

## LORD BROUGHAM ON AGRICULTURE.

At the anniversary dinner of the Cumberland and Westmoreland Agricultural Society, at Penrith, Lord Brougham presided. The following is the noble Lord's speech, in proposing the toast of the evening:—

Lord Brougham then rose, and said he had now to propose, as the immediate business of the day, "Success to the Cumberland and Westmoreland Agricultural Society," whose great proceedings of the cattle show had brought them this day together. He ought to approach such a subject as that, on which he was, generally speaking, so ill-informed, and of which he had really no practical experience, with very great distrust of himself; but, nevertheless, he could not help feeling that he should ill-discharge his duty as their president on that occasion if he were altogether to repudiate the subject. They were met certainly to avoid all allusion whatever to political topics, and to unite in that which should further one of the greatest interests of mankind—the cultivation of the soil. His noble friend, the head of the society and Lord Lieutenant of the county, has set him the example of abstaining from any reference to disputed points, such as those connected with the trade in provisions. He cheerfully adopted the principle, and would avoid that contested ground altogether. He would also join him in holding this opinion—that whatever might be the effect of the late very important change in the law and policy of this country with respect to the corn trade, all men must admit that its first tendency, whatever might be its ultimate effects, was rather, upon the whole, he would not say of a kind to press hard upon the producer of food, upon the tiller of the earth, upon the landlord or the tenant farmer, but rather to stimulate him—for that was the moral he drew from it—to stimulate him to all measures of improvement whereby he can make his trade more profitable and his land more productive. He had the misfortune to differ upon the corn laws, as upon many other subjects, in his time, from his noble friend near him, and he was afraid also great numbers of those friends and neighbours he had now the honor of addressing. He did not mean to renew the discussion of the corn laws. He heard it debated till he was sick of the very name of corn—almost as much so as a lame man might be of the word. He was as sick of it as he could be during that tiresome and never-to-be-sufficiently-deprecated session of 1846, owing to the labour it took in that House of Parliament of which he was an unworthy member. God forbid he should renew the discussion now. But, though he had the misfortune to differ with many of them, he always maintained that in the end it would be no damage to neither landlord or tenant. He never denied that the immediate tendency would be

of a kind to press somewhat upon them. He never asserted, as many foolish and thoughtless people, in the giddiness of the moment, did, that repealing the corn laws would make the loaf larger, or the price of the loaf smaller. He never maintained such a proposition—he never would maintain such a proposition; if he had, the evidence would have been against him every hour of every day since. What its ultimate effects would be was a very frequent question; but he never maintained that such would be its immediate effect any more than he maintained, as some other agitators for repeal of the corn laws began by maintaining, that it would lower wages. "O, then, if it would lower wages," said the working people, "God forbid there should be a repeal of the corn laws." "But it will cheapen bread," rejoined the agitator, "and that will more than compensate for any reduction in your wages." "We are not so sure about that," was the reply; and it was a curious fact, nothing more was said on the idea of lowering wages, and from that time forth they held no public meeting except by ticket, because the working people would have come in and overwhelmed them. That was the fact. He mentioned this to show how the wisest of men were very wrong when they came to speculate on futurity. God knows, we are poor limited beings, not always seeing what was around and about us, and never at all what would be in the future. But it always was the opinion maintained by those with whom he associated on this subject—it was the most important lesson that could be drawn from the result of that controversy, and whatever happened to press on the farmer, it was the more important lesson for him to learn—it became doubly and trebly important that he should move all his powers, and put all his energies in force and action for the purpose of increasing the produce of his land and diminishing the expense of his cultivation. That was the ground on which they might all meet, whatever their opinions on local politics or general politics might be. His friend, the High Sheriff, having passed some time in the east, had imported an oriental apologue, for which he did not believe there was the slightest foundation in fact. In that excellent "Arabian Nights'" tale he gave them an account of a fight between a blue boar and a yellow bear, and as the time might come when, as the preachers of peace and arbitration promised, "the lion should lie down with the lamb"—although that was not likely soon to happen—he did not know what progress had been made in Africa towards taming the lion, by paring his claws, and making him submit, with the scissors in hand; but long before that the blue and the yellow boar were certainly at peace with each other, as on the present occasion. If they would allow him to make a somewhat scholastic allegory, on the subject, he