

responsibility from the shoulders of the farmers, and resting it upon the Government; that such an arrangement would neutralize the good example of those who have already insured themselves against loss, and would charge upon the same persons, as taxpayers, the additional expense and duty of assisting to meet the losses of those who have neglected to take the precautions of insurance; that it would tend to remove the anxiety which is now generally felt to analyse the subject fully by sounding it to its very bottom, and thus lessen the hope of our obtaining information upon it, and of providing a prevention against it; that if the disease should not extend itself upon a large scale, and thus the very severe losses be confined to a small fraction of the farming class, it would be obviously improper to remove from landlords, neighbours, and rateable property, the duty of voluntarily assisting, so far as assistance is needed, those on whom the blow has fallen, and that, finally, if on the other hand, the disease should extend its ravages, it would inevitably result in a higher price of meat, and, in consequence, those who were not smitten in their cattle would profit largely, by the disease as producers, while as consumers they would only suffer in common with the community at large; and "how then," asks Mr. Gladstone, "could the community be asked to pay twice—first for their meat in extra price, and, secondly, for the cattle lost, while landlords and cultivators of the soil would, probably, as a class, have their loss (as in a bad corn year) counterbalanced by a corresponding or greater benefit?"

Mr. Gladstone's letter has already called forth some severe strictures from the more prominent agricultural journals. We will bring this article to a close by two quotations from the British press. Says *Bell's Messenger* :—

"Mr. Gladstone dexterously lets the principle alone, and lights only upon details. It is not, says he, prudent to let our farmers and our graziers know that their losses by this calamity will eventually be made good to them out of the national pocket, or they will sink into supine indifference and neglect to devise or adopt measures calculated to arrest the infection. Such an argument will surely not hold water a moment when we reflect that it might equally be directed against all reliable insurance whatever, and of course against the particular form of it which Mr. Gladstone in the same breath proceeds to recommend. Does he suppose, for example, that fever-ships would be wrecked, and fever houses would be burnt, if Insurance Companies did not exist? Or is he of opinion that the mass should be deprived of the power of insuring, because certain evil disposed persons abuse its advantages? But, continues Mr. Gladstone, the plague may not extend itself, and then the nation would indeed be foolish to promise 'to pay the piper,' when landlords and tenants can make up the sum between them. Such advice now, with all due deference to so great an authority, is to speak plainly, simple impertinence. No one knows, or ought to know, better than the Chancellor of the Exchequer himself that the Cattle Plague has already attained the full dimensions of a national calamity; and to talk, therefore, about it at this time of day, as if it were an isolated outbreak—a mere district epidemic, a village pest, a hole-and-corner business, had enough indeed in its form and consequences, but nevertheless confined to a few remote homesteads—is to trifle with the deepest interest not merely of the Agricultural community, but of the public at large.

"Mr. Gladstone says with perverse ingenuity, 'the public cannot afford to pay twice, first, in the increased price of meat, &c., and secondly, in compensation to the losers of cattle!' Very ingeniously, but very incorrectly, put. 'The weakest,' as Mr. Gladstone knows, 'will,' unfortunately, 'always go to the wall,' and as, in this case, the Agriculturists are the weakest, the public will—if they consent to the evil counsels of the Minister—get their meat at a somewhat higher price and of a somewhat inferior quality from abroad, and will allow a large and most important section of the community to incur alone the perils of a Providential visitation! In other words, because it will cost Englishmen too much to do their duty, they will endeavour to shirk it altogether! Be the opinion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer what it may, we will not for ourselves, and we see it universally exemplified, think so meanly of the generosity, nay, of the conscientiousness, of our fellow-countrymen? We can never believe, till we see it ruled by Parliament, that this

nation, whose peculiar boast it is to be guided by the highest principles of honour and honesty, and to hold in the utmost veneration the sacred rights of person and property; that this nation, which has ever determined to make any sacrifice rather than that one of its members should lose an iota of his individual rights, or be the victim of fraud or oppression; that this nation, which sent a fleet to recover the crockery of a Don Pacifico, just as it voted millions to mitigate the pressure of an Irish famine; that this nation, which has ever reverently recognized the hand of an all-ruling Providence, in the chastisements inflicted upon mortals—we can never, we say, believe, that, in violation of its dearest pledges, in contradiction to its entire career, in despair of its manifest destiny, this nation, as a people and as a Parliament, will solemnly endorse the advice which this Cabinet Minister whom we hitherto mistook for a Christian Statesman has so cruelly and heartlessly given."

Our concluding extract is from *The Farmer* (Scottish). The editor says—

"Mr. Gladstone has stated his belief that British farmers are a set of unmitigated rascals, whose chief end and aim would be to cheat the Government, if funds were advanced with a view to compensation, or in order to support a national system of insurance. This the *Times* considers 'conclusive,' and quite sufficient to justify the Government refusing to treat the insurance of cattle as a public concern, or to support it by a guarantee from the Exchequer. The *Times* asserts that the principle, that whenever a particular occupation suffers, the community at large ought to step in to assist it, is neither just in itself nor safe in its application. If the *Times* is correct, why did the Government step in to assist the manufacturing districts, a measure which was strongly supported by the *Times*? If the principle be wrong now, it was equally so then; nay, the assistance granted was more uncalled for, because the manufacturers of Lancashire were much better able to help their workpeople than the landlords of Great Britain are to help their tenants, or than the tenantry to help one another. Fortunes were made by the master manufacturers out of the artificially-produced cotton famine, but even Mr. Gladstone's assurance does not carry him the length of saying that agriculturists are likely to realize similar advantages from the cattle plague. We are wrong—Mr. Gladstone does say so. He tells us that an extensive destruction of the cattle of this country will be the means of heaping wealth on the farmers, by the 'much augmented' price of meat, which will be the inevitable result, that is to say, those who have already lost their cattle, or who may afterwards do so, will have their losses reimbursed—'counterbalanced,' says the Chancellor of the Exchequer—by the extra prices which will be obtained by those whose cattle are not smitten. Did Mr. Gladstone imagine that he had a pack of fools as well as knaves to deal with, when he asked the landlords and cultivators of the soil, to believe this arrant nonsense? It would be interesting to know how the ruined dargyns of London, York, Cheeshire, or Edinburgh, are to have their losses 'counterbalanced' by any extra prices which the farmers of Caithness, Morayshire, or Ireland may obtain for their cattle; and it is to be hoped that the Chancellor will explain how this novel system of 'reciprocity' is to be carried into effect."

The number of cattle attacked by rinderpest in Britain per week, at the date of last advices, was somewhat over ten thousand. Unless the disease is arrested, and judging from the present rate of increase, it is probable that before May 1st, some three hundred thousand head of cattle will have succumbed to its fatal attack.

We shall probably return to the subject in our next issue.

Trichinous Pork in Germany.

We have more than once copied paragraphs from our British exchanges, showing the fatal prevalence of parasitic disease in Germany, arising from the consumption of pork infested with the newly observed *trichina spiralis*. We condense the following particulars from a communication addressed to the *Lancet* by Dr. Thudichum, respecting the outbreak at Hederleben. The epidemic of trichiniasis at this place appears to have been the most extensive and the most fatal of all outbreaks hitherto recorded. The Hettstadt outbreak occasioned severe sickness to upwards of 150 persons, and the death of 28 out of that number. Unfortunately, however, the epidemic

at Hederleben had up to the 21st day of December last, produced upwards of 90 deaths. These figures fairly warrant us in concluding that the number of persons attacked had amounted to several hundreds. "All this havoc," says Dr. Thudichum, "has been caused by one trichinous pig. The butcher having recognized the abnormal appearance of the meat of this pig, had carefully disguised it by mixing it with the meat of two healthy pigs, or added it in small pieces to larger joints of pork to make up weight. He made this confession shortly before his death, which was caused by trichiniasis contracted from his own meat. His wife also died of the disease."

A peculiarly unfortunate circumstance in connection with this fatal outbreak, is to be found in the fact that the medical practitioner at Hederleben failed to diagnose the disease in the early stages of the first cases. The larger portion of the fatal carcass was then exhibited in the butcher's shop; and, had its dangerous character been promptly discovered, it might at once have been seized and destroyed, and further damage effectually prevented. The disease was regarded as cholera, and opium was used to arrest the symptoms. When the nature of the outbreak was discovered, the time for mitigation and palliation had passed away.

Physicians from all parts of Germany have gone to Hederleben to study the disease. The public mind has become morbidly alarmed, and a general panic prevails. A public meeting was held at Berlin, the proceedings of which are reported as follows:—

"Professor Virchow addressed the meeting, and urged the necessity of instituting a microscopical examination of all pork. At the conclusion of his speech, he handed to the president a piece of smoked sausage and a piece of meat from a pig, which had been recognized as trichinous. Thereupon a veterinary practitioner named Urban rose and combated all that science has acquired during the last five years as an undoubted illusion. 'Trichinae,' he said, 'are the most harmless animals in the world. It is only doctors without practice who make a noise about them, in order to create some occupation for themselves.' &c. (Great interruption.) The president is obliged to stop the veterinarian. Drs. Virchow and Mason demand an apology from M. Urban. Dr. Mason challenges Urban to eat some of the sausage on the president's table. (Great applause.) Urban wishes to explain. The meeting calls upon him to eat. He had not spoken of Berlin doctors ('Eat, eat!') but of those at Hederleben. ('Eat!') He would first see whether the sausage contained trichinae. (Great laughter and continued shouts of 'Eat, eat, eat!') Whereupon M. Urban suddenly seizes the sausage on the president's table, bites off a piece, eats it, and leaves the hall forthwith, amid the applause and laughter of the assembly."

A German newspaper reports that five days later the veterinarian Urban was confined to his bed, and his arm and legs were paralyzed. His illness was caused by trichinae contained in the sausage he had been badged to swallow, and, as might be expected, the result was fatal.

The Berlin butchers have now determined to submit all pork to microscopical examination; and they have accordingly petitioned for the co-operation of the municipality for the purpose of making the examination compulsory upon all. This is a step in the right direction. Still, all pork should be most thoroughly and carefully cooked before use. Trichinae in man are prevented with certainty only by being perfectly cooked.

The *Lancet*, supplements the communication with the following pertinent remarks:—"Some say, 'We in England do not eat raw meat, and therefore the danger of trichiniasis does not affect us.' This is an error. The strongest proof of the possibility of trichiniasis breaking out among us at any time is the circumstance that the common tapeworm from pork, *Tænia solium*, is always infesting a number of persons throughout the kingdom. Now, if measles survive salting, smoking, and cooking (so-called), and after ingestion, become tapeworms, a fortiori it is clear that trichinae will survive these processes, because they are much better protected against their influence than measles. The trichina has been discovered in this country; cases of trichiniasis have unquestionably been observed, and instances of encapsuled trichinae are constantly being discovered in our anatomical theatres. Only last year a subject with millions of trichinae in his flesh was dissected in the Middlesex Hospital. Why, therefore, disguise or deny the danger? Let us prevent it. Let us be ready to meet it at all stages. Let us search for the source whence the pig receives the trichina, and endeavour to close it up."