

they rode on horseback. "Dragoon," the soldier who is prepared to serve on foot or on horseback as the occasion requires, was suggested by the fabulous "dragon," an animal furnished with wings and able either to run or fly. The Roman soldier who suffered himself to be made a prisoner of war—*captus*—was considered a worthless fellow. From *captus*, through the Norman-French *cattif*, comes our "cattif," a term that forcibly indicates the character of mean people.

The first "*sauveteur*" was led by an earnest religious enthusiasm to visit *la Sainte Terre*, the Holy Land. Gradually, those idlers who preferred a ramble to the active duties of life took staff and set out for the Holy Land, and thus the word lost its honourable meaning. The family of Merode was distinguished in the history of the Netherlands. It had one member, who made incursions into the enemy's country from which he always returned laden with spoils. From his time, those who wander in quest of plunder have been termed *Merode-ers*, "marauders."

During a war between Germany and Austria, the most incredible rumours concerning the defeats and victories of the Germans were circulated. All of them were found to originate in Hamburg, and whenever unreliable news was announced it would be said "that is a Hamburg," and eventually a "humbug."

Mara was an elf of Finland, and she was accustomed to torment those whom she disliked with horrible visions. Hence our night-mare. A priory of London, "St. Mary's of Bethlehem," was granted to the city by Henry VIII. as a place of lodgement for the insane. Bethlehem by degrees was corrupted "bedlam," the name now given to lunatic asylums. "Gazette" is derived from *Gazetta*, a small venetian coin, which was the price of newspapers containing commercial and military information, published by the Republic of Venice in 1563.

When the Moors ruled Spain, they imposed duties on all merchandise carried past a certain town—Tarifa—located at the extremity of a promontory extending far out into the Mediterranean near the Straits of Gibraltar. These taxes were called *tarifa*, and then *tariff*. The Danes have a word *Gheu* which signifies "go on"; and, formerly, French heralds, wishing to stop a knight in his course at a tournament, cried "*Hola*." *Ghee*, *whoa*, as used by teamsters, appear to be thus derived. Some authorities say however that they are derived from the name of "Jehu," the celebrated charioteer.

But there is really no end to such things and we may as well stop here; we trust that the readers may become interested and continue the investigations we have begun, for we will assure them that the result will be full compensation for their time and labour. G. T.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### THE TRUTH ABOUT IRELAND.

To the Editor of THE WEEK:

SIR,—I trust that you will find space to publish the following few remarks on some of the most prominent errors that your correspondent ("Fairplay Radical") like all others of his class of writers has fallen into. If the "staitest sect" or "Celtic Irish" were the instructors of his younger days, as he claims them to have been, he must have been a very apt pupil indeed; nor has he yet forgotten the training of his earlier days, judging by the wide range of imagination he still commands. Imagine for instance his comparison of statistics 1776-79 with those of 1891, more than a century since, and for him to contrast and compare the value of Irish farm land then with that now must, to those thoroughly posted in the matter, seem ridiculously absurd. Why, sir, is it not a notorious fact that rent has increased out of all proportion to the value of land during the last century, while at the same time the value of farm produce in Ireland has decreased to an alarming extent owing to the competition from other countries?

Of the increase in rent, I will give just two instances, both of which come before my own notice so vividly that I trust "Fairplay Radical" will not attribute my authority to that of a so-called "*Celtic imagination run wild*."

The first is that of my father's farm on Lord Lurgan's estate, County Armagh, part of which within my own memory, or I should say within a period of twenty years, has been increased from 10s. per acre to £4 (four pounds sterling), and that other portions of his farm have been increased during the same period to an average of about 100 per cent., namely, from 15s. and 20s. to 30s. and 40s. respectively. And this, too, which I emphatically impress on the readers of THE WEEK, was advanced because of improvements made on the farm, not by the landlord by any means but by the tenant.

The other instance is that of a cousin of my own, who seven years ago, when I left Ireland for this country, had the "Nutley Farm," situated about ten miles from Kingston, rented at a yearly rental of £7 10s. per acre (seven pounds ten shillings, per acre), and this fertile land would not pasture even one cow to the acre, for he had to purchase hay, turnips, and grains in addition to feed his stock, which I know was not in proportion as one to the acre. The very idea of quoting statistics of 1776-79 goes to prove nothing except the unfairness of the rent charged now (compare above) with that charged a century ago. "Fairplay Radical" quotes from Arthur Young, "some of the lands near Kingston will carry an ox and a wether per acre." And rents for from 15s. to 20s. per acre.

The above instances, quoted by me, I can prove by

documentary evidence, that is, if the veracity of a "Celtic Irishman" is called in question.

I will conclude by repeating that English proverb, "Let every tub stand on its own bottom," and the Scotch, "Let every herring hang by its own head"; and say that these are ideas the "consummation of which are devoutly to be wished for" by every true and loyal Irishman, not only in the north, south, east and west of Ireland, but all the world over, because it is a well-known fact that Ireland and Irishmen have hung long enough by other heads and at the mercy of other hands than their own.

With the hope that "Fairplay Radical" will in his future articles desist from citing stale statistics such as I have called in question with conclusions which must be obvious to every fair minded reader of THE WEEK.

ISAAC E. PEDLOW.

Renfrew, January 14, 1891.

### OLD FRENCH PEAR TREES.

To the Editor of THE WEEK:

SIR,—In reading the instructive article by Mr. John Fraser, reprinted in your number of the 9th inst., and entitled "La Salle's Homestead at Lachine," I was much interested in his reference to the "almost giant pear-trees said to have been two hundred years old in 1814." These old French pears are not confined to the island of Montreal, but at an early date were transplanted further west, particularly along the Detroit River, where perhaps they found an even more congenial home than at Lachine, and grew to be not "almost," but actual giants. All along the Canadian shore from above the present town to Windsor, but more particularly at quaint old Sandwich, Pelee Island, and down to Amherstburg, these grand old trees are still to be found in an apparently vigorous, though in reality in a decaying condition.

When I lived at Windsor some years ago they greatly interested me, and I made many pilgrimages to the giants, whose "air of old" carried the mind back to primitive days. The singular fact is their perishing condition. The reader may remember my reference to them in the 6th scene of the 4th act of *Tecumseh*:—

How those giant pears  
Loom with uplifted and high-arched heads,  
Like forest trees! A hundred years ago  
They, like their owner, had their roots in France—  
In fruitful Normandy—but here refuse,  
Unlike, to multiply, as if their spirits  
Grieved in their alien home.

The end of these remarkable old trees cannot be far off. The young saplings were probably sent over from France in large numbers as *souvenirs*, and found their way westward as settlement extended. One blown down near Detroit some years ago, upon counting the annular rings, was found to be one hundred and seventy years old, and was therefore contemporary with the foundation of Fort Pontchartrain and the settlement of Detroit by Cadillac. Their fruit, though sweet and pleasant to the taste, is small, but the yield in good years is fabulous. Their sterility otherwise is singular; but, of course, I only speak of the old pears on the Detroit, where, so far as my enquiries went, it seemed plain that they were dying out. Mr. Fraser, at the close of his article, makes mention of "a promising young pear orchard" at his old homestead, and it would be interesting to learn whether this is an offshoot or not of the old trees he refers to.

Prince Albert, N.-W.T.

C. MAIR.

## THE DECLINE OF RURAL NEW ENGLAND.

IN every period of American history the influence of New England has been marked and out of proportion to its size and population. In religious thought and activities, in great moral and social movements, in literature and scholarship, in inventive genius and the skilled industries, in the pulpit, at the Bar, on the Bench, and in legislative halls, New-Englanders have always stood in the front rank and have contributed largely to the worthiest American achievements.

Now, the bulk of this population, until very recent years, has been rural rather than urban, and the towns themselves, large and small, have been made up of the country-born and country-bred, while almost the entire stream of emigration that has flooded and fertilized the North-West has had its source in the hamlets and farms. It would be easy to show that the quality of this output from the rural districts has been even more remarkable than the quantity. Hence came Webster, Choate, Chase, Greeley, Cushing, Bryant, Whittier, Beecher, Hopkins, and a long list of notables that will occur to every reader. It may therefore be fairly claimed that what New England has been and what it has done, at home and abroad, through its citizens or through its colonists, has come in large measure from the country districts.

Hence the prosperity of this region concerns not merely New England, but the country at large. The testimony of many reliable witnesses and my own observations, covering more than twenty years, convince me that the outlook for the future is very unsatisfactory.

1. Fifty years ago almost every farm was cultivated by the owner, who had every interest in its most careful tillage, in making permanent improvements, and in the care of buildings, fences, and woodland. Hired labour was the exception, for the large families were quite competent for all the farm-work, the indoor as well as the

outdoor, with a surplus which went to the aid of less fortunate neighbours, and sent brains and muscle to the city or to the opening West. Not all farmers were equally industrious, frugal, and successful, but there was a large body of landed proprietors, homogeneous in race, substantially on an equality socially, and alike interested in the present and future welfare of the community. In this respect there has been a great change in the last twenty years, and one which is going on more rapidly every year. The land is passing into the hands of non-resident proprietors, by mortgage, by death of resident owner, by his removal to the village or manufacturing centre, or his emigration to the West.

It is also held in fewer hands, not as a general thing to be managed and worked in large estates, but to be rented from year to year.

The new proprietor has bought the farm at a small price, as compared with its former valuation, and has no interest or pride in it or its management, except as an investment. So in every township there is an increasing body of renters, as a class unreliable, unsuccessful, shifting, and shiftless. Their interest in the property and the community is temporary, their tillage such as they suppose will bring the largest immediate returns with the least care and labour. It goes without saying that such farms and all their appurtenances are in a state of chronic decline. These renters are often bankrupt farmers, or young men without the pluck and thrift to become farm-owners, the courage and push to go to the West, or the qualities in demand in the manufacturing towns.

2. Many farms are without resident cultivators, and in all probability will never again be homesteads. The New Hampshire Commissioner of Agriculture reports eight hundred and eighty-seven such farms, and these are only a small part. I know a district where eight contiguous farms have been thus abandoned, and, taking the farm on which the writer was born as the centre, a circle with a radius of five miles would inclose twenty farms abandoned within the last few years.

Some of these have good buildings, stone fences, apple and sugar orchards, and all have made comfortable homes. On some of them a few acres of the best land are tilled, while the rest produces a lessening crop of hay or is used for pasture. The fine old orchards, uncared for, are wasting away, a lilac or a few rose bushes struggling for life in the grass show the site of the old garden, the buildings are falling to decay, and homesteads that have fostered large and prosperous families for generations are a desolation and will soon be a wilderness. In some districts the old country roads are becoming impassable from the growth of bushes and the cessation of all repairs. An eminent New England judge told me last summer that public sentiment in these districts will not allow a jury to find damages against the authorities in case of injuries to travellers from such defective highways, on the ground that the diminished population cannot keep them in repair.

The abandonment of this rough country and the transfer of its population to more fertile regions or more remunerative employments may be no financial loss to the nation, but it robs New England of a hardy yeomanry, with whom the love of natal soil and home and simple life has been almost a religion.

3. Not only is the area of cultivated land decreasing in this way, but the land-owners are sensibly narrowing their tillage. The land is growing poorer, partly from natural causes and partly from less careful working and the marked decrease in the amount of live stock kept upon it. The fact is, farming does not pay, especially if help must be hired to do a large part of the work.

The farmer finds himself the victim of all the evils of a protective tariff without its supposed benefits. The promised home market he has found to his cost, if not his ruin, is a delusion and a snare. If the manufacturing centres in his vicinity have raised the price of some of his products, they have advanced the cost of labour in a greater degree, and drawn to themselves the best brain and muscle from the farms. He is being heavily taxed for the benefit of the whole list of these assistant industries that rob him of his working force, while the competition, intensified by labour-saving machines suited to the large prairie farms of the West, and stimulated by lavish gifts of land to settlers and subsidies to railroads, ruinously reduces the prices of his products in his natural home market. He buys Western flour and Western corn for his own consumption at a cheaper rate than he can produce them with hired labour, and by reason of the long winter is unable to compete with the West and South in cattle-raising for the Eastern markets at his door. Confining his attention to the few crops that, from their bulk or perishable nature, are not subject to the destructive competition of the West, the ordinary farmer merely lives and pays current expenses, while his less shrewd and careful neighbour falls behind each year, and sooner or later will be sold out of house and home.

Naturally, there is a decay of heart and hope that blights growth and prosperity. Many farms within a hundred miles of Boston, and not five miles from excellent railroad facilities, will not sell for the cost of the improvements. The New Hampshire Commissioner of Agriculture gives a long list of farms with "fairly comfortable buildings, at prices from two dollars to ten dollars per acre," and a shorter list at higher prices. The Vermont Commissioner gives a list at from three dollars to five dollars per acre, and nearer to railroad or village, with better buildings, five dollars to ten dollars—"all at no great distance from market and adapted to doing business." I