

FAT LANDS ==--

FOR

== LEAN TILLERS.

A Lecture.

BY

JOSEPH FORSTER,

Author of "Acres and Achers," "Bumbles, Drones, and Working Bees," &c.

A PARALLEL.

EVERYBODY who has ever read it remembers Carlyle's famous description of the workhouse of St. Ives, in Huntingdonshire, and what the picturesque tourist saw: "I saw sitting on wooden benches, in front of their Bastile, and within their ringwall and its railings, some half-hundred or more of these men. Tall robust figures, young mostly, or of middle age; of honest countenance, many of them thoughtful and even intelligent-looking men. They sat there, near by one another, but in a kind of torpor, and especially in a silence which was very striking. In silence: for, alas! what word was to be said? An earth all lying round crying, Come and till me, come and reap me; yet we here sit enchanted! In the eyes and brows of these men hung the gloomiest expression, not of anger, but of grief and shame and manifold inarticulate distress and weariness. They returned my glance with a glance that seemed to say, 'Do not look at us, we sit enchanted here we know not why. The sun shines and the earth calls, and, by the governing powers and importance of this England, we are forbidden to obey. It is impossible, they tell us!' There was something that reminded me of Dante's hell in the look of all this; and I ro le swiftly away." An exactly similar scene may be witnessed any night by a tourist, picturesque or otherwise, who finds his way to the House of Commons. There they are, moody and listless on their benches, flitting aimlessly hither and thither from corridor to corridor, sauntering through the tea-room, idling in the smoking-room, all at their wits' ends how to get through the dreary hours, and hoping against hope that the morrow may break the horrid spell. And so "many of them thoughtful and even intelligent-looking men."—*Pall Mall Gazette*.

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