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no man can leave his home port when work is not to be had in the sure knowledge of a vacant place elsewhere. Even if he had that sure knowledge, the poor man could not capitalise his future earnings to pay his railway fare. The Labour Exchange will set in motion a fluid stream of labour, between ports in which work is growing slack, and ports in which work is growing brisk. By communication between Exchanges, specific employment will be found for the man who has no work, and by advancing his railway fare, the manager will enable the men for whom he has found employment to take advantage of their opportunity.

Whether, in present circumstances, the gain will repay the cost of establishing several new Exchanges for the fisheries, is a matter which only Government itself can decide. Threatened as it is by the competition of State-supported German trawling companies, and salted-herrings from the Baltic, the trade at any rate should welcome such an action.

GILBERT E. JACKSON

THE FARMER AS HE IS.

WHAT kind of man is the farmer? Ought he to be criticised, or does he deserve sympathy? These are very important questions to ask. Rural reform proceeds very slowly, and one of the main reasons is that the public do not realise how great an influence the farmer wields. If people knew more about the farmer, his methods, ideas, and ways of going about things, a good deal that is difficult in land reform would soon become greatly simplified. It has somehow become the custom to take it for granted that there is nothing about the farmer that calls for criticism. Most land reformers let loose the vials of their wrath upon the landlord, but all use the farmer with the greatest kindness. His prices are low, his labour scarce, and on the top of all his other difficulties the landlord rules him with a rod of iron. This seems to be the idea concerning him that has become embedded in the public mind. Let us see how far it is right.

To begin with, his prices are not so low in comparison as they are held to be. Some of them are lower than they used to be, but in other directions he has a distinct advantage over the old farmers, and with some lines he actually gets much better prices. The delivery of his corn, and the bringing back of his feeding stuffs, only cost a mere fraction of what they formerly

cost. That this greatly influences the cost of production goes without saying. Then better railway facilities, and the regulation of the supply that the present system of preserving eggs has brought about, has enormously increased the value of dairy produce. On a well-managed farm the dairy now pays the wages and keeps the house going. This would have been impossible in the old days. In many localities eggs are fully 100 per cent. dearer than they were fifty years ago. Butter, too, is dearer. Formerly part of the profits obtained from corn were consumed in incidental expenses. This is an aspect of "the good old times" that we hear little about. And, our ports being open, large supplies of cheap foreign corn are always available for feeding purposes. In a word, a farmer can, after deducting from his profits as large a salary for himself as he could command in the labour market, still obtain a steady 5 per cent. interest on his capital; and it is doubtful if the old farmers, except at extraordinary times, obtained much more.

The statement, too, that labour is scarce needs qualifying. The villages, of course, have become much smaller. But the same system of cultivation being followed, and more machinery used, obviously less labour is required. Then the farmer in these days does not need as many men, for he takes far less pains with the soil. He does not hoe his corn; barely manages to get the thistles taken out. He goes in for cheap production. When the truth is known he has about all the labour he wants. In hay or harvest time there may be a scarcity. And probably a farmer here and there would like to have an extra man or two occasionally at ordinary times. As a rule, however, when there is a scarcity, it is largely a question of wages. The farmer would like labour to flow into his neighbourhood, but does not intend to offer any attraction for it to do so. He would rather be inconvenienced to some extent than raise wages slightly, even for a short time. Men ought to be glad to work at his price. For instance, a farmer living near Lincoln wanted a man for a day, and went to see a labourer who was working for a local builder and contractor. It meant a cold dinner and three or four miles of walking, so that naturally the man hesitated. Moreover, he could ill be spared from his work. But to oblige the farmer he went. He was having 3s. a day; the farmer paid him 2s. 6d. for the day's work. Another man, in longer days, was having 3s. 6d. a day in the same builder's employ. A local farmer wanted haymakers. "What will you give me a day?" inquired the man. "Two and ninepence," was the reply. And

when he refused to go the farmer roundly abused him. The labourer was an obliging sort of fellow and was anxious to help with the hay, but to lose ninepence a day was too much, especially as it meant working harder. I expect that farmer would go away and convince somebody that no men were to be had. It is men of his type who are chiefly responsible for the mistaken idea held by the outside public regarding the scarcity of labour.

As to the statement that the landlord rules the farmer with a rod of iron, it would be much nearer the truth to say that the farmer so rules the landlord. At bottom it is the farmer who decides what the rent of land shall be, and what shall be done on the estate in the way of improvements. If it be true that the average rent of land is 20s. an acre, then all land of average quality ought to be rented at 20s. an acre. But what do we find? We find land of the quality alluded to rented at 18s., 16s., 12s., and even 10s. an acre. The bigger the farm the lower the rent, that is, generally speaking. The quality of the soil has not much to do with it. Nothing has much to do with it but the influence of the farmer. The bigger the farmer the greater his influence; and the greater his influence the lower his rent. Now many people, even country people, think a low rent is a very good thing. And so it is if kept within certain limits. Outside those limits it becomes an evil afflicting the whole neighbourhood. For instance, I know a landlord who receives fully £2,000 a year less in rent than he ought to receive, and less than he would receive if the influence of his larger tenants were broken down and the land thrown fairly into the open market. This landlord is a man who takes his position seriously, and fully two-thirds of this amount would be spent in improving his estate, providing small holdings, building cottages for young men and women anxious to be married. But not having the money he has to be content with doing what he can. The same thing applies in the case of repairs. When all the repairs needed cannot be executed, the biggest farmers always stand the best chance. Your big farmer is always on friendly terms with the land agent. In fact, he makes a point of being so, and when he wants a new cartshed, or the roof of the cow-stable to be attended to, he writes to the agent, or perhaps goes to see him. A tennis party is a good time for transacting such business. Both the agent and the landlord experience some pricking of conscience. They know that poor Smith, the cottager, has been waiting for years for a new pig-sty; that he has lost more than one sow and litter owing to the bad condition of the present one; but then it is impossible to put off

Mr. So-and-so. They cannot help themselves. Smith will have to wait a little longer.

If it is necessary that the small cultivator should come into existence, the influence of the farmer, and especially the big farmer, is a factor that will have to be taken into serious account. He is on the parish council, on the district council, on the county council, he is everywhere. And wherever he is he is the enemy of progress. He stands for the old-time methods and the old-time prosperity. He is ambitious to farm a large number of acres, and to be looked up to by the rest of the rural population. He does not want the labourer to acquire land; he wants the land himself. He hates the labourer. He wants him to grovel at his feet, and the labourer won't. He hates democracy, and the labourer is a democrat. At bottom he realises that he can do little to prevent the rising tide. But he will do all he can. He will resort to machinery to keep down wages, and he will pull the wires to prevent the land getting divided into small plots. And when he does all he can he does a good deal. It seems to me that there is nothing for it but that, either directly or indirectly, the State will have to break down his influence in more than one direction.

JOSEPH CLARK

THE INCREASE IN MALE ADULT PAUPERISM.

ONE of the problems to which the Report of the recent Poor Law Commission draws attention is contained in the following table, taken from paragraph 24 on page 21 of the Report.

	<i>Total Population.</i> (Census of 1901 compared with estimate for 1875.)	<i>Number of Paupers.</i> (Cycle of 1896-7 to 1905-6 compared with cycle of 1871-2 to 1879-80.)
Men	+ 42·2	+ 18·4
Women... ..	+ 44·1	- 2·4
Children under 16	+ 21·3	- 18·4
All classes	+ 34·8	- 3·9

This shows that male adult pauperism has been moving in a direction opposite to that of child pauperism and female adult pauperism. This increase in male pauperism occurred chiefly during the cycle of ten years 1896-7 to 1905-6. In this cycle