

prietors and two joint stock companies had come to grief over them, the manufacture of Stoke amounted to about 26,000 tons a year. It was gradually increased by the establishment of agencies in all the British colonies, and most other parts of the world, to 200,000 tons, or an increase of more than 700 per cent., with a corresponding increase in the number of men employed, and a more than equivalent advance in the wages paid. Thus, while the item for wages in 1852 was between £40 and £50, in 1889 it varied from £500 to £700 per week. This remarkable result was due to the untiring vigilance and unswerving courage of the new proprietor, who, in order to be about the works with the earliest and latest of his men, slept over the offices, and lived in the business. In nine months he was satisfied that things were paying in the wright way, and in two years the works had been placed on the high road to the position with which the present generation is familiar.

If Mr. Corbett had not, nine years ago, sold to the Salt Union, the splendid property he built up, Droitwich might now have been a sea-port. But all the great improvements which have been made in the town are mainly due to him. He has converted it into a popular health resort. Knowing that the use of brine for the manufacture of salt in Droitwich must decline, he erected baths by way of compensation, and there are now in the town several first-class hotels, and many comfortable villas for the accommodation of visitors. For 20 years he represented the Droitwich division in the House of Commons, and he has been pressed to renew his connection with the constituency. As to how he is regarded by the working classes, it suffices to say that for upwards of 40 years he never, as an employer, had a strike of 48 hours. Perhaps that was because he paid his men about 15 per cent higher wages than prevailed elsewhere in the salt trade, provided them with good cottages and gardens, schools, a dispensary, a doctor, a chaplain, and even wine when they needed it. In another capacity, that of landowner, he is so considerate to his tenants that, if he has a farm to let, there is a rush for it from men who are anxious to enjoy the advantages of being "under Mr. Corbett."

Impney, which occupied several years in building, is superbly situated on the banks of the river Salwayre, and stands on an eminence commanding a charming view of typical Worcestershire scenery

and part of the county of Salop. Twenty-five years ago wheat and beans were cultivated on the site, and it must have been no easy matter to make the grounds worthy of the mansion. But they are as picturesque as the house is beautiful. It was in Mr. Corbett's pleasant sanctum that my courteous host chatted respecting the unique project which has attracted so much attention.

"When," I asked, "did you first conceive the idea of founding a School of Agriculture?"

"It had been on my mind for 20 years to do something to educate the rising generation in the technical or scientific means of agriculture. I do not pretend to be an expert, but it has often struck me that the land has not been made the most of, and I thought it would be better to do something while I was living."

"Did you consult anyone before you came to the decision?"

"Yes; I talked the matter over with Mr. Martin Curtler, of Worcester, and other gentlemen of considerable agricultural experience, and they recommended me to let them write to several large landed proprietors to see if they would support the proposal, not financially, but as an educational agency for improving farming. There have since been two meetings, at each of which the landed proprietors who were present, expressed themselves warmly in favour of the object, and freely recognised its importance."

"Has any detailed scheme been finally determined upon yet?"

"No; at present the thing is quite in embryo. But, to put it roughly, I propose that a certain part of my Worcestershire estate, say about 200 acres, shall be apportioned for the purpose of an experimental farm, and that a building shall be erected with accommodation for 30 boarders, including separate bedrooms, for the sons of tenant farmers. It is my aim to do here what the State does in Germany.

"What kind of staff do you suggest?"

"An agricultural superintendent and secretary, a matron, and a bailiff would, I think, be sufficient, with necessary labourers, to form the staff."

"You considered, I believe, whether it would be more desirable to form a college or a school?"

*To be continued.*

