

members worked the land partly as kitchen garden and fruit orchards, and partly as dairy farm, stall feeding being encouraged and root crops grown for the cattle. Pigs, poultry, &c., were reared. Wages at the time were only 8d per day for men and 5d. for women, and the members were paid at these rates. Yet, as they lived chiefly on potatoes and milk produced on the farm, which, as well as mutton and pork, were sold to them at extremely low prices, they saved money or rather notes. Their health and appearance quickly improved, so much so that, with disease raging round them, there was no case of death or serious illness among them while the experiment lasted. The single men lived together in a large building, and the families in cottages. Assisted by Mrs. Craig, the secretary carried out the most enlightened system of education for the young, those old enough being alternately employed on the farm and in the school. Sanitary arrangements were in a high state of perfection, and physical and moral training were most carefully attended to. In respect of these and other social arrangements, Mr. Craig was a man much before his time, and he has since made himself a name in connection with their application in various parts of the country.

"The 'New System, as the Ralahine experiment was called, though at first regarded with suspicion and derision, quickly gained favour in the district, so that before long outsiders were extremely anxious to become members of the association. In January, 1832, the community consisted of fifty adults and seventeen children. The total number afterwards increased to eighty-one. Everything was prosperous, and the members of the association were not only benefited themselves, but their improvement exercised a beneficent influence upon the people in their neighbourhood. It was hoped that other landlords would imitate the excellent example of Mr. Vandeleur, especially as his experiment was one profitable to himself, as well as calculated to produce peace and contentment in disturbed Ireland. Just when these hopes were raised to their highest degree of expectancy, the happy community at Ralahine was broken up through the ruin and flight of Mr. Vandeleur, who had lost his property by gambling. Everything was sold off, and the labour notes saved by the members would have been worthless had not Mr. Craig, with noble self-sacrifice, redeemed them out of his own pocket.

"We have given but a very scanty description of the system pursued at Ralahine. The arrangements were in most respects admirable, and reflected the greatest credit upon Mr. Craig as an organiser and administrator. To his wisdom, energy, tact, and forbearance the success of his experiment was in great measure due, and it is greatly to be regretted that he was not in a position to repeat the attempt under more favourable circumstances."

("History of a Co-operative Farm.")