

### THE COMPLAINT OF THE SPARROWS AT THE ROYAL ARTILLERY PARK.

[Suggested by seeing a flock of them flying round and round, in evident distress, after the closing up of the Royal Artillery Park.]

Dear friends and fellow Sparrows,  
I've some weighty words to say,  
As they affect our future prospects,  
Stand "Attention," here I pray:

I've whirled about the Park—  
I've whistled "where oh, where,"  
There's a terrible big desertion,  
To me seems very clear,

The handsome, frowning citadel,  
The key to all the rest,  
Bought, they say, with life-blood,  
Stands like an empty nest.

And our Royal Park,  
Where we've so happy been  
Cared for and loved and petted  
By the big guns of the Queen.

Is like a silent graveyard,  
With monuments of shame  
For England and her honor  
Will be an empty name.

When she deserts her children,  
Her strength, her pride, her fame,  
And allows the "mighty dollar"  
With "sordid" her name to stain—

I love old England, Brethern,  
As much as any of you,  
And what affects her honor  
Is a thorn in my breast too.

But she needn't cut the bough  
That held us to the tree,  
We loved the very shadow  
Of the land of liberty.

They say we'll turn to Frenchers  
And have to *parlez vous*,  
For friars will get the barracks,  
Long the home of the Royal Blue.

Some talk of turning Yankees,  
And say its mother tongue,  
Because from the same great nation  
Both they and we are sprung.

Don't hop with angry twittersings,  
At what I now have said;  
Matters are very serious;  
They affect our daily bread.

Let's fly to Colonel Rhodes  
And tell him about our cheer,  
He never meant desertion  
When he brought us over here.

And if something isn't done,  
Starve we surely will,  
For since the "Orontes" sailed,  
Not a crumb's been inside my bill.

The sparrows were brought from England by  
Colonel Rhodes two or three years ago and have  
ever since been carefully looked after and petted  
by the men of the Royal Artillery who provided  
them quarters in the Artillery Park.

### LORD MALMESBURY ON THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

At the annual dinner of the South Avon Agricultural Society, held at Christ church, the Right Hon. the Earl of Malmesbury presided. In replying to the toast of "The Houses of Parliament," his Lordship defended the House of Lords from the charges recently made against it. In the course of his speech he said: It is a very important matter in this country to know whether the House of Lords is of value to the nation or not, and before you can decide upon that point it is necessary to read and learn and inwardly to digest the history of England. That, I venture to say, has not been done by those who accuse the House of Lords so vaguely and so lightly. [Hear, hear.] It is not for me at a meeting of this kind to go back and take up your time by quoting and recalling to your memory various moments at which the Peers have been the saviours of this country, when they were the first to assert the liberty of the people against the tyranny of the Crown, and when, later, they defended the Crown against the tyranny of the people. (Cheers.) This is not the place or the occasion for such historical reviews, but, speaking personally of the House of Lords as I know it and have known it, having attended it with great care and per-

severance for thirty years, I may say I do not know any body of men who attend to the business which is before them with greater attention and perseverance than my colleagues do in that House. (Hear, hear.) They are, as it may be said, out of sight; but two or three times in a session a debate springs up, the galleries are filled with ladies and gentlemen, and the newspapers report speeches, which, I may venture to say without vanity, are second to none that can be spoken. But it is not of that which I would speak; it is of the committees that sit in that House; it is of the arduous and careful business-like manner in which private bills and public bills are sifted in those committees of the House; and these are not seen. I wish to speak most respectfully of the House of Commons—as respectfully as any body of men can be spoken of—but I say, and it is impossible that it should be otherwise, owing to the great mass of business before them, the late hours at which they sit, and various other circumstances, and reasons, I say that the bills they send up to our House are constantly so very rough and unshaped, and it is so totally impossible for any notion to be taken upon them, that, unless there was a second House of Parliament, whether the House of Lords or any other House, it would be beyond the power of the law to take hold of those bills and put them into any kind of form. If you did not recollect the vast business of the House of Commons, you could have no possible idea of the blunders and the extraordinary shape in which some of the bills come up which we are told to pass as laws of the land. There has been one great complaint made of the House of Lords this year—that it has done nothing; that when a great question—I mean the Ballot Bill—was sent up at the end of the session, the House of Lords rejected it. These are the words of those who wish to attack the House upon what I may call a false indictment, and make use of the word that it "rejected" the bill. The House of Lords did not reject the bill; they never considered it. They said, "You send us up this bill, important as it is, which has taken you four or five weeks to discuss before you could settle what its details should be, and expect us to pass it in three days—a bill so important to the country, changing so completely the character of the English voter that it requires at least ten times that number of days to consider and arrange it in a useful form," (Hear, hear.) The House of Lords, therefore, declined to consider the bill this year, but they never rejected it—they never refused or declined, or said the bill was not worth considering. And so it has been with other bills sent up to us. We unfortunately sit there perfectly ready to do our work from the beginning of February to the end of July, and from some cause or other which it is not for me here to explain, last session we remained sitting without anything to do, except as regards a few bills which originated in our House. They were practical measures, and these in the great Babel of politics, are not seen or known, but they are of immense importance to many districts of this country and to its main interests. You may depend upon it, if you only give the House of Lords work to do they are perfectly ready to do it. In proposing another toast his Lordship spoke of the land laws and tenant right: Among the other changes which are proposed, such as these we have lately alluded to, it is said the land laws require to be altered. What do they mean by the "land laws?" They mean to alter that great and noble system of confidence between landlord and tenant which

exists in this country, and in no other like it. They wish to interfere, and no longer to leave the landlords and tenants free agents in their respective contracts with one another. I consider it is an insult to any intellectual person to be told that two grown-up men—the landlord on the one side and the man wishing to take a farm on the other—should not be able between themselves to come to a fair agreement as to the time and conditions upon which the one lets and the other takes the land (Hear, hear). I know nothing of Ireland except that the habits of the people are perfectly different as between landlord and tenant, from what they are here; but this is what I suppose has started these opinions that such and such laws should be made for this country as have been made for Ireland. Now, I am quite convinced, if such laws as were passed for Ireland two years ago were passed for England, they would be perfectly futile both to the tenants on one side, in many cases, and the landlords on the other—but less to the landlords than to the tenants. If the landlord does not retain sufficient personal interest and power over his estate, he will not look upon it as an heirloom, where he was born and where he means to die. He will not look upon his tenants like so many brothers, as it were, who are to go through life with him, both gaining a fair profit from the estate which belongs to him, but, as we see in France and other countries he will look upon the estate as a mere investment, and himself not being amused upon it, and having no personal power and interest in it, he will depart from it, and either he will, if he has capital, farm his own estate under the care of skillful agents and middlemen, or if he does not do that he will let it out at once to some public company which would spring up on the speculation of taking large estates and cultivating them to the best profit they could. (Hear, hear.) There would be an end to that invaluable race of men—that class which Lord Derby used to call "the backbone of the country"—the tenant farmers. (Hear, hear.) There would be no longer that feeling which makes the strength of this country wherever you find it, whatever districts it may be divided into. I cannot sufficiently recommend to you a continuance of that system, acting together, consulting together, and, above all, of being plain and straightforward with your landlord, telling him all the grievances you have, and coming to that understanding which two Englishmen of common sense ought always to be able to accomplish within half an hour. (Cheers.) With respect to this government or any other—of course I do not allude politically to anything—I have only one prayer to make to them and to the House of Commons and that is, leave us alone; leave us to our own good sense and our own industry; leave us to the laws regarding landlord and tenant under which we have lived hitherto, and I am perfectly certain the system cannot be improved in any way. (Hear, hear.) The landlord and tenant are now both under the surveillance of public opinion, and if they dispute they have what is better than any written law, the custom of the country to resort to.

The *Army and Navy Gazette* hears that officers have sent in their papers by "hundreds and hundreds." In one cavalry regiment one major and six captains and several subalterns seek to retire. The Dublin Brigade Office is reported to have had 400 applications to retire, and we are afraid to mention the number reported to have been received at headquarters.