

take the initiative of reform in their own hands if they would escape a thousand impracticable crotchets, long dreary discussions, and Sessions of profitless theories.

MEAT AND BREAD.

In a clever article by Edward Hurst, Esq. in the last number of *Dolman's Magazine*, the writer speaks of the relative value of bread and meat, and intimates that a pound of meat ought to cost no more than a pound of bread. In Scotland, before the Union, butchers' meat was as cheap and even cheaper than oatmeal bread, and every other country must once have been similarly situated.

Strange as this may sound in a country like this, where the ordinary price of bread is about twopence a-pound and meat eightpence a-pound, including the bone and some refuse, and uncooked, it is no doubt correct. Lord Kaimes and Blackstone—indeed, all who have written on the progress of the human race—agree that the first state of man was that of a hunter, like the Indians at this day. As the number of men increased, and when animals became scarce, it became necessary to catch and rear such as could be tamed, and tribes and nations became shepherds, cowherds, and swineherds. There was a transition from the hunter to the cattle-breeding state. This was the state of the Jewish Arabs, from Abraham down to Joseph's time. Such was the state of early Rome—at its commencement as a depasturing country; and such was the ancient state of all the northern nations. At all such periods, meat must have been much cheaper than the produce of tilled, ploughed, or arable land, the quantity of which was small, and cultivated with great labour, difficulty, and uncertainty. Mankind increased, and still pressed on the means of maintenance; for we find, as late as Julius Cæsar, the Helvetians bursting from their mountain sides into Gaul to obtain land to enable them to exist, as their own country had become too narrow for them. The highlanders, in the early history of half the nations of the world, were too strong for the people of the plains—the herdsmen and shepherds; but in this instance, as in many others, the organization of their armies enabled the Romans—as allies of the Gauls—to drive the Helvetians back to their mountains.

From the cattle-breeding state to the agricultural or tillage state, the transition became in time easy, and was facilitated by that instrument so much celebrated in all countries—the plough. Rome was at an early period in this agricultural state. But in the process of time large portions of land about the "eternal city" were occupied by the Roman aristocracy; and when wheat could be obtained, as it could be, at a much cheaper rate from Sicily, Egypt, and Lybia, it ceased to be cultivated about Rome, and much of the land not required by the amazingly wealthy senators for their gardens was laid down in pasturage. It was found more profitable to raise stock than corn. This change must have been highly advantageous to the Roman people, as its tenacity was to equalise the price of meat and bread—a matter lost sight of altogether by that party historian Mr. Allison. Corn, indeed, could be imported into Rome at a cheap rate; but the Roman farmer had never any thing to fear from a competition with cattle, which could not be sent in any considerable number across the sea, even if raised in Egypt or Sicily. This is so obvious that it is unnecessary to dwell upon it.

In England, for many years, the chief attention of agriculturists has been turned to the cultivation of corn, as if that was the only article of consumption required by man. Yet we have meat, deducting the bone, &c. at from 9l. to 10l. per pound, and bread, sifted of all bran and pollard, and baked, at less than 2l. per pound; and land in the Romney marshes, which will not fatten cattle, though it does sheep, letting to the graziers at £5 an

acre, and in Pevensy level, where cattle will fatten, at a similar rate; whilst there are millions of acres of plough land that will not let for more than 20s. an acre; and it is notorious that not one farmer in ten keeps half the stock that he ought—nay, worse, thousands of farms are not half cultivated—not half manured, because the stock upon them is insufficient.

What is to be inferred from all this? Is it not, that, by foolish laws, the attention of farmers has been called too much to the raising of corn, whilst the raising of stock—meat,—as necessary for man in these climates as bread,—has been neglected? If the price of a pound of bread and a pound of meat ought to be, according to Mr. Hurst, about equal, does it not indicate to the farmer that he now ought to pay much more attention to raising meat than he has done? It is true that a corn crop comes in every year, whilst the returns from stock take 2, 3, or 4 years; but the difference between the price of meat and bread is so enormous, that the profit on the former must surely compensate for difference in time. We wish to speak with care and modesty on the subject, because we are aware that it is one that practical men only are competent to form and give an opinion on; but the hints we throw out may, perhaps, direct the attention of some of our readers to it.

CORRESPONDENCE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE WEEKLY EXPOSITOR.

SIR,—I observe by your paper of the 20th inst. that the professed object of the *Expositor*, among other things, is the reformation of abuses in the public departments of this distracted and ill-governed Province. With a view of assisting you in your praiseworthy and very arduous undertaking, I beg leave through your columns, in a short series of letters, to offer some observations on the Emigrant Establishment of this city, with a view of demonstrating that the system at present pursued is bad from bottom to top.

It is well known to the inhabitants of Montreal that large numbers of emigrants remain in this city during the winter months, and have to be relieved by the charitable public, on whom they are cast wholly dependent for subsistence. It is often asked, What becomes of the Emigrant Fund—or rather the Emigrant Tax? This secret shall be no longer hidden; and I hope to satisfy the public on the subject.

During the year 1844, the number of emigrants who arrived at the port of Quebec was in round numbers about 20,000, paying a tax of something like £3850. Out of this sum, at the port of Montreal, there was paid to the Forwarders, for the transport of emigrants to the different sections of the Province, the sum of £524 currency, whilst there was paid to the Emigrant Agent and his staff, the sum of £537,—thus showing that the salaries of the officers of the establishment exceeded the amount given for the relief of emigrants by £13. This, Mr. Editor, is something like the Irish Poor Law. But what became of the remaining £2789 which the emigrant had to pay before he was cleared at the Custom-House?—that is the question. It is well known that the relief given at Quebec is trifling: the above sum of £524 sent all who required it as far as Kingston. The relief from this latter place is also trifling, having no tolls to pay from Kingston to the head of the Lake.

But perhaps the public are not generally aware that there are no fewer than eight Emigrant Agents between Quebec and Hamilton, who annually pocket something like \$5,800 of the Emigrant Tax, or more than one-fourth of the whole amount. This is justice to the suffering emigrants, at the expense of their own pockets! The Adminis-

tration may create places for their favorites, and the community may, if they will, tacitly submit to pay for and perpetuate the abuse; but that the already destitute stranger who arrives on our shores should be compelled to contribute out of his penury to the support of such a state of things, is surely a great and manifest wrong.

Well, sir, there are few diseases without a remedy; and, with the utmost deference to the opinions of others who may have the interest of the emigrant at heart, I would suggest such a remedy for the evils connected with the Emigrant Establishment. First, let us commence at the port of Montreal, where the expenses are enormous, considering the duty to be performed; for if performed, the case would not be so bad; but it is not, nor even attempted. In the first place, the emigrants are neglected on their arrival at this port; they seldom or never see the Emigrant Agent before arriving at the Emigrant Shed, and then only late in the afternoon, when he meets them in the character of a *Nero*, calling them paupers, &c. the moment they ask relief. The poor people are not aware that, for the harsh treatment with which he visits them, he is pocketing annually nine hundred dollars of their hard-earned money. Yet such is the case, and it cannot be denied. Then come the applicants for a free passage, when the truly poor and deserving emigrant is wholly neglected and set aside. The cunning and the crafty man, with his pockets full of money, soon finds out how to manage. He goes to some of his old acquaintances, gets them to write a touching letter to the Emigrant Agent; the Agent knows the party sending this letter, consequently the rich man gets a free passage, whilst the poor and simple emigrant is left behind. He has to settle in Montreal; the winter sets in; he is forced to beg, and become a burthen upon the citizens; his children are brought up in idleness or worse, when they should be scattered among the farmers, learning agricultural pursuits, which would make them honest, industrious, and useful people, instead of begging in the streets, and oftentimes stealing from the citizens. Our goal is a standing evidence of this. Both males and females are found there, who should be with their friends in different parts of the Province, and who would be sent there provided that a proper system were adopted.

Whilst, therefore, Montreal may boast of being the capital of British North America and of possessing the Seat of Government, she has also to lament and say that she is the seat of pauperism and crime,—which is chiefly to be attributed to the bad system of managing emigrants upon their arrival; although the widow, the orphan, the lame, blind, lunatic, and foolish emigrant have to subscribe in equal proportions the sum of nine hundred dollars for the season to pay an emigrant agent, who lends little or no attention to them. Such a salary is shameful, and a crying sin. One hundred pounds would be sufficient at the port of Montreal, and one man more than sufficient to do what is to be done, even were everything performed that should be required. Were the agent to visit the steam-boats every morning on their arrival, and speak with the emigrants, then proceed to the sheds, commence to examine those who have been more than 48 hours in the premises, he would be through all his work before 12 o'clock. The remainder of the day he might spend in answering letters, if any; no more assistants are required than a labourer, nurse, and police. The doctor might attend as usual, but his salary is far too much. Remember I speak for the poor, out of whose pockets the whole comes.

In future letters I purpose to make known many other glaring facts.

I am, Sir,
Your obed. servant,
P. BRENNAN.