

Cumberland and Westmoreland. The modes of hiring servants, and other agricultural customs differ very widely in different parts of the United Kingdom. The Bothy system, which has existed so long in some parts of Scotland, and been productive of much social evil, has at length received its death-blow. Formerly it was the general practice for farmers to keep their unmarried servants in their houses, to admit them to their own table and exercise over them a sort of paternal government. During the last thirty years matters have greatly changed in these respects, and few farmers keep more than one man in the house; single men get lodgings in the cottages of married labourers. It is principally in reference to this change Mr. Simpson observes:

But with this great change in the relative position of master and servant it is a question whether other changes are not desirable. It is not for me to say what might be done under the present system of hiring servants into the house, yea, even what is now perhaps done in some few instances. None can doubt the great benefits that servants might derive from a residence under their master's roof. The farmer who employs many workmen, the great majority of whom form part of the family, might have a wonderful influence for good over those who serve him—might, like the patriarch of old, command his children and his household after him, that they should keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment. There may be instances of this fatherly care and protection—there may be masters and mistresses who know the responsibility imposed on them by their position, and strive in some measure to influence their servants for good; but, as I said before, it is not for me to speak of what might be, but of what is, and I am much mistaken if in the great majority of farm houses servants are not left to their own desires; and as they sit around the fire on a winter evening it is very doubtful whether their conduct is becoming, their conversation edifying, or the treatment to which the younger girls especially are exposed, is such as their mothers would approve. That there are many exceptions I am perfectly well aware; that there are very many amongst farm servants themselves to whom loose and profane talk is disagreeable, I well know; and a change in the present system of hiring, in many respects, would be more beneficial to servants than to masters. At present the master goes to the market and hires a servant of whose moral conduct and character he knows little or nothing. That servant in due time takes up his residence in the master's household, and has his place at the kitchen fire. Few days elapse until his con-

duct and conversation rank him as very different from those amongst whom he has found a place. For God's name he has no reverence, in female virtue no faith, and his fellow-servants begin by tolerating and too often end by approving of what he does and says. Or you may reverse the picture, and follow a modest and well-conducted girl from the Sunday School to the hiring, and from the hiring to her first place. Stand by her in thought as she first listens to language to which her ears have been unaccustomed, follow her if you will to the ill-arranged sleeping apartments, and realize the shock to her feelings when she finds she cannot even undress without being overlooked, and then remember that she must endure this, and much more than this, or go to prison, and that because she has been hired out for half a year as a servant in husbandry and must serve her term. And here I may remark upon the inequality of the law as it affects masters and servants. If a servant in husbandry hires for half a year, he must serve the term, or may be imprisoned. However much he may dislike his service, however hardly he may be treated, to whatever evil influences he may be exposed, from whatever temptations he may desire to escape, he cannot terminate the service without running the risk of imprisonment. While on the other hand the master may turn away his servant at a moment's notice, and if he pay him wages for the time he has served, it seldom happens that the servant can obtain any recompense. It is very true that if he waits until the end of the half-year he may try to obtain the half-year's wages; but he will most probably be brought face to face with one of those gentlemen whose business it is to make the worse appear the better reason, and whose profit depends upon their success in doing so, and in nine cases out of ten the servant will have to be satisfied with wages for the time he has served. Such being the state of the law it is to me surprising that servants should still continue to hire for the half-year, surprising that they should not engage themselves on the condition of a month's notice or a month's wages. That such will eventually be the case I have little doubt, and I believe that such a change would have a most beneficial effect upon the social condition of servants, and help to lessen an evil which all regret, the frequent change of place. Under the present system of half-yearly hirings change of place is almost a necessary consequence. As the term approaches masters and servants have to make fresh arrangements. The master may have no fault to the servant, and the servant may like his place, but he thinks he ought to have more wages. The master is unwilling to advance. The bargaining goes on until the hiring day and they part, the servant probably to get less wages at a worse place, and the master to hire a stranger for the same money. And so long as there are half-yearly hirings there will be these constant