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Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for January 18th, 2019

To see what we've added to the Electric Scotland site view our What's New page at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/whatsnew.htm>

To see what we've added to the Electric Canadian site view our What's New page at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/whatsnew.htm>

For the latest news from Scotland see our ScotNews feed at:

<https://electricscotland.com/scotnews.htm>

Electric Scotland News

The seemingly never ending Brexit debate continues. I can't help but think that the majority of MP's are not fit to govern the country. Their personal ego's get in the way and many are quite frankly liars. Let us not forget that the referendum turnout was the largest turnout in the history of Britain. It was won by 52% to 48% that voted to leave the EU. However the majority of MP's think they know better and are opposing this for personal advantage rather for the benefit of the country.

From my perspective it is obvious that we should just leave with no deal or at worst a Canada style deal. That would at least allow us the leave the single market, the customs union and come out from under the ECJ laws. This gives us the freedom to do as we want. And if this turns out not to be in our interests then at least we did what the majority of the people said they wanted.

I have an idea that if we did have another referendum then it is likely there would be an even larger vote to leave. However I do think it is time for the people of Britain to get of their backsides and join there party of choice as in that way they can have a say as to what MP is picked to fight the next election. Far too many MP's on both Labour and Conservative sides fought on leaving the EU but once they were elected they have not done what they said they would do. Many of them should be deselected but you need to be a member of the party to do that.

SO my call is for people out there to start taking control so you can pick an MP that will do what you want them to do and be able to deselect an MP that has not done what they said they would do.

Can I also remind you that Burn's Suppers are being organised this month and so you might want to check your local media to see where you can attend one to enjoy an evening with good Scottish food and drink. So check out our Burns pages for lots of information on the Bard at:

<https://electricscotland.com/burns/index.html>

Most St. Andrews Societies organise such an event as do many Clan Societies so worth checking with them to see what might be on offer.

C-K ranked as a top place to visit

It might be a new year, but history was on the mind of our respondents. Chatham-Kent is a town that has a place in history, and this is the year to learn more about it. From being a stop along the Underground Railroad to preserving classic cars, this town is happy to tell its story. And so this is my own local town so hope you find it of interest.

Read this article at: <https://chathamvoice.com/2019/01/08/c-k-ranked-as-a-top-place-to-visit/>

Here is the video introduction to this newsletter...

<https://youtu.be/DE2l-dk92hE>

Scottish News from this weeks newspapers

Note that this is a selection and more can be read in our [ScotNews](#) feed on our index page where we list news from the past 1-2 weeks. I am partly doing this to build an archive of modern news from and about Scotland as all the newsletters are archived and also indexed on Google and other search engines. I might also add that in newspapers such as the Guardian, Scotsman, Courier, etc. you will find many comments which can be just as interesting as the news story itself and of course you can also add your own comments if you wish.

Sophie Kennedy Clark, actor

Sophie Kennedy Clark struggled to find an agent after film school now she's racking up the roles and finding inspiration in the life and work of Hollywood icon Mary Pickford. Interview by Alistair Harkness

Read more at:

<https://www.scotsman.com/lifestyle/culture/film/ones-to-watch-in-2019-sophie-kennedy-clark-actor-1-4853322>

9 lesser-known Scottish towns and villages that are worth a visit

What about the many gems that are often overlooked?

Read more at:

<https://www.scotsman.com/lifestyle/9-lesser-known-scottish-towns-and-villages-that-are-worth-a-visit-1-4854765>

The supposed cliff edge of leaving the EU on WTO terms is another Millennium Bug

No Deal is the Best Deal for Britain, a report from Economists for Free Trade

Read more at:

<https://www.economistsforfreetrade.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/No-Deal-is-the-Best-Deal-for-Britain-Upload.pdf>

The People's Friend: 150 years without upsetting or offending

When the People's Friend was first published 150 years ago it vowed it would contain nothing with the slightest tendency to corrupt the morals either of old or young..According to editor-in-chief Angela Gilchrist, the longest-running women's magazine in the world is still sticking to those founding values.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-46797116>

The EU is no land of milk and honey

Let's be optimistic about our future as an independent nation

Read more at:

<https://brexitcentral.com/eu-no-land-milk-honey-lets-optimistic-future-independent-nation/>

Just leave!

I'M FED UP to the back teeth of Brexit and I suspect I'm not alone. I'm fed up to the back teeth of our elected politicians and I suspect I'm not alone.

Read more at:

http://www.thinkscotland.org/thinkpolitics/articles.html?read_full=13789

Parliament sinks May's EU divorce deal by 230 votes

British lawmakers defeated Prime Minister Theresa May's Brexit divorce deal by a crushing margin

Read more at:

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-britain-eu/brexit-bedlam-parliament-sinks-mays-eu-divorce-deal-by-230-votes-idUKKCN1P90P1>

Salmond, Sturgeon, and the end of an era for the SNP

At this acute point, the once impressively unified, disciplined SNP have become embroiled in a huge, high-powered divide between its two main figures

Read more at:

<http://www.scottishreview.net/GerryHassan462a.html>

Dumfries bakery lands World Scotch Pie title

The Little Bakery in Dumfries saw off the competition at the 20th edition of the event.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-south-scotland-46876821>

Robert Burns murals

A series of vast murals depicting the epic Robert Burns poem Tam O'Shanter have been created for one of Glasgow's leading arts centres.

Read more at:

<https://www.scotsman.com/lifestyle/culture/books/oran-mor-to-unveil-robert-burns-murals-to-celebrate-life-of-the-bard-1-4856550>

May lost the vote, Labour lost its integrity

THIS is taken from Labour's 2017 manifesto on Brexit.

Read more at:

http://www.thinkscotland.org/todays-thinking/articles.html?read_full=13796

Theresa May survives bid to force her from office

Theresa May opened the door of 10 Downing Street to opposition leaders after winning a vote of no confidence in her government, offering high-level talks in a bid to salvage her Brexit deal.

Read more at:

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/general-election/brexit-theresa-may-survives-bid-to-force-her-from-office-1-4857632>

Democracy is in danger as our political leaders seek to subvert the Leave vote

One man, a Leave voter, elaborated: 'We voted to leave the EU, to leave', he said. 'We did not vote for a deal, for any deal, but just to leave, and we should leave'

Read more at:

<https://brexitcentral.com/democracy-danger-political-leaders-seek-subvert-leave-vote/>

Support for Parliament plummets as Brexit chaos reigns

Three-quarters of voters say the crisis-hit EU departure process has shown that the current generation of MPs are not up to the job.

Read more at:

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/1073284/brexit-news-theresa-may-brexit-deal-confidence-vote>

Calls for haggis emoji to be introduced ahead of Burns Night

An award-winning haggis maker is calling for Scotland's national dish to be represented in the language of emojis.

Read more at:

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/calls-for-haggis-emoji-to-be-introduced-ahead-of-burns-night-1-4858240>

Electric Canadian

Canadian Archive Reports

Added the 1891 report.

You can read this at: https://www.electriccanadian.com/makers/brymner_douglas.htm

The Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs

The Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs for 1914 which you can read at:

<https://www.electriccanadian.com/history/annual/index.htm>

Canadian Fisherman

You can read volume 6 at: <https://www.electriccanadian.com/lifestyle/fisherman/index.htm>

Descendants of James Leslie, Capt 15th Reg. of Foot

Provided by Barrie Leslie (pdf) which you can read at:

<https://www.electriccanadian.com/makers/CaptJamesLeslie15thRegofFoot..pdf>

Perth on the Tay a Tale of the Transplanted Highlanders

by Josephine Smith, Merrickville (1901) (pdf)

You can read this at: <https://www.electriccanadian.com/pioneering/perthonthetay.pdf>

William Notman

Photographic Pioneer and you can read about him at:

https://www.electriccanadian.com/makers/notman_william.htm

The O.A.C. Review (Ontario Agricultural College).

Added some information on this publication and links to copies of it for you to read. It's about 4/5 down the page. For 72 years, from 1889-1961, this magazine was published annually by and for students of the Ontario Agricultural College. It provides a rich source of historical information about the department and its alumni as well as the social and agricultural history of Ontario. Regular columns from the Ontario Agricultural College and the MacDonald Institute for Women provide ongoing commentary on student life, detailing the academic, athletic and social events of each year. Feature articles address the scientific, social and political issues of the day, through the Great Depression and two World Wars. Photographs, special reports and advertisements enhance the historical richness of this publication. Material for this collection is provided by the University of Guelph Library.

I might add that around half way down the page I also added links to the 5 volume report made in 1881 of the Ontario Agricultural Commission. In 1881 the report was issued in five volumes. It was without doubt the most valuable commission report ever issued in Ontario, if not in all Canada. Part of it was reissued a second and a third time, and for years it formed the Ontario farmer's library. Even to this day it is a valuable work of reference, containing as it does a vast amount of practical information and forming an invaluable source of agricultural history.

You can read these at: <https://www.electriccanadian.com/transport/agriculture/ontario.htm>

Annals of the Diocese of Fredericton

By Ernest Hawkins, B.d. (1847) (pdf) which you can read at:

<https://www.electriccanadian.com/history/nb/AnnalsofFredericton.pdf>

Annals of the Diocese of Toronto

By Ernest Hawkins, B.D. (1848) (pdf) which you can read at:

<https://www.electriccanadian.com/history/ontario/annalsdiocesetoronto.pdf>

Electric Scotland

The State of Kuwait

By Colonel Salem M. Al-Sorour, Army of Kuwait

You can read this at: <https://electricscotland.com/history/stateofkuwait.pdf>

The Scottish Review

Added volume 13 to the page at: <https://electricscotland.com/history/review/index.htm>

Descendants of James Leslie, Capt 15th Reg. of Foot

James Leslie was a Captain in the 15th Regiment of Foot, he served under Amherst at Louisberg, and Wolfe at Quebec, and was twice wounded in the American war. You can read this at:

<https://www.electriccanadian.com/makers/CaptJamesLeslie15thRegofFoot..pdf>

Tayside Songs and Other Verses

By Robert Ford

This can be read at: <https://electricscotland.com/poetry/ford/index.htm>

Isle of Lewis

Added a few videos to our Isle of Lewis page at: <https://www.electricscotland.com/history/lewsiana/>

Major Robert Wilson McClaughry

An account of his life and also a link to a book about Signaletic Instructions which he edited and you can read this at:

<https://electricScotland.com/history/scotsirish/RobertWilsonMcClaughry.pdf>

Sun Tzu on the Art of War

The Oldest Military Treatise in the World, Translated from the Chinese by Lionel Giles, M.A. (1910) (pdf)

You can read this at: <https://electricScotland.com/history/scotreg/TheArtOfWar.pdf>

Fletcher of Saltoun

By G. W. T. Omond. Book about a Scottish Patriot during the Union of the Crowns which can be read at:

https://electricScotland.com/history/other/fletcher_andrew1.htm

Rosneath Past and Present

By William Charles Maughan (1893)

You can read this at: <https://electricScotland.com/books/pdf/rosneath.htm>

Dreams o' Hame

by James D. Law. A Scots American who mainly writes in the Doric language and you can read this at:

<https://electricScotland.com/poetry/dreams.htm>

Shetland Islands

Came across a series on YouTube which follows the doctors on the Shetland Islands in their day to day work and so have added it to our Shetland page. With only some 28,000 people on the island there is a great sense of community.

You can view the video series at: <https://electricScotland.com/history/shetland/>

Annals of Lodge Fortrose

No. 108. Stornaway, compiled from the Lodge Records by J. Campbell Smith, The Forwood and Sketch of the Hebrides by M. W. Bro J. Ross Robertson, Toronto, Canada. This volume has been printed, published and presented to the Brethren of Lodge Fortrose, by Bro. J. Ross Robertson, Most Worshipful Past Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Canada, etc., etc. (1905) (pdf)

You can read this at: <https://electricScotland.com/history/annalsoflodgefortrose.pdf>

The Story

THE SCOTCH FARM-LABOURER

Taken from the Scottish Review of 1889

MORE than a century ago a great literary man who, though himself no statesman, was nevertheless exceedingly familiar with the details of rural life in his own native part of the kingdom, spoke of a bold peasantry as the pride of their country, and declared the nation to fare ill in which, while wealth accumulated, men decayed. This testimony was at once true in substance and forcible in form.

Now, with regard to the peasantry of those portions of Scotland which are affected by the Crofters' Act of 1886 and the Crofters' Holdings Act of 1887 (that is to say, a very large part of the Northern and Western Highlands), it is absolutely incontrovertible that, in many of the districts comprehended within that area, and at frequent periods, the peasantry who constituted a portion of the pride of Scotland decayed in alarming proportions, and in a manner as disastrous to the country's interests as it was fraught with immediate evil consequences to the peasantry themselves. The case of the Highland Crofter has, however, occupied the attention of Parliament and of the nation for a long period, and the English people have become more or less familiarized with the nature of the Crofters' surroundings, and of the dreary lot which is his portion on such part of the barren and rugged soil of his native land as he has succeeded in recovering from the mountainous wilds; so that there is little necessity for any further accounts of his character, the conditions of his toil, or the hardship? incidental to his tenure of the land. Besides, the subject bristles with political and social difficulties with which I have neither the ability nor the wish to deal. I simply desire to give a plain, unvarnished, and trustworthy account of a particular class of the Scotch peasantry, viz., the ordinary farm-labourers, and of that class within a definite area; an area specially restricted to the counties of Moray, Banff, and Aberdeen. I believe that there is a question wider and more significant than even the crofters' question; the question of the social, moral, and political condition of the Scotch peasantry as a whole, but more especially that numerous and important portion of them which is composed of the wage-receiving agricultural population. I propose to describe the farm-labourers as I have seen them while living amongst them, in the hope of making a humble contribution towards a knowledge of their real character, habits, and surroundings.

I shall suppose, then, that the main illustration is drawn from a certain parish with a population of some fifteen thousand souls, a district so peculiarly and literally rural as to boast within its confines but one solitary village or hamlet. The general scenery of this north country parish will require no elaborate description, because such delineation would be rendered unreal, if amplified to any appreciable extent, inasmuch as the said parish, like most of its neighbours, is bald in outline, unromantic in character, and fertile only in soil so far as the productiveness of the land is .a result of agricultural patience and skill. Though it is to some extent both hilly and wooded, yet, in the main, it presents a very marked contrast to most of those magnificent highlands and islands which are the homes of the crofter peasantry. The parish is, however, in highly important respects, typical. For instance, every variety of soil and of agricultural holding is to be found within it; on the one hand from the wet, peaty, unfertile bog, to the rich, fat, amply manured, and diligently cultivated field; and on the other from the miserable, paltry, shieling, with its two or three tiny, sombre pastures, to the imposing farmhouse, in the centre of hundreds of broad and carefully tilled acres. Many of the smaller crofters are themselves agricultural labourers on the large farms; and connected with such holdings will be found also, as a rule, the best and most competent class of the rural labourers.

The parish in question extends for some fifteen miles in length, by ten in breadth, and its soil is the property of several landowners, the most wealthy of whom is a well-known peer, and the least important, the possessor in his own right of a little strip of land limited to the extent of thirteen acres. The countryside is not altogether devoid of the beauties of natural scenery. Here and there lovely dells intervene, which even a Burns could not despise, but in the main its appearance discloses agricultural enterprise as distinguished from romantic picture. But it is well stocked with farm-labourers, men whose character and habits it is my chief purpose to describe.

In doing so it will be right to begin at the beginning; in other words, to give some account of the pedigree and the education of these sons of the soil. The youngster whose lot it is to be trained to the hardy life of a farm-labourer is generally the offspring of parents who have been, or are themselves farm-labourers. Frequently, however, the children of the smaller crofters, and occasionally even those of the less important farmers, are compelled to go into service and earn such livelihood as the scanty acres cultivated by their fathers are incapable of securing for them. In nearly every case they are nurtured in penury, and inured from their infancy to the sternest hardships. The farm-labourer's cottage is, in some instances, well built, and its roof rendered proof against the howling wind and the wintry tempest, but in others it is little better than a mere hovel. The stiff breezes have played sad havoc with its covering of thatch, so that when the heavy rain comes down, or the whirling hail beats against it, the storm is felt all too literally within the walls of the cheerless habitation. To escape from such a dwelling to the cosy of the well-warmed schoolroom is a real boon and relief to the family of the farm-labourer. In nearly every parish within the counties with which I am more particularly dealing, there is now ample accommodation provided for all the young folks who are supposed to attend the country school. The Boards have adequately discharged their duties since they came into existence some years ago, and if they have erred at all, it has been on the side of lavish, as opposed to niggardly expenditure. Before the days of Lord Young's Act, however, there was a very different state of things in the parochial schools. Some of the buildings were good, but many were ricketty, and within the latter, as in the huts of the agricultural labourers, the winds of heaven made themselves felt; on the floor in the morning there was an occasional snow-wreath; and the gentle patter of the rain formed a frequent accompaniment to the sound of the drawling voices of the north country pupils. Yet, as I have said, the schoolroom was a cosy place in winter. A huge fire roared in the chimney, the fuel at times consisting of coal carted from the nearest town, but more usually of the homely peat, or a great bundle of logs obtained surreptitiously from a neighbouring wood. When it is stated that the master of this establishment was accustomed to take things easy, often indeed preferring to read his newspaper by the hour rather than drill the mysteries of reading, writing, and arithmetic into the somewhat thick craniums of his youthful scholars, and that a nap, induced no doubt by the stuffy atmosphere of the heated room, was of almost daily occurrence, it will readily be understood that the thinly-clad and under-fed child of the farm-labourer regarded the parish school as by no means such an uninviting place as it might otherwise have appeared by reason of the dreary rudiments which were communicated within it. In the teaching which is given in the Public Schools, as they are now called, the School Board and the Government Inspector have between them wrought wonders, so that what has been lost of old-world attractiveness alike in the buildings, the teacher, and his method, is more than compensated for by the discipline which is maintained and the improved education which is communicated by the schoolmasters. Prior to the School Board regime, many of the parochial schools received both male and female pupils, and the little community constituted a sort of rural democracy. On the same bench there sat not infrequently the small land-owner's son and the child of the parish pauper. When the master was on the scene he governed as an absolute monarch, but when the pedagogue's dreaded frown was withdrawn, it became a question of the rule of the strongest, if not of the fittest. The somewhat slender refinement of the better sort of scholars was, I am afraid, too often neutralized and rendered inoperative by the rugged semi-barbarity of the rougher and more uncouth members of this rising democracy. Yet, on the whole, a kindly spirit was developed; a spirit which was carried to a marked extent into adult life, for at school the future masters and the future servants had come to know, and, without at all infringing upon their proper mutual spheres, to understand and respect one another.

In the schoolroom the boys were placed at one end and the girls at the other, the interior of the building being bisected by a passage, extending from the main doorway to the fire-place. I speak now of some years ago, the sexes having been duly separated by the reforming School Board, and attached in numerous instances, to rival establishments erected at considerable distances from each other within the same parish.

The adult farm-labourers of the present day are the product of the old state of things. It may be thought a paradox but nevertheless it is perfectly true, that they are one and all absolutely illiterate, and yet none are without a smattering of education. They are able to read and to write; they have been drilled by the schoolmaster to a certain extent in grammar, geography, and history; some have

even been indoctrinated in the rudiments of Latin; but the bucolic influences to which these agricultural labourers have been subjected since leaving school, have driven from their memories the greater portion of their slender education. Untouched by the spirit which is at work in the urban centres, social, political, or religious questions have for them no interest, and the sole remaining part of the primary culture which was instilled into their minds by the loquacious pedagogue is this simple ability to read and write. In their own way they discharge the simple duties of life, but to nearly everything that is beyond the scope of primitive natural affection they are blind and callous. The rising generation are now sent to school in obedience to the requirements of the Education Code, at the latest, at the age of five; but, in the olden times many of the children of the agricultural toilers did not appear in the schoolroom till the ages of seven, eight, or nine. They were, in addition, most irregular in their attendances, and the cases of young men and young women of sixteen, seventeen, and eighteen who were unable to read a difficult sentence, to write legibly, or to spell with any degree of accuracy, were numerous, and as a consequence, there were always—especially in the winter time—several big, burly young men, and stalwart young women to be found in attendance at the country schools. The help of such persons was of course in great demand, during the summer and autumn, for turnip hoeing, peat cutting, harvesting, potatoe ingathering, and such like, and the hard pressed struggling parents were compelled to send their sons and daughters into service, in order to eke out the means of a scanty livelihood. When, however, the bitter winter set in, with its cold, and frost, and snow, there was less need for the assistance of such persons on the various farms, and as a consequence the young men and women (the former in greater numbers) returned to their fathers' houses and renewed their attendance at the parochial school. I can recollect one such establishment where even bearded men were to be seen puzzling their brains through the dreary winter time in improving their acquaintance with reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar and geography. At such periods, as many as seventy pupils were crammed into a room capable of seating comfortably less than forty, and it required considerable tact and firmness on the part of the schoolmaster to maintain order in such a heterogeneous community, yet the respect in which the rural dominie was held, was generally so great that his rule was acquiesced in with remarkable submissiveness. Shakespeare speaks of the divinity which hedges a king, but the divinity, or certain allied qualities, which seemed to surround the unpretentious parochial teacher, secured an amount of humble obedience to his dicta, which only those can really understand who have been fellow scholars with these great burly sons of the soil. Occasionally the turbulent revolutionary spirit did manifest itself, and then, indeed, there was huge astonishment, and much fear and quaking, in the hearts of the younger generation. When rotten eggs were shied at the roof of the schoolroom; when insolent ejaculations were shouted to the schoolmaster over his garden fence; when two or three youthful giants threatened to thrash the dominie with his own ferule, and—but for the divinity which hedged him—would assuredly have done it; when such things occurred there was not only a shock within the little building where the pedagogue ruled, but a sort of electric thrill of horror pulsated through the whole country side. In such squabbles the autocrat was almost invariably in the right, and it is to the credit of the rural folk that they, with scarcely an exception, vindicated his conduct and supported him in the discharge of his disagreeable duty. The injunction of one of old is, 'Let patience have her perfect work,*' and the schoolmaster was compelled in the exercise of his functions as general instructor, to exemplify the Apostolic command. It was very trying to flesh and blood to lose a promising pupil when the spring set in and to have to take him in hand afresh at the end of the year. The dreary round, the common task, had all to be undertaken again, with what cheerfulness the teacher might be able to assume in such cheerless circumstances.

In most of the country towns in the north of Scotland there are certain days known as 'feein' Friday,' 'hairst Monday,' and such like. In the little urban centre adjoining the parish of which I have been more especially speaking, there were three great hiring markets for farm-labourers in the course of the year. These were the 'feein' Friday,' immediately before Whitsuntide; 'hairst Monday,' occurring about four weeks before the anticipated commencement of the local harvest; and 'feein' Friday' again, the week before Martinmas. Thither flocked all the male and female farm-labourers who were desirous of obtaining fresh engagements, and by ten or eleven o'clock a huge concourse of people anxious to be feed, and a very large number of employers in need of hands for the farm work during the coming season, had assembled in the town's square and in the main adjoining thoroughfares. I am speaking of these markets in the past tense, but they are not bygone institutions alone, inasmuch as they still enjoy a vigorous existence. The men generally take their stand in the street, or along the square, in little companies of twos and threes; the women in similar dispositions; and in the vast assemblage there may be observed not a few fathers keeping watchful eyes on the movements of certain awkward youths whose services they are eager to dispose of for the next six months—or for the period of harvest, as the case may be; several mothers, likewise, with strong red-cheeked girls bent on obtaining a similar market; but one and all noisy, hearty, laughter-loving beings; rude of manner, and ruder still of speech; quarrelsome to a degree; yet on the whole brimming over with the milk of human kindness. Hiring and feeing are, however, serious matters, and it is not until this, the chief business of the day, is over, that the mirth and fun grow fast and furious. The negotiations are conducted on both sides with a very cunningly assumed nonchalance. As a specimen, the following dialogue may be transcribed :—

Farmer: 'Are ye for feein', chield?' Labourer: 'Maybe I am, an' maybe no.' Fanner: 'It's a braw day.' Labourer: 'It's nae ill at a.' Farmer: 'There's three pair (of horse) on oor place.' Labourer: '1 ken that.' Farmer: 'My folk genevly bide three or fower terms wi' me.' Labourer: 'I've been sax at the "Tanzie."' Farmer (scratching his head): 'We'll nae 'gree, I'm thinkin.' Labourer: 'It's gae like.' Farmer: 'An' hoo muckle wages may ye be askin?' Labourer: 'Ou, jest the ord'nar run; I'm nae partikier.' Farmer: 'Are ye guid at the pleuch?' Labourer: 'I've had fower prizes, if that's a test o' skeel.' Farmer: 'Ye'll nae suit me, I'm thinkin'.' Labourer (who is conscious of his importance): 'Like enench.' Farmer: 'Weel, man, what's yer feel' Labourer: 'Aye, but what for, ye ken?' Farmer: 'Ou jest second horseman.' Labourer: 'Aucht poun' ten; nae a farthin' less.' Farmer: 'Ah! I thocht we widna' 'gree.' Labourer (edging off): 'Vera weel, vera week' Farmer: 'Bide a wee, man; ye ken hoo to crack yersel', nae doot; yet I'll say aucht poun'; will ye hae it?' Labourer: 'I canna decide; fat arles d'ye gie?' Farmer: 'Deil a penny mair than a shillin'.' Labourer: 'Ower little! I wus' ye guid day.' Farmer: 'Bide a

wee; I'll say the half-crown.' Labourer (after meditating for a few seconds): 'Gie's the siller.' Farmer: 'Here it is; mind ye come the second day after the term.' Labourer: 'A' richt.' And so the engagement is made.

In order to appreciate the meaning of the foregoing conversation, it is necessary to understand that the farmer and the labourer are very well acquainted with each other's characters, and in all probability had each mentally decided to enter into relationships one with the other, and both therefore had a shrewd idea as to what the issue of the negotiations would be. The farmers, of course, prefer to engage those men of whose capabilities they are previously cognizant, and the ploughmen and other hands naturally choose to be feed by persons of whose good treatment of their servants they are pretty fully aware. It is always customary to give and receive a certain small sum by way of 'earnest' or 'arles,' and indeed the taking of such a payment is equivalent in its way to accepting the Queen's shilling from the recruiting sergeant.

When the main business of the day is over, the period of saturnalia sets in with a vengeance. All over the Market Square there are numerous ricketty stalls groaning under the weight of huge quantities of treacle candy, lozenges, and miscellaneous sweets made of the vilest compounds, and in the purchase of such (for the farm-labourer, whether male or female, is a very sweet-mouthed animal) the whole of the 4 arles * speedily disappears, and a considerable portion of the hardly-earned half-year's wage to boot. The booth of the itinerant showman who exhibits the marvel of marvels in the form of a headless trunk, or a human head detached from the body, is also crammed with gaping spectators, whose feelings find vent in such expressions as 'Saw ye ever onything like it,' or, 'Weel, noo, wha wad hae thocht it,' or such like. The young lads and the women imbibe unlimited quantities of lemonade and similar non-intoxicants; the men prefer a more potent liquor, and betake themselves to the public-house, where they sit over their glasses of whiskey— 'critur,' as they prefer to call it. By and bye the centre of the little town becomes a scene of the wildest uproar. Drunken men rush hither and thither; dames shriek and children scream; quarrels are rife; stalls are crushed in the general hubbub; the clamour of a babel of voices is carried on the breeze all over the town ; and it is only the fall of evening that puts an end to the rustic revelry, merriment, and din. It is a somewhat delicate subject upon which to touch, but any description of 'fee in' Friday ' and its concomitants which failed to include an allusion to the notorious immorality which usually attends it, would be lamentably incomplete. At the same time it will be enough to say, that while the county of Banff especially has an unenviable notoriety on account of the foremost place which it occupies in respect of its statistics of illegitimacy, one cannot err in tracing a large percentage of such cases, directly and indirectly, to the debasing orgies of the feeing market.

The farm-labourer, as already stated, is engaged for periods of six months, either from Whitsuntide to Martinmas or Martinmas to Whitsuntide. The wages are very fluctuating, lads getting from £2 to £5 per half-year, women £2 to £6, and men from £5 to £10 or £12, with, of course, food and lodging in each case. At twelve o'clock on the term-day the farm-labourer is a free man, and he then generally takes two or three days' rest before entering upon his new situation. His movables can easily be packed into a large canvas bag or stowed away in a lumbering chest, and a man or woman has never any difficulty in obtaining a comrade's assistance in the task of transporting from one farm to another, or to the Railway Station, the said ungainly chest. Attached to some of the smaller farms there are only two male labourers, a man and a lad, with one female servant; on a few, and these the most important, establishments, as many as a dozen male and half-a-dozen female workers will be found; but in the larger number of holdings the staff of labourers consists of three men, two women, and a lad of from thirteen to eighteen years of age.

The hours of the agricultural labourer in Moray, Banff, and Aberdeen, are lengthy, far more so than those of the mechanic who plies his handicraft or his trade in the country town. The latter is engaged for a maximum of ten hours per diem, but the poor farm-servant toils and moils in all weathers, thirteen, four-z teen, and fifteen, out of the twenty-four, hours. At half-past five in the morning, both in the cheerful bright period of summer, and the dark, chilly, and sleety days of the boisterous Highland winter, the foreman leaves his bed, rouses his fellow-servants in the rude dormitory, and then walks across the farm-yard to call the maid-servants, this being a part of the duty which he is expected to discharge. If the time of year be winter, he then with the other ploughmen proceeds to groom the horses, provide them with their morning provender, and subsequently to clean out the stables. Ere this is done the maid-servants will have lit the kitchen fire, made the porridge, and spread the table for breakfast. The table, need it be said, is guiltless of any damask covering, presenting only the appearance of a long, clean, shining, board, alongside of which are placed two unbacked forms, serving in lieu of chairs for the accommodation of the farm-labourers. On the table may be seen two huge basins filled to the brim with oatmeal porridge, each of these dishes being flanked with a large trencher, bearing an enormous quantity of oat cakes. For every expected participator in the rude but homely meal a bowl either of stone or wood is ranged along the edge of the table, well filled with good fresh skimmed milk, and on the dresser not far off there is a copious supply of the same liquid kept in reserve in a big tin can. At six o'clock, or fifteen minutes later, the farm labourers make their appearance from the stables and the byres, take their seats around the wholesome porridge, and without any ceremony whatsoever attack the victuals with might and main. Half-a-dozen tin or horn spoons are not infrequently thrust simultaneously into the porridge bicker; but the pangs of appetite drown any squeamish feelings of nicety which might otherwise arise, and generally within the space of ten minutes the capacious basin is emptied. The feast, however, is not yet ended, inasmuch as the bowls receive a fresh addition of milk, the oatmeal cakes are set upon, and a considerable time elapses ere the meal is completed. Breakfast over, the male labourers return to the stable, the barn, or the byre, where sundry additional duties have to be discharged, pending the dawn of the winter's morning. As soon as the daylight has fairly set in, the persons whose labour lies in some portion of the outlying farm-land set out, grumbling probably, as is their wont, at the biting chill of the raw winter's day. Work goes on till the hour of eleven, but then a respite comes. By the time the various servants have trudged homewards, and the horses have been unharnessed and fed, it will be nearly twelve o'clock, the arrival of which hour is the signal for the mid-day meal. Punctual to the minute, the foreman and the rest of the workmen appear within the kitchen, and woe

betide Jenny or Jessie or Maggie, if the food is not duly placed on the table for the famished toilers, to whom the keen air and hard work have given voracious appetites. With hands innocent of any ablution they once more surround the table, and forthwith proceed to make havoc of the fare. The food is not of the savoury sort, but some atonement for inferiority of quality is rendered by the prodigious quantity which is displayed. Of what then do the viands consist I cannot recollect that I have ever witnessed a farm-labourers' week-day dinner party—at any rate in bleak and barren Banffshire—of which one or other of the following dishes did not constitute the staple article of food. I refer to milk-broth, made of barley, milk, and a little cream; milk-porridge, compounded of oatmeal and milk; potato soup; plain boiled potatoes in their jackets, to be peeled with horny fingers, and eaten to an accompaniment of salt, mustard, and oatcake; mashed potatoe, with an admixture of milk, salt, pepper, and onion, also to be eaten to the oat-cake accompaniment; one or other of these dishes, I say, with plenty of skimmed milk, and oatmeal bread ad libitum to follow, forms the chief meal of the Scotch farm-labourer in the district to which this paper chiefly refers. In the time of harvest, when the agricultural labourers dine in the field by the side of the newly erected 'stooks,' a copious supply of home-brewed ale is allowed to the various hands, and the beverage comes as a welcome change from the everlasting milk. Butter, eggs and cheese, are produced on Sundays alone; and it is then and then only that butcher's meat is served in the farm-servants' kitchen. A bit of beef, or a piece of mutton is all too like an angel's visit; when it does appear, its presence constitutes an event, as does also the production of a barn-door fowl or a piece of pork. Not infrequently the mutton broth alone reaches the kitchen board while the savoury shoulder or the ample leg is retained to grace the parlour table for the benefit of the master and mistress. In a similar manner good kail-broth, a compound apparently akin to that decoction in which the shoulder or the leg of mutton has been boiled, but in reality brewed from a huge shin or sirloin of beef obtained by the good wife from the butcher's shop in the nearest market town as a veritable rarity for the unsophisticated palates of the rustic labourers, sometimes appears. But such an event is reserved for the *Sawbath' only; if the poor drudge who enters the low roofed, soot-bespattered kitchen, for his mid-day meal, were to see such a thing as a good dish of kail broth, a joint of beef, or even a gammon of boiled bacon on the shining board, he would be no less surprised than if he had come in contact with the veriest cataclysm in nature. And yet, perchance—especially if the vegetarians be right in their doctrine—the North country farm labourer is just as fortunate as his brother worker in the sunnier south of England, whose noonday or evening meal is eked out by huge quantities of oily, fat, unwholesome bacon or ham. At the same time I fear that this beef-worshipping, mutton-loving, pork-eating, ham-devouring community, will be too ready to compassionate the Highland farm-servant whose staple articles of food consist of porridge, potatoes, milk, and oatmeal bread. Dinner is over by half-past twelve, and then the men servants leave the table and proceed to one or other of the farm-buildings, where they usually squat on a heap of soft straw until one o'clock, which is the appointed period for the resumption of their arduous labours. Precisely to the hour the foreman gives the signal for renewal of work, which goes on till six o'clock, unless the period of the year be the depth of winter, when the shortness of the day curtails the hours of labour, at least for those whose work is out of doors.

At 6.15, or 6.30 at the latest, supper is on the table, and the jaded farm-labourers are again served with some vegetarian article of diet. But in the summer season, when the fish-wife comes up from the neighbouring seaport with her creel, or the local 'cadger' goes round amongst the farms with his pony and cart, and manages to cajole the 'gudewife' into purchasing a suitable supply for the farm-servants' board, as well as a portion for the parlour table, the empty stomachs of the tired labourers are regaled with what is to them, men and women alike, a great dainty, viz., good fresh herrings probably caught in the Moray Frith in the hours of the previous night. Supper fitly closes the serious business of the day, but still there remains something to be done. For the women there is work in the kitchen; and by and bye the cows have to be milked, a task which almost invariably falls to the female servants. The men sit around the kitchen fire and smoke their pipes, making the most of their brief respite from a round of arduous toil. Occasionally a greasy pack of cards is brought forth, and a hotly contested game of 4 three card loo' or 4 catch the ten' is entered upon; at other times the draught board (Scottie dam-brod) is produced as a means of enlivenment, when many games are played* between the younger men, the stake being—of course for fun's sake—the possession of some well-known rustic beauty. In summer time, when the evenings are long, the men and lads wander aimlessly about the farmyard, loll around the stable door, lie upon a heap of straw, or betake themselves to a neighbouring farmstead for a chat with their country-chums. Out-door sports are almost unknown, and as a matter of fact the hard-worked fellows are too much worn out with their daily labours to be anxious to join in any recreation entailing much exertion of muscle or limb. It is only upon a rare, a very rare occasion, that a brief spell at cricket is attempted; quoits are now and again taken up; but the sole really popular form of amusement is that which is furnished through the medium of a fellow-labourer who can handle the fiddlebow or the concertina, and discourse the sweet but simple music of the national airs of Scotland. It is only when there is a chance of a good rousing rustic dance that the farm-labourer awakes from his lethargy, and foots it with might and main. A local ball is a great event; but, in such parishes as it still flourishes, the raffle, as it is called, very suitably takes the place of this gathering. This institution has now, however, nearly died out; yet in its pristine days it was the occasion of much jollity and mirth to the agricultural toilers. The raffle was generally got up for the benefit of some poor but deserving person residing within the limits of the parish boundaries. A varied selection of appropriate articles was—or w, shall I say!—purchased at the nearest country town, in view of the approaching raffle; such commodities generally consisting of small packets of tobacco, sweets, tea, or embroidery to tickle the fancy of the girls, with a choice of apples, pears, oranges, or whiskey. A douce, sensible man is appointed to preside at a little table, around which the miscellaneous display of good things is placed. A little tin jug occupies the centre of the unpretentious board, and within it the dice are inserted in due preparation for the first 4 throw.' The individual stake is one penny; the combined total amounts only to three or four pence; and the winner has a choice of the various articles for which the raffle takes place. The raffle is held in the barn of some small farmer or humble crofter, and if an open loft exists in the building, it is sure to be occupied by the fiddlers, of whom at least two will be in evidence, and whose duties are neither light, nor their services unappreciated. Dance follows dance, and tune follows tune, until the rafters of the old barn ring again. But, as already hinted, these re-unions are mostly things of the past.

Pulpit denunciations and whisperings of illegality have, generally speaking, effectually killed them; though it must be told, in honour of bygone associations, that they have not absolutely died out. They were the innocent opportunities of much genuine mirth and jollity; the old-world glamour was around them; but, on the other hand, it must be owned there was a dark record attached to them,—a tale of the baldest immorality and vice. Yet the raffle per se was blameless, and one may freely pass it by with a *pax vobiscum!*

The blacksmith's 'smiddy' is a noted rendezvous of the farm labourers on a cold winter's evening. When supper is over, the ploughman sets out for the blacksmith's shop, with his 4 sock ' and his 'cou'ter,' both of which require to be replenished and resharpened, and by the hour of 7.30 or 8 o'clock, in that dingy but withal comfortable shelter, there may be seen a large, noisy, voluble throng of country yokels, retailing to one another the latest gossip which circulates through the parish, or discussing with much heat and rude force of epithet the relative merits of leading adepts in the various details of farm work. But harmless gossip occasionally gives place to outrageous scandal, and then, if the blacksmith chance to be a sober, sedate fellow, it requires no little tact on his part to conciliate the assembly, and at the same time maintain his principles and allay the uneasy twinges of his offended conscience. One such son of Vulcan I can well remember. He was a noted man in his craft, but in addition to superb skill with the hammer, was a powerful lay-preacher and leading elder to boot. This good man, however, by the exercise of a discretion which did him the highest honour, succeeded in the most admirable manner and degree in reconciling the decorum of his position as a pillar of orthodoxy, with the bonhomie and tolerance characteristic of the master of ceremonies in a country smiddy. It was not so much by any verbal expression as by an unmistakable change of manner and action, that this worthy man invariably succeeded in putting a restraint upon the free speech and rough behaviour of the uncultured rustics who thronged his smiddy, some of them perched around the flaming forge smoking their well-seasoned 'cutties' others reclined on the wooden benches, and the remainder, perchance, fain to rest their jaded limbs on the earthen floor. The smith's name was Sandy Ferguson, and the ploughmen would say, ' Sandy's a queer chield in his opingins; he gangs a wee bit ower far, ye ken; but deil be in us, if we can put a spoke in his wheel, try fat we can.'

The North country farm-labourer is a personage sui generis in many respects, but in none more so than in the matter of clothing. In his gait he is decidedly akin to the agricultural toiler all the world over. His movements are ungainly, and his whole manner slouching and slovenly. In outward garb, however, he differs very much from the farm-labourer in the south of England. The hideous smock is unknown in Moray, Banff, or Aberdeen; at any rate in the form and the dimensions which characterize it in the sunnier south. In the northern counties, when it makes its appearance, it is a smart tight-fitting article of dress, known as a 4 slope/ and constituting a sort of cross between a sleeved waistcoat and an ordinary jacket, only made of white or striped unbleached linen. The trousers are usually of moleskin or corduroy, and, if the slope is absent, a velvet waistcoat, of inferior but well-wearing quality, with moleskin or cotton sleeves, is worn in lieu of a jacket and less substantial vest. Such is the ordinary work-a-day garb, both in summer and in winter, of the farm-labourer; with the addition of a good Scotch bonnet for the head, graced by preference with a large scarlet tassel; and failing the bonnet, a rough straw hat or ordinary peaked cap. There is nothing particularly noticeable in the dress of the female servants, except that the taste for finery and the latest fashions, be they ever so ridiculous, has thoroughly taken possession of their minds. At the term time they are the very best customers at the different drapers' shops in the market town, where they almost invariably deal for cash, distinguished in this respect from their sturdier brothers, most of whom have running accounts with the local tailors, whose misfortune it is in this manner to contract a multitude of bad debts. For the losses entailed by this system of credit, however, they generally manage to recoup themselves by the exorbitant prices which they charge.

If the agricultural servants are poorly fed, they are certainly still more poorly housed. As a fair sample of the prevailing accommodation for the labourers in the Scotch North-eastern counties the following may be taken as characteristic. On a farm which I shall here call by the name of Bankhead, the servants* quarters may be seen in close proximity to the cow byre,—indeed it divides with that compartment the entire honour of a separate building. If you do not know your whereabouts, you are exceedingly likely to step in amongst the cows, when in search of human beings, and vice versa. The roof of the tenement is covered with thatch, which has a wofnl appearance of dilapidation. On entering the portion set apart for the farm-labourers the first thing that strikes the eye is a large square wooden trunk, known as the 'meal-girnel,' and the use of which is probably indicated with sufficient perspicuity by that word. In a corner of the room to the left, a large collection of picks, spades, and other agricultural tools is placed, as if this were the only available space for such implements in the whole establishment. Directly opposite the door is a little window, twenty-four inches by eighteen, the aperture for the admission of light, save and except a random chink which may chance to show itself in the roof. In the window ledge a cracked looking-glass, the only one in the room, reclines at the oddest of angles; and near it a seldom used and somewhat toothless comb stands ready for service. The only furniture in this damp and cheerless den consists of three big chests, the property of the farm-labourers, and a couple of wooden bedsteads, over which the coarsest of coverlets are placed. When it is added that the floor is so uneven as to constitute a veritable Scylla and Charybdis ; that the walls present a solid front of stone and mortar; that to the rafters are attached such articles as horses, collars, saddles, and bridles; a rough but fairly complete idea of the interior will have been obtained. In winter nights the cold is intense; the snow is sometimes blown through the chinks of the ill-fitting doorway and cast up as a tiny snow-wreath on the uneven floor. In bed the labourers shiver under their scanty covering, until perchance they get up, proceed to the bam, and, fetching from thence a quantity of canvas sacks pile them upon their beds as a protection from the icy chill. This is a true and accurate picture. The house-accommodation of the married men has already been referred to, and further description of it is here unnecessary.

And now as to the last and most important point with which I propose to deal, the problem presented by the intellectual and moral condition of the farm-labourers. Whatever may be lacking to them (and indeed there is much, very much lacking) there is certainly not the original want of a primary education. Had their early training found proper means of maintenance, it would have been in many

respects adequate. But the state of intellectual lethargy to which the agricultural toiler speedily succumbs after quitting school is deplorable in the extreme. By and bye the greater portion of his knowledge is lost, and he rises in the morning and lies down at night with neither the desire nor the ability to take any interest in matters which concern his higher welfare; untroubled about religion, or politics, or literature even in that most general of its forms, the circulating newspaper. To this widespread and comprehensive assertion there are no doubt here and there a few exceptions of men who do concern themselves with the means of self-improvement; who are influenced by religious feeling, or political sentiment; and who take in the local or county paper; but, as a class, the farm-labourers are such as I have just described them, and I know no parallel to their dense ignorance and consummate apathy except it be found amongst the individuals of their own class in many districts of rural England. A few years ago there was, indeed, a similar absence of intellectual concern amongst the trawlers of the North Sea, and the depth of ignorance and moral degradation was there more pronounced; but yet in the case of the Scotch farm-labourer there seems to me to exist a not dissimilar state of isolation from the great hopes and aspirations of humanity, and all intelligent appreciation of the feelings which throb in the hearts, and the questions which agitate the minds, of the great British democracy in the urban centres. The schoolmaster has done his best, but circumstances have been against him; the parish ministers have, let it be supposed, done their duty, though candid criticism cannot but chronicle an immeasurable failure; the political agitator has been amongst them, but as yet with no beneficent result; and the outcome is—well, such a state of dogged ignorance as I have been endeavouring feebly to depict. As to morality, let the statistics of illegitimacy be duly pondered, and it will require little power of reflection or imagination to realize the condition of things which prevails even at the present hour. Every one who knows the moral tone which exists amongst these hard-worked men and women can but say with unfeigned sorrow that a higher sentiment as to the relation between the sexes exists in many savage and untutored communities than amongst this populous and to some extent educated section of the British democracy dwelling in the midst of nineteenth century civilization. What then is the remedy for this general sad state of things? First of all, be it said, there is no heroic remedy. The schoolmaster must toil and struggle, the minister of religion must wake up to the fact that old methods are in many respects effete; he must more and more make his influence as the moral teacher felt, he must be the apostle of the kindly social spirit; the political theorist or platform lecturer may go ahead, whether he be old-fashioned Tory or modern Liberal; the newspaper may push its claims with renewed persistence. If by any means the men—and women too—could be brought to interest themselves in instructive reading, if an institution could be called into existence which would do for the labourers something similar to that which has been done by Mechanics' Institutes for the town's handicraftsmen, a great step in advance would be taken. To my mind, however, the key to the problem is in the solidarity of interest between the farmer and the labourer. Any political theory from any quarter which would seek to dissever the interests of these two would be fraught with baneful consequences. If the labourer is to be raised intellectually, socially, and morally, the farmer must be an important factor in the problem. Community of interest ought therefore to be maintained and strengthened. Every available influence should be brought to bear upon the occupiers of both small and large holdings to induce them to take a more hearty and intelligent interest in their servants; to care for their physical and intellectual well-being; and to exercise that gentle stimulus which would effectually draw forth the hitherto latent mental energies of the great body of the workmen. I should not rest this plea upon grounds of sentiment only but upon that unity of interest which I strongly believe to subsist between the employer and the employed in this particular case.

Finally it is well to let the light in upon any unsatisfactory and unpleasant condition of affairs, and if nothing else has been done, I trust the purpose which I set myself, at the outset, of giving an unvarnished account of the North country farm labourer has been fulfilled. I close in the simple words of the inspirer of Burns :—

'Peace to the husbandman and a' his tribe,
Whase care fells a' our wants frae year to year;
Lang may his sock and counter turn the glebe,
And banks o' com bend down wi' laded ear!
May Scotia's simmers aye look gay and green;
Her yellow hairsts frae scowry blasts decreed!
May a' her tenants sit fu' snug and bien,
Frae the hard grip o' ails and poortith freed—
And a lang lastiug train o' peacefu' hours succeed!'

Alexander Gordon.

And that's it for this week and hope you all have a great weekend

Alastair