that which would be made by a Ministry in this country on introducing into it a peasant proprietary, and the same result would follow—anarchy, founded on the discontent of the cultivators. The effect of the well-meant though ill-advised manner of emancipation has not been to improve the condition of the cultivators of the Russian soil, for never were they worse off than now. Though the empire is naturally so fertile, and

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though there are so few people in it in proportion to its size, yet starvation or disease, consequent on privations, is the normal condition of the tillers of the soil in more than half its provinces. Besides throwing the land out of cultivation, the emancipation seems to have had another effect. This has been to put a greater number of men at the disposal of the Emperor for filling up the battalions employed in his campaigns of conquest in Europe and Asia.

One more bad effect the mode of emancipation adopted by the late Emperor has had, has been to drive the landowners into the army for an occupation. Had the owners of land been encouraged by the Government to form Land Committees, instead of being divorced from the land as they were by the act, they would not only have continued to live on their estates, but they would have invested their surplus incomes in helping their enfranchised serfs to work the land on the new principles of co-operation. These men, on the other hand, would not have been left destitute of capital and sympathetic counsel, and so in the helpless condition they were in when deserted by their former masters. The two classes, in their new relationship, would have co-operated together in such a way as to make the land of their country most productive, thereby benefiting the whole community as well as themselves. Instead of such a result taking place, the owners of land have been seeking a fresh career in the army; the emancipated serfs have, in their own persons, been providing them with soldiers to command; and the Government has had to enter upon an extensive career of conquest to give employment to both. Furthermore, the capital of the empire that has been spent, in an economical point of view so unproductively, in these wars of conquest, could have set going thousands of co-operative farms, if made over for the purpose to the Land Committee in European and a Land Department in Asiatic Russia.

It may be asked, What has all this to do with the future of

England? Much every way, so long as both Russia and England are great Asiatic powers. While these lines are being penned, Mr. Stanhope's motion in the House of Commons, respecting the retention of Candahar by England is being debated. Had not the late Emperor made the great mistake of emancipating the serfs in the way he did, by which both owners of land and the newly-emancipated serfs have been forced into the army for an occupation, it is most probable there would have been no conquests of Khiva, Bokhara, Tashkend, Turcomania, and fears on the part of the Indian Government of a further conquest by Russia of Afghanistan. There would consequently have been no occasion for the invasion of Afghanistan by English forces in obedience to such fears. The nearly £20,000,000 spent in carrying out this invasion would thus have been saved to the Indian and English exchequers. It is this forcing into the army the population that ought to be co-operating together in the cultivation of the land that makes the unceasingly onward advances of Russian conquest towards the frontier of India so threatening to the continued occupation of that dependency by England. These repeated advances of his armies the late Emperor seemed utterly powerless to check, and it is to be feared the present Emperor will, for the same reason, be equally as powerless. In truth, there is only one way of checking these advances, and that is to keep the materials for making both officers and privates on the land to cultivate it in co-operation through Land Committees.

If the Emperor Alexander III. could but be induced to establish co-operative farms on the plan here proposed, there is no reason why England and Russia should not co-operate together for the benefit of each other as rulers of provinces in Asia. As these farms would absorb the greater part of the population of Russia in the tillage of its land, that nation would cease to be aggressive at the expense of English

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interests in that region. In fact, through these farms the reverse process would take place of that, which, as has been shown, has been making it aggressive. The co-operative farms would, moreover, absorb a great deal of the capital of the empire, as well as of the human material, for making officers and men. They would thus divert this capital, so far as a productive return is concerned, from being thrown away in the maintenance of an immense army and police force for carrying on aggressive wars or carrying out repressive measures against discontented owners of labour.

When co-operative farms will have been established in India, England will herself cease to be an aggressive power in Asia. She will then, for the reasons given elsewhere, feel so secure in the hold of her dependency against hostile influences from outside, that she will no longer be under an obligation to pursue her old tactics of defence by absorbing the territories of threatening neighbours.

On the supposition that Russia wishes to become a civilised power, and its Government to look after the interests of other classes than those of the army, that country would gain far more by allowing England to hold her dependency of India in peace than by attempting to oust her out of it. It must be by this time pretty obvious to most Russians that their policy of aggression, even only on their way towards India, as a substitute for developing the resources of the territories still in their possession, has not had much effect in appeasing discontent at head-quarters. If they had not spent a single rouble for carrying on aggressive wars, instead of the hundreds of millions they must have been doing during the last few years, they could hardly have been overtaken with a greater calamity than they have met with in the assassination of their beloved Emperor. There can, indeed, hardly be a doubt that these wars of aggression have greatly intensified, if they have not actually originated, the dissatisfaction at

the seats of Government, as indicated by the Nihilist conspiracy.

Is it not time that England and Russia should lay aside their jealousy of one another, and co-operate together to develop the natural resources, and civilise the millions of inhabitants of that immense region of the globe, in which they each have so large a stake. Were Russia to allow England to undertake the task of developing the natural resources of Asiatic Turkey and Persia, she would be as great a gainer thereby as England. England could do it only through a Land Department with its co-operative farms and English capital. But these mean a thorough intersection of the two countries with railways leading from the confines of Russia in the North to the southern seas and ocean. Over these railways could the produce of the co-operative farms in Russian territory be taken to the seaboard on the Mediterranean or the Indian ocean just as profitably to the Russians as if they had built the railways themselves. It must not be forgotten that under a system of co-operative farms in the dependencies of England, there is to be, for the reasons already given, no levying of duties, so that the produce of Russia would pass through them exempt from duty. Thus by the co-operation of Russia and England the natural resources of the greater part of Asia could be developed in a marvellously profitable manner, and this, too, not as was the wealth of Mexico and Peru by the Spaniards, but for the benefit mainly of the actual tillers of the soil in this immense region.

An amicable arrangement of the above kind between the two nations, together with the working of co-operative farms in the territories of each, would do away with the necessity each is now under, from the absence of such an arrangement, of maintaining a large army. The capital and labour thus diverted from a non-productive to a most productive expenditure would, beyond all question, increase the wealth of Northern

and Central, as well as South-Western, Asia to a marvellous extent. Any attempt to find a medium course between the harmonious one just indicated and a war of extermination between the two countries would, it is to be feared, only end by the two ultimately drifting into the latter.

In their present condition both Asiatic Turkey and Persia are hindrances to the development of the resources of two-thirds of Asia, inasmuch as they both lie in the direct course between the realised wealth and civilisation of the West and the poverty or undeveloped wealth and barbarism of the East. How the present rulers are to be amicably set aside, to allow of the development of these regions, is much too large a question to be disposed of here, and may be discussed at some future time in a pamphlet. It suffices now to say that if any difficulty at all insuperable had been anticipated on this score, the proposal would never have been suggested. Russia could not possibly develop the resources of these regions in the way England could with comparative ease, through the agencies just mentioned. The territories Russia already holds in Asia would take her several centuries to develop in the same way, and this with all the immense help England could give her in the task by means of her railways in the regions spoken of, and in other ways. The land of Northern and Central Asia, farmed on the co-operative principle here laid down, and with outlets to the seaboard through English territories, would be many times more valuable to Russia than could possibly be the land of the whole of Asia, were it in no better condition than that in which is at present the land now within its dominions.

Englishmen, whose forefathers have taken part, by many great sacrifices of money and life, in building up their vast empire, have now to ask themselves whether they are prepared to witness its disintegration, till it has been reduced to within the compass of one comparatively small island, and this an

outlying dependency of a Continental republic. To voluntarily place themselves in a condition of dependency on a supreme Government on the continent of Europe would be for them to revert to the position their ancestors held under the rule of ancient Rome. Such a position would surely not be a sufficient compensation for all the loss of capital and lives so great a change would most certainly involve. In addition to these losses, they would still have confronting them the cause of all their misfortunes—labour discontented with the manner and amount of its remuneration. As shown in the cases of France and the United States, republics are an immensely long way off from being earthly paradises, so long as labour in them is discontented.

Another reason why Englishmen should co-operate together to maintain in all its integrity the vast empire to which they have the good fortune to belong, is that they would thereby have the opportunity of setting a prominent example to all countries of putting the climax to a more satisfactory relationship between capital and labour. They took the initiatory step in this noble work by setting coloured labour free from its personal dependence on the capricious acts of white capitalists. It now rests with them to complete the work then begun, by freeing labour, white as well as coloured, from the utter helplessness in which it has been placed under what is called its freedom of contract with capital. It is more than probable that had not England, by reason of her vast dependencies, been in the foremost rank of powerful nations, the example set by her of making free the labour of the coloured population under her rule would not have been followed, as it has been, by other nations. As, fortunately, the members of the disintegrating school have not yet had the power to break up the position of influence among nations then and still held by her, it may be assumed that her example would be equally as readily followed by other nations of putting the relation of capital and

labour on a more amicable and workable footing through co-operation than has hitherto been the case.

The emancipation of coloured labour from its dependence on slaveowners, like the emancipation of serfs from their dependence on the landowners of the middle ages, was after all but a rudimentary step in the more satisfactory adjustment of the relationship between capital and labour that must ultimately prevail. It merely gave the negroes thus emancipated the power to dispose of their labour on the best terms they could get for it. But, this, in their helpless state, was but to expose them to fall under a slavery scarcely less galling than that of their former masters, namely, the slavery of the supply of and demand for labour of political economy or employers. Hence has arisen the doubt whether the present condition of the coloured owners of labour under white employers is after all more favourable to them than it was previous to their emancipation.

It is now close upon fifty years since this emancipation took place, and what has been the effect of it upon the owners of coloured labour in the West Indian dependencies of England? Take Jamaica as an example. Than this island there could not have been a more favourable field for testing the results of the measure. It is endowed by nature with every requisite for making a people highly prosperous, and as a consequence to become as civilised as the people of any other country. But what is the real state of the coloured owners of labour in Jamaica? In regard to both prosperity and civilisation they may be said to be not very much better off than were their forefathers in Africa. The modes of communication over the island are very little, if at all, less primitive than they were a century ago. The amount of land produce exported from the island every year is trifling in comparison with what it ought to be, if be taken into account the many advantages the people enjoy for trading with all the world.

Granted that all the coloured labour of Jamaica is not in the employ of white capitalists. But what is not so is employed in cultivating small farms. It is no doubt owing to these small farms that the land of Jamaica produces so little in comparison with its capacity for production. More than half the exports of the island consists of sugar and rum, both of which are the manufactured products of white capitalists employing coloured labour. What the cultivators of small farms produce must therefore be very little indeed, and that this is so is proved by the smallness of the annual imports into as well as the exports from the island. This smallness of production may arise from either of these two causes. Either these owners of small farms are not able to raise any capital at all for working their farms more productively, or if they are able to get any it is only at a rate of interest too high to allow of their using the borrowed capital to advantage. As this is the case with small farms everywhere else, it is not unlikely to be so in Jamaica.

Some writers have attributed the little production of the small farms in Jamaica, owned by the coloured population, partly to the extraordinary richness of the land, and partly to the fewness of the wants of the cultivators. Thus, between the two, they go on to say, the land produces enough to supply these scanty wants with the labour expended on its cultivation of only two days in the week. Even supposing these to be the true causes of the smallness of production, what do they do else than prove all that has been alleged in a former chapter against small farms—that their tendency is to materialise, if not barbarise, rather than civilise their owners; and that so naturally fertile is the land of Jamaica that, even with the many drawbacks incident to a peasant proprietary, and a want of capital, the exports from the island ought to be many times larger? There could be no greater condemnation of the system of small farms than that the owners and cultivators of

them live—as a rule they do—down to the lowest level of civilisation possible in a civilised country. Under a system of small farms, through which the owners are shut out from all the healthy emulation provoked by living together in one community, and by a desire to reach a continuous gradation of higher positions in this community, till the highest of all is reached—that of manager of the whole—nothing whatever is gained by the land being unusually fertile and in the tropics. All these owners care for is, apparently, but little more than a mere subsistence; and if that can be obtained by the work of but one day in the week, it seems quite enough to satisfy their wants and their highest aspirations.

How different would be likely to be the wants and aims of the owners of coloured labour in the co-operative farms of a Land Department. The civilising effect of these farms on the natives would be such as to make them exert themselves to the utmost—and this not one, but every day in the week but Sunday—however fertile may be their land, and however large may be their profits from working it in co-operation. They would, first of all, have to arouse themselves to get together the capital requisite to enable them to enter into the partnership of a co-operative farm. On becoming a member, they would find a succession of spurs to their exertion in having to find the capital with which to buy the shares needed to allow of their passing from one class of shareholders to another, till, by ultimately reaching the first class, they become in turn eligible for the post of manager. Besides these incentives to work there would be the products of a civilised existence, which they would be continuously under a temptation to buy, in the shape of comforts, if not luxuries, procurable at the attractive shops in the towns—which are to be separated from the co-operative farms, be it remembered, even in the case of the farthest by only a few miles of rail or tramway.

It may be safely assumed that when Africa and India have

been detached from England, her people would lose all opportunity of placing the labour of these regions on the satisfactory footing here indicated. Whether India falls under the dominion of Russia, or under a misrule of anarchy produced by the contention of chiefs for the mastery, the condition of the millions engaged in the tillage of its land would be worse even than it is now. On the retirement, again, of England from Africa, most of the natives would be killed off till they were reduced to the number that might, without danger to their Dutch masters, be brought into a condition of service not far off from slavery. This would be none the less the case if there should be formed in South Africa one vast republic of confederated States, made up mainly of and ruled over by Dutchmen. We know only too well the kind of treatment the coloured races have been receiving from the Boer farmers, even when under the rule of England. What it would be when this rule had been entirely done away with, it sends a thrill of horror through one to think of.

Were these dependencies, on the other hand, retained by England, and managed in the way here suggested, each through its Land Department and co-operative farms, she would, in the course of time, probably have in the two a population of not far short of 500 millions, of whom the greater part by far would be coloured natives. Now, most of these would be engaged in the tillage of the land. For men in that calling they would be, as we have seen, exceedingly prosperous, and, therefore, thoroughly contented with the manner and amount of the remuneration of their labour. Surely this ought to be a sufficient justification for the retention of those regions as dependencies of their country, especially in the eyes of all professing to have the welfare of their coloured fellow-creatures at heart, as, strange to say, do those seeking to break up the empire, by the maintenance of which alone in its integrity could the vast and glorious work just spoken of be accomplished.

It is the opinion of the disintegrating school that, by leaving these regions to themselves, they would develop into republics, in which the inhabitants would have free scope to prove their fitness to survive through the working of representative institutions. How the coloured natives of the soil of a republic of white men have fared under the working out of this survival of the fittest theory, we know from the fate of the Red Indians, that once occupied the regions now ruled over by the North American Republic. On this point it is noteworthy that the republicans of North America did not manumit their four millions of coloured slaves till very many years after the British empire had set the example, and other slave-holding nations not republican had followed it.

The native races of India are never likely to enjoy the blessings resulting from the possession of representative institutions through England's leaving them to themselves. If Russia rules the country, her rule over the natives would be a military despotism far more oppressive than the one they are now under; and if they are ruled by their own Rajahs, the probability of the tillers of the land having the suffrage, and the privilege of sending representatives to Parliament to make known their grievances, would be still more remote; for these Rajahs would not be accessible to be acted upon to grant them by the proceedings of the revolutionary societies of Europe.

It is more than probable that, when England has withdrawn from Africa her sovereignty and then her suzerainty, representative institutions will exist in those parts, in which Englishmen are in the ascendancy, for such institutions exist there already, and will most likely continue to do so. But what about the coloured natives? Are the interests of these natives represented in the Houses of Assembly in the English colonies of Africa in any proportion to their numbers? Are they at all, and if so, are they represented by coloured men? In the Orange River and Transvaal the coloured natives have most certainly

no suffrage. What is more, he would be a bold man who should propose in the House of Assembly of either of these Republics that they should have their interests represented therein. The interests of the coloured natives would be about as much represented in the Parliaments of the Republics, either Dutch or English, of Africa on the retirement of England's rule over that dependency, as were the interests of the negroes in the Parliaments of the Southern States before the great civil war, which brought about their emancipation.

Now, were the dependencies of India and Africa to continue portions of the British empire under the new conditions of a Land Department and co-operative farms, the most liberal of constitutional Governments could be granted them. Every coloured member of a co-operative farm could have the franchise, and as these would be the actual tillers of the soil, corresponding to the farm-labourers of England, the very lowest class connected with the tillage of the land would be included. These coloured labourers would, moreover, be allowed to send gentlemen of colour to the Parliament, whether at Calcutta or Cape Town, in which their interests would be represented. The Government of each dependency could safely grant a constitution, giving the franchise to every one engaged in the cultivation of the land, since among them would be no dissatisfaction. At any rate, they would be suffering from no grievance, the removal of which would involve the destruction of the capital of the dependency. The only possible grievance that they could have would be that the land, even of a co-operative farm, would not produce heavy crops without the bestowal of a great deal of labour upon it. But this would be a hardship not to be lightened by the most eloquent of representatives in a Parliament House. It would, however, be considerably lightened by the economical working of co-operative farms, and by the opportunities for change of occupation and relaxation they would give to the overwrought labourer.

What is to be the future of England has now been brought to within a very narrow compass. In short, it rests entirely with her rulers and capitalists whether her future shall be the brilliant one for the purposes just mentioned, or the reverse. It is not now for armies to take a principal part in the decision, however necessary it may have been at one time; it is a matter for capitalists, acting alone in the United Kingdom, and through a Government Department in the dependencies. The question now is whether the capital of the country should be diverted, through the action of co-operation, into new and secure fields of employment, giving content to the labour employed in the tillage of the land, or whether it shall be allowed to go on in its old course of impoverishing the owners of this labour, and thereby making them discontented, and, so, pliable instruments in the hands of those undertaking to represent their interests, for destroying the capital and institutions of their country, and as preliminary steps to the break-up of the empire.

Before parting, one word to the members of the disintegrating school. It is just possible that the wish of these men to dissolve the empire may have sprung from the militaryism, to which the retention of the dependencies they seem so anxious to get rid of has hitherto given rise, and by which so much of their revenues have been unproductively spent. But when these dependencies have a Land Department, a large portion of the revenues, now spent unproductively in maintaining soldiers, would, as we have seen, be laid out most productively on the land of co-operative farms. These farms would render an army, or any other kind of repressive force, unnecessary in the districts in which they existed. Thus everything the disintegrators of the empire are contending for, in the interests of those they are claiming to represent, would be gained by the carrying out of the principles of co-operation here proposed. Whereas by reducing the British empire to the insignificant position of being but a small island in the Atlantic

Ocean, they would be rendered utterly incapable of carrying out any of their benevolent intentions. The scores of millions of labourers engaged in tilling the land of these dependencies can have their condition improved only by being put into a way of receiving the fruits of their labour. These fruits can be secured to them only by their having brought to them English capital on reasonable terms. But how can this capital reach them, if, instead of establishing in the dependencies a Land Department to serve as a vehicle for bringing it, and making it secure to investors, these dependencies are cut adrift from England, and thus given over to fall either into a state of anarchy or into the hands of her enemies?

THE END.

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