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HOPS AND HOP-PICKERS.

BY THE

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CONVEYANCE AND IMPROVED LODGING OF HOP-PICKERS,

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ASSOCIATION FOR HOP-PICKERS AND OTHERS,

BY THE AUTHOR.

DITTON PLACE,
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HOPS AND HOP-PICKERS.

CHAPTER I.

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It would be difficult to select from the various products of the soil of this country any one which, from its introduction into England to the present time, a period considerably upwards of four centuries, has occasioned more anxiety and expense to the agriculturist than the "wicked weed," * *Humulus lupulus*, the hop plant. To give a history of the plant and its cultivation is not within the scope of the following pages. But some information on

* So called in a petition to Parliament in 1442.
points interesting to the reader who is fond of agriculture will precede the main design of the writer, which is to secure the abatement of evils which, notwithstanding long and persistent efforts, are suffered to this day, both by those who engage in hop-picking, and by the resident population of those parts of England, in which the principal cultivation of the hop is to be found.

In recent years an increasing demand for immigrant labour has arisen under conditions similar to those of the hop-picking for fruit and vegetables which are cultivated for the London market. And therefore, although the requirements of hop-pickers and the due care for their moral, material, and religious good are to be kept principally in view, the interests of fruit-pickers, pea-pickers, potato-diggers, and other immigrant labourers into country districts will not be lost sight of.

The hop has abundantly verified the old adage that a threatened life is a long one. Far beyond living memory till within recent times it has been from one cause or other in jeopardy, and yet it has not only survived but has increased mightily. The story is related of the late Canon Moore, of Hunton, in Kent, that, on being told by a young clergymen who had been preferred to a living in the hop country, that he had been cautioned not to reckon on income from hops, as "they would soon be grubbed up all over England," he replied that
people told him the same when he took the living in 1802.

Although the cultivation of the plant is really as secure as need be, it is impossible for any one who has witnessed the losses and anxieties which form so large a portion of the lot of the hop-grower, not to feel deep sympathy with him, and to wonder how he persists, in the teeth of his difficulties, to plant, and to pick, and to sell for what he can get. The reason is, that he has invested his capital in the cultivation, and cannot, without making a heavy loss, release himself if he would. Profits also do occasionally come, and are sufficient to console him under the losses and crosses of two or three bad seasons. Like "fœnerator Alfius," notwithstanding his protestations that he will turn his capital into grass and arable, he will go on with his hops. There is apparently a fascination in the minds of some of the growers, which arises from the very uncertainty of results. The sweets of success are all the more appreciated when, after a season full of the gloomiest anticipations which may end in ruin, the crop, contrary to expectations, turns out to be first-rate. In 1881, a grower of about twenty acres, who had been hit terribly hard by recent adverse seasons, was unexpectedly rescued by his hops. After deducting the cost of the cultivation, picking, drying, rent, rent-charges, rates and taxes, he had cleared a thousand pounds. Several acres of his
garden produced a crop which sold for as much as the land on which it grew would fetch. Such successes may, and occasionally do, come; but woe to the man who turns amateur hop-planter under the belief that he may reckon on them, and make his fortune by a similar stroke of luck.

It is now many years since crowded meetings were held in the hop-growing districts of England on the subject of legislative interference. The growers, who time out of mind annually beset the Chancellor of the Exchequer with a substantial grievance, were roused into unusual excitement. It had been determined to abolish the heavy and obnoxious duty on home-grown hops—a pound for every hundredweight at that time. Such an alteration was a just but tardy concession, as all were agreed; but an unpalatable condition was threatened at the same time. The repeal of the import duty on foreign hops was determined on, and called forth strong but ineffectual protests. Such an application of the principles of free-trade roused all parties, and none denounced it more energetically than some who, in bygone days, had been clamorous for repeal of the duty on corn. Vigorous and united action was, therefore, determined upon, and was taken accordingly. There was the inevitable deputation, which went up in due course and said its say and withdrew, after the manner of deputations, and was seen no more.
Contrary, however, to the vaticinations of the learned in hops, the experience of the best part of twenty years, far from proving adverse, has shown a large increase in the cultivation of the plant in this country. At the time of the repeal of the duty the growth was barely 49,000 acres; at no time previous had it exceeded 58,000, the highest point having been attained in 1855 when the excise return was 57,757 3/4 acres. Under the new régime the acreage began to extend. For a few years it was not possible to state with accuracy what it was. The excise returns were abandoned on the abolition of the duty, and the Board of Trade was not very fortunate in the effort made to obtain any trustworthy substitute for them. It was not till 1868 that, in consequence of representations made to the Board, account was taken of the cultivation of growers whose occupation of land did not exceed five acres, part or all of which might be under hop. Subsequently the returns are worthy of the name. The inaccuracy in former times consisted in their being too low. A reference to them will show that the cultivation, after reaching nearly 65,000 acres in 1868, fell to 60,050 in 1871—the lowest point, it will be noticed, since the abolition of the duty. From this date it commenced to rise till, in 1878, it reached the extraordinary number of 71,789 acres. Following slowly and in cumbrous fashion, though steadily, the laws of supply and demand, the
acreage under hop then commenced to recede till, in 1881, it fell to 64,943. The tide then commenced to flow, and in the last year's return 65,619 acres were enumerated. The present year will see a considerable advance.

Again, so far from the fears which were freely expressed at "letting the foreigner loose" on the English market, so that hops would hardly fetch forty shillings a hundredweight, it is stated that the growers have made more money by their hops since than previous to the abolition of the duty and free-trade in hops. They may well have done so, seeing not only the increased acreage, but that the whole of the duty which averaged nearly £6 per acre has gone into the pocket, not of the owner of the soil, but of the cultivator, while prices have certainly not ruled at a lower figure than in the days of the vexatious duty. As I have occasion to mention the foreigner, it may be as well to say that his influence in lowering the market value is not to be ignored, especially in affecting the price of the inferior qualities offered for sale. Neither should it be overrated, as it commonly is, when the Englishman takes his samples to the Borough. The unrivalled skill of the hop-growers of this country and their capital must be taken into account, as well as the advantages of soil and climate which they possess in common with their competitors. In respect to the land under hop, and the matter of capital, the foreigner is, with some exception, in much
the same position as the small home growers whose acreage was considered at one time beneath the attention of the Board of Trade, while in point of skill he is a long way inferior. The yeomen of Kent and the grower from the Shires need by no means despair. We may safely back the Englishman against all comers. It does not, however, follow that the best grower is most successful in selling his produce. The experience of the trade fully bears out this statement, and the markets of 1881 and 1882 sufficiently illustrate its truth. In the former year a great quantity of hops was sold at from £5 to £7 per cwt., which was worth from £8 to £11 or £12. Men who had discernment of the time, and held their hops for a few weeks, were rewarded by a considerable advance. One of the growers who had sold a part of his hops was induced, by the casual remark of an acquaintance who knew something of the state of the trade, to ask £2 10s. per cwt. more than he had intended on his way to the Borough. He obtained his price, and returned home rejoicing at his unexpected good luck. His happiness was, however, qualified, as perhaps good fortune commonly is, by a little after consideration. Had he only seen his friend before he parted with his first lot, "he would have been £200 a better man."

The experience of the market in the year of dearth (1882), when "the hops went up" to three times the price of the year preceding,
running in some cases as high as £35 per cwt., is much the same in regard to the growers. Many obtained what they considered was a good price, being some pounds more than that which they received (per cwt.) for the hops of '81. Hops were thus sold at £15 to £17 which were soon worth £25 or more. Sometimes, however, the grower cannot well help himself. There is no difficulty in setting the market price as soon as hops are in the Borough, as there are always growers who cannot afford to wait the rise of the market.

Hops flourish in clays in strong deep loam, with dry subsoil. In Mid Kent they succeed on the light loamy and friable soils. The varieties principally grown in this famous hop-growing county, as also elsewhere, are the Goldings, Colegates, Jones, Grape, Early Prolifics, Early Bramblings, and Fuggles. The early varieties have in recent years increased to such an extent as to cause the "general picking" to commence a few days sooner than used to be the case. Formerly the home strength was commonly sufficient for the early sorts, and the immigrants came for the bulk of the crop. This is not now the rule.

The cultivation of the hop is expensive, the plant requiring constant attention and care in all stages of its growth. It is propagated by cuttings taken early in the year and planted in a small plot of ground; occasionally the cuttings are grown in flower-pots, and then transplanted.
The young plants remain in the bed one or two years. When wanted for planting out in the gardens they are dug up and tied in bundles, and are worth from 20s. to 60s. per thousand.

The process of planting a hop-garden is interesting. The ground is divided by measurement into parts or rows, six, seven, or eight feet wide, according to the number of hills per acre, which are marked by reeds or small sticks placed in the rows. There are two or three plants to a "hill." The space between the rows is called the "alley." A "six-foot plant" has each a hill six feet apart, and its alleys are six feet wide. There are thus 1210 hills in an acre, three poles being commonly required for each hill. The "seven-foot plant" has its alleys and hills seven feet apart; four poles are used to each hill, and the number of hills to the acre is 889. The "eight-foot plant" has a width of alley eight feet, and the hills are four feet from each other in the rows. Two poles are commonly required for each hill, and the number of hills per acre is 1361.

In speaking of the size of a hop-garden, and in paying for digging and cultivation, the computation is made by the number of hills. For instance, a garden of three acres, two roods, and twenty perches is described to be three and a half acres and 151 hills, six-foot plant.

In the first year after being transplanted to the garden, the young hops are trained up short poles about the height of French-bean sticks,
and it is usual to grow an intermediate crop between the hills of turnips, potatoes, or mangold. The second year sees the plant trained up longer poles. The poles are of different lengths according to the strength of the plant and the soil, and full-length poles are not used before the third year. The best poles are ash, chestnut, and larch. Inferior poles are oak, beech, and hazel. It is still customary in Kent to cut the larch before the sap rises, and thus the valuable bark of the tree is wasted. The reason assigned is that the greater durability of the pole is secured by this means, but there is ground for doubting its accuracy. Even if true, the value of the bark at the tan-pit would, it is said, more than replace the depreciation in the wood. The lower part of the poles is dipped in creosote, by which a great saving is affected in their wear. For this purpose tanks with furnace are used. On large estates they are fixtures; but they are also movable, and may be hired. When the foot of the pole is thoroughly saturated it becomes heavy, hard, and durable, and almost resembles iron.

If the plant is trained up a pole of too great a length, the vigour which should be held in reserve for the fruit is expended on the growth of the "bine," its leader, and laterals, and the crop is small. The Colegate hop requires a pole eighteen or twenty feet in length. The Golding (originally grown at Ditton Place, and called after the name of the then owner), which
now comprises several beautiful and delicate varieties, are easily overtrained if sixteen, or in some localities fourteen, feet are exceeded. The Grapes and Jones are content to flourish amid shorter poles, and, like younger members of a numerous family, who have the clothes of the elder brethren adapted to their size, are commonly provided with the old poles which have become in process of time unfit for the larger

varieties, and are cut down to suit the smaller ones.

A good deal of ingenuity has been expended on the problem of the most economical way of training the hops on the poles, always provided that the crop shall not suffer thereby. In some instances the poles are fastened together by strong twine of cocoa-nut fibre, along which the laterals are easily trained. The most
The method consists “in fixing two poles about eight feet high permanently into the ground on either side of each hill; there is a socket fixed in these uprights about four feet from the ground, and two pieces of thick iron wire are lashed to their tips to form a fork. In these forks (b) the ends of twelve-feet poles are laid, whose butts (o) rest in the sockets (c) of the opposite poles to form diagonal supports for the bines, which are trained on to these when they reach the points of the sockets. At picking time these diagonally laid poles are lifted from their resting-places in the forks or sockets, and the hops are picked into bins or baskets, as in the case of hops poled in the ordinary manner. The advantage of this system is that the wind does not hurt the hops, as the poles cannot bang against each other. On the other hand, the original outlay is more costly, and more tying is necessary to get the bines to go up the diagonal poles.”

* Some difficulty is also experienced in getting the manure to the ground, and clearing the land by the nidget; the inventor recommends the temporary re-

* Whitehead on Hop Cultivation.
moval of the outside row of poles to make room. Those who desire further information on this ingenious plan will find it in the little publication of its author and ingenious inventor, whose address is given below.*

Mr. Farmer, of Kyewood, Tenbury, has patented a plan of training hops on wire by an arrangement of vertical wires communicating with horizontal wires. Large posts, stouter than telegraph posts, are fixed at the end of each row of hops, to which the wires are fastened to the top and bottom. The system carried out by Mr. Butcher, of Selling, Kent, is at once simple and comparatively economical.

With regard to training hops on wire, it is believed that the bine would require constant tying, as its reflexed hooks would not have a firm hold upon the smooth wires, and that short turns would be general, which are usually thought to be indications of want of vigour in the plant and fatal to the chances of a good crop. Still, training on wire is adopted to some extent in England, and very extensively in Germany, where poles are dear. In the latter country there are at least twenty different modes of using wire as a substitute for poles. String, Mr. Whitehead adds, is also used for training the bines along. This method was introduced from America, and has been adopted in a few instances in this country. It has not

* Coley's "Vinery Principles of Growing Hops." Bower Farm, Maidstone.
given satisfaction because the leading shoots require frequently to be tied to the strings, as it is against their nature to climb laterally.

In open weather in winter the ground is manured and dug. The recent trying years have seen the plough at work in the gardens, but the saving in the cost of ploughing compared with digging is questionable if the apprehension is well founded that the team and the plough injure the plant to some extent. Further, the stacks of the poles prevent more than a partial use of that implement. The Kentish labourers dig with a spud or fork with three blade-like prongs. Excellent workmen they are in the use of this implement, which they prefer to the spade even in the cultivation of their cottage gardens, although it is not so good a tool for the work among the vegetables. As the spring advances, all unnecessary shoots are cut away; the strength of the plant is thus concentrated on the leader. "Hop-tops," as the shoots used to be called, though they figure in the menu of one of Rabelais' heroes, are
never seen, I believe, on the table, but are said to be a nice esculent. Women are employed in “hop-tying;” and as the leader climbs the pole, the operation, which then necessitates the use of a step-ladder, is repeated. Meanwhile, the garden is kept clear of weeds by means of a horse-hoe, or nidget.

Notwithstanding the utmost care and skill, a few chilly nights in summer, a few days' ungenial weather at a critical season, will ruin all chance of a crop. From the beginning of spring to the moment of payment for the produce, no man can say with anything like a fair probability what the result will be. All he knows is that with the best he can do—with unremitting care and unwearied diligence, so that you will find him and his men frequently in the small hours of the morning long before the dawn, washing the plant—he will achieve a success where others less careful and skilful will sustain disaster. Many remarkable instances of success in consequence of the exercise of these qualities are forthcoming every year, and especially were they witnessed during the unfortunate season of 1822. The rule, however, in favour of care, skill, and the freest expenditure of money on the crop, commands by no means uniform success, as probably every grower can testify. Instances are not wanting in which the garden, whether from want of capital in bad times, or mismanagement, or both, has been left very much to take its chance, and has, after
all, done tolerably well, while others, where every care and skill have been in exercise, have failed miserably. The due culture of the hop, like the training of the young, has its failures, but on the whole is rewarded by success, while the converse holds equally true.

Nothing known and in use can do more than lessen and retard the process of destruction when mischief has once begun in the garden. Sulphuring the hop is frequently used to destroy mould insects in the earlier stages of the growth; after the fruit is developed, its use is objectionable. The "negur" (negro) classes among the friends of hops; another is the lady-bird. Among the foes are the red spider, the flea, the fly, the louse, the otter-moth, the green-fly, mould, mildew, blight, honey-dew, and fire-blast.

Numerous are the enemies to which the hop plants are liable from the very earliest down to the latest stages of their growth.* The first enemy that appears upon the scene is the wire-worm, the larva of the "click beetle." This larva, which is long, yellowish, and horny coated, and provided with long mandibles well fitted for gnawing vegetable substances, attacks the fresh-planted sets, and frequently causes great injury by exhausting their juices and eating away the young shoots as fast as they are formed. The only way of circumventing them is to put traps of small pieces of turnip, carrot,

* "Hops, from the Set to the Skylight."
or mangel, close to the hop plants just under the ground. As many as two hundred have been caught in one plant centre in a single season by these traps. In old meadow-land it is sometimes most difficult to get hop plants to grow by reason of the wire-worms, which are harboured in the decaying sward.

The larva of the ghost moth, a long white caterpillar, is a formidable enemy, but fortunately not very common. The flea is most destructive; it is of the same genus as the turnip flea, but is more oval in shape, and of a greenish black colour, tinged with bronze or copper hue. In the last four seasons the hop cones in many grounds just before picking became red or dirty coloured and prematurely decayed. On examination it was found that the stems or strigs of the canes were pierced by the snouts of insects, and that in many cases the holes were filled with tiny larvae, which were no doubt those of the fleas. There is no effectual prevention against their attacks.

But the attacks of wire-worms, millipeds, and fleas, are insignificant indeed in comparison with those of the *Aphis humuli*, or hop-fly, the "barometer of poverty," which changes in a few short weeks the appearance of the whole of the plantations of the United Kingdom from the prospect of a plenteous crop to the blackness of utter blight. Professor Owen, in his work on *Parthenogenesis*, says "that the first formed larva of early spring procreates not one, but
eight larvae like itself in successive broods, and each of these larvae repeats the process; and it may be again repeated in the same geometrical ratio until a number which figures can only indicate and language almost fails to express is the result.” Practically, in favourable weather the increase of aphides upon hop plants is past all calculation. The plants change colour, the leaves quickly shine from the viscous excretions of these insects, and finally turn black. This shining liquid is called honey-dew. When the bine is in a normal condition the aphides do not increase after their kind, but disappear as quickly as they came.

To check the progress of flies and lice a system of washing the plants with soap and water is now adopted by many planters. This operation must be performed by careful men, and the bine and leaves of each pole thoroughly cleansed, otherwise the plants will be just as foul in a few days after, as they were before the process.

Red spiders in very hot summers are among the foes which the hop-planter must reckon with. He first perceives a small patch of yellowing plants upon a shallow-moulded plot or in unkindly soil, which spreads and increases if the weather be dry, until all the plants become yellow, and look as if they were dying. Heavy thunder showers, a wet day, or two or three cold nights, however, completely check the ravages of the spiders. Where these insects
INJURIES TO THE HOPS.

prevail the plants look as if a hot wind—a very simoon—had blasted them with its fiery breath. The Germans call this kupperbrand (copper-brand), and until recently did not connect it with the action of the red spider, but attributed it to atmospheric influences or to unhealthy conditions of the soil. The English planters call it fire-blast.

During the last few years planters have noticed a prettily marked bug, about one-fifth of an inch in length, active in its movements, and running from leaf to leaf and up and down the vines of the hop plant, injuring bine leaves and fine terminal shoots by puncturing them and sucking their juices.

The foregoing extracts from a very interesting work, "Hops, from the Set to the Skylight," by Mr. Chas. Whitehead, will suffice to show the difficulties with which the cultivators of this frail and fickle plant have to contend. It is more than probable that further investigation, which is at this time being made by its author, and Miss Ormerod, the consulting entomologist of the Royal Agricultural Society, will enable the growers to overcome some of the enemies of the hop which have hitherto baffled their endeavours. The plant is, when affected by ungenial weather, and thereby brought into an unhealthy state, like the human constitution, more liable than at other times to the ravages of disease.

When favoured by genial weather the hop
rapidly becomes exceedingly beautiful. It throws abroad its luxuriant branches, ranging from hill to hill, and interlacing in graceful festoons across the alleys, in some places high overhead, in others curving and sweeping low, almost down to the ground. At length the blossom appears. The female blossom becomes the fruit, which hangs in thick clusters of a delicate green colour, in shape somewhat resembling bunches of grapes. Unceasing care is still necessary, and more frequently than not the crop after all deceives the expectations and hopes formed of it. A scanty and poor picking in wet and cold weather is the return for the outlay and industrious skill of the grower. The reader will not be surprised at the anxieties and perplexities which beset the hop-growers. "The crop is eminently of a wagering character. So delicate is the plant and capricious the climate, and uncertain the market, that they are kept during the greater part of the year as much on the edge of expectation as if they were gambling with their whole income at stake."
CHAPTER II.

On the picking and drying—Measuring baskets—Need of trustworthy information of the market, home and foreign.

By increasing the accommodation for drying the hops and drawing a supply of immigrant labour from the metropolis and towns adjacent to the hop districts during the picking, the season has been shortened in the county of Kent and elsewhere by nearly one-half. In localities where the labour supply is, with other advantages, to be obtained, it does not exceed three weeks, unless, as may rarely happen, it is desirable to protract it for a few days on account of the state of the crop, which may be beneficially affected by weather after the commencement of the season.

The number of pickers for say fifty acres varies considerably. In Kent it rarely exceeds
"WE WANT A SCREECH (CRÈCHE), YOUR RIVERENCE."
two hundred, not reckoning infants and the little children who will be on the ground whether wanted or not. The suggestion of the crèche for the former is worthy of attention. The pickers are divided into "companies," usually of ten, the chief of which is the "binman," who is commonly the "pole-puller." His duty is to keep the pickers supplied with hops to pick, for which purpose the "bine" (vine) is cut a short distance from the ground, the pole pulled up and laid conveniently for the pickers. The "bins" are placed beneath the framework, on which the hop-pole rests with its delicious burden, and into which the hops fall as fast as nimble fingers can pick them. In some districts baskets are used instead of bins. The pickers are paid by the bushel, the agreement being to pick so many bushels for a shilling: This is called "fixing the tally." The measurer, or tally-man, is the person whose duty it is to ascertain what quantities each one has picked in his or her bin, or half bin or basket, as the case may be. By this means, the quantity of hops is ascertained before removal from the garden, as also is the amount which each one has earned, all being carefully entered in the account kept by the "booker." A check is thus provided, which tends to secure the property when taken from the garden to the kiln. An additional precaution which some of the growers adopt is to weigh the hops when green, and
again when dried; for which purpose an allowance for drying—which depends very much on the state in which they are gathered, wet or dry—is made. These precautions are by no means needless, for if the drier chances to be a dishonest man he has considerable opportunity of smuggling away a pocket or two and disposing of the same. Such instances are, however, rare.

It would be advisable to have all the measuring baskets stamped, and for the inspector of weights and measures to pay an occasional visit to the gardens to see that all is right. In consequence of the natural wish of the people to make as many bushels as they can, there is a good deal of trouble to give them satisfaction in the measurement. It is said that the expedient of having the measuring basket made to hold a little more than a bushel, and in measuring to give them an apparent advantage by not filling what they call the bushel, keeps them in good humour. There is no intention on the part of the grower who resorts to this contrivance to cheat them of one farthing; but no trick should be resorted to under any pretext, however plausible. "A perfect and just measure shalt thou have."

The "companies" take up their ground in a line at first concealed by the hops, and from two to three hundred yards in length. As the poles are stripped and the ground cleared, the
bins are moved for them to keep close to their work. Under favourable circumstances, a couple of acres or upwards will be cleared in a day of all trace of vegetation. The contrast between the luxuriant growth in front of the pickers, and the devastation in their rear, is striking. The work is carried on in fine weather cheerily, if not quietly. There are, however, exceptions. Occasionally the "foreigners," as the London people are called, will get up a strike, and "compel" the home-pickers—usually nothing loath, excepting to save appearances—to join them. There is, indeed, a whisper that the disturbance is generally started by the home party, some of whom "set on the foreigner," who cares but little for anybody or anything so long as he gets well paid. If an advance is obtained, or if the disturbers are discharged and not replaced, so much the better for all who remain. In times, happily bygone, the disturbances occasionally assumed the dimensions of a riot, and the military have been called out to restore order. Generally a policeman or two suffice, and of late years there has been a marked decrease of disorderly conduct among the hop-pickers, even when they resort to the legitimate demand for higher pay, and enforce it by a strike. Women are excellent pickers, many earning daily 2s. and upwards. Children are often useful pickers, doing better than men who are not accustomed to the work, and who have no natural aptitude to improve by
practice. There are men who can barely earn sufficient to support life, while a handy child of twelve or fourteen years of age will earn as much as 1s. 6d. a day. Such clumsy fellows, who are always on the growl, had far better keep clear of the hop gardens. The farm-bailiff knows almost at a glance the good picker, or who will soon become one. There is a knack about the work, easy as it looks. Those who do not find it come tolerably easy to them would do well not to "go a hopping" any more, for they will have but little reason to congratulate themselves on their earnings.

From the bin the hops are carried in "pokes" to the "oast-house." This building consists of spacious floors for drying, packing, and storing the hops, in addition to a number of kilns, generally of circular form, as shown in the
illustration. The cost of an oast-house of this size is £1000 or upwards. The drying-floors or kilns are covered with horsehair, on which the hops are placed in the early part of the picking to the depth of eight or ten inches; but as the season advances and the crop is brought in ripe, a larger quantity is dried at once. They remain on the kiln ten or twelve hours, during which the kilns are said to be "loaded." Large coke and coal furnaces are kept burning night and day. Sulphur is thrown into the furnaces in large quantities, for no other reason than to give the hops a bright colour. The kilns have high conical roofs, each surmounted by a cowl with vane, which adjusts itself to the wind, and thus helps to secure a fire-draught.

When the hops are dried to a turn—and much skill is necessary to settle this difficult point—they are carefully removed to the clean and nicely kept upper floor of the oast-house. A circular hole in the floor admits the "pocket," which is made on the premises, of stout canvas well and securely sewn with twine, and is fastened by means of hooks so as to hang down through the floor and exactly fill the aperture. The hops are straightway shovelled into the pocket, and unless a machine which is now commonly used
for compressing the hops in the pocket is preferred, the work is done by treading.

“A young and active man, usually one of the driers, clad in an old coat and breeches, but with no inner raiment, jumps into the pocket, and as the hops are thrown in he dances away till the pocket is equally packed and is as tight as a drum. The sight is laughable enough, but the labour is severe. The pay is usually Is. a pocket.” The way to make a pocket is simple enough; a piece of canvas known as “hop-pocketing” is doubled, a handful of hops secured in each corner for handles, the sides sewn together, and the pocket is made. When filled the mouth is sewn up, a couple of handles are made as at the other extremity. The pockets are pretty nearly of uniform weight; in Mid Kent a few pounds over one and a half hundredweight. They are ranged together against the wall of the oast-house till their removal for sale, the name of the grower, the district, and the weight, being stamped in large characters on each pocket. Drawing the samples is the work of a skilled hand. A “clinch” is thrust into the side of the pocket and a small parcel of hops carefully extracted. The cavity thus made is filled up by hops kept for the purpose, and a patch of canvas sewn over the spot makes all secure. The sample is neatly packed up in brown paper, and numbered to correspond with the pocket. By this means the grower offers his crop to the factor, who sells for him
EXPENSES OF CULTIVATION.

37

to the merchant, who in turn supplies the brewer.

A few lines on the expense of hop cultivation will be of interest. This is of two kinds, fixed and variable. The fixed cost comprises the rent, the rent-charges, wear and tear, manure, rates, and other items. The variable cost depends on the crop, and includes picking, drying, packing, and selling.

The following is an account of an estate in Mid Kent, growing forty-eight acres of hops:

**Fixed Expenses.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>s</th>
<th>d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rent per acre, including interest on cost of oast-house and storage</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rates, insurance, rent-charges, poles, horse labour, manure, and manual labour</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>£28</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Variable Cost (of a Crop of 7 cwt. per Acre).**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>s</th>
<th>d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Picking and drying</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coals, coke, and brimstone</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hop pockets</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carriage of hops and commission on the sale</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>£407</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Variable cost per acre                     | 8  | 11 | 4  |

Total cost at 7 cwt. per acre               | £36 | 11 | 4  |

The fixed items have been stated in a lump sum, rates and rent-charges in lieu of the tithe being, however, subject to a trifling variation. The two driers received £7 7s. each for their
work, which lasted exactly fifteen days. They are farm labourers, working at the usual rate of wages during the remainder of the year.

The following is an estimate of cultivating an acre of hops at Trevereux, Limpsfield, for one year, by Mr. H. Cox, formerly a hop-grower, and is extracted from the report of Mr. Norman (Commission, in Agriculture):—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>s</th>
<th>d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rent of land</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tithe, rent-charge, taxes, etc.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stripping the poles</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average expense of poles</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digging</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cutting</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poling</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manure</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping clean</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tying and hilling</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fences</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest of capital</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Cost per acre** ... ... £20 0 0

**Expenses of Picking and Drying on a Crop of Hops by the cwt.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>s</th>
<th>d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Picking, 9s.; Pole-pullers and helpers, 2s. 6d.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small repairs to kiln</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drier's wages</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuel and sulphur, 3s.; Hop sulphur, etc., 1s.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pockets and bagging</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carriage to London</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commission on sale</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Cost per cwt.** ... ... £1 6 6

One among many sources of anxiety to the grower is that, as a rule, nothing can with certainty be predicted of the selling price till
the market settles itself. The growers used in old times to get a valuable hint from the excise returns of the hop duty of the probable requirements of the trade. Since the repeal they have had to read between the lines of the announcements of parties whose object in giving information must be qualified by the interest they have in the market. The principal growers are sometimes equal to the occasion, and will not hesitate either to hold or to sell. The general run, however, experience a good deal of disappointment, and commonly learn the real state of the market a month or so after they have effected their clearance sales. There is some reason to say that a man whose skill lies in the cultivation rather than in the sale of the hops, cannot be far wrong in keeping as clear as he may from speculating in the market, and sell when he can realize a fair remunerative price, always supposing that he is free to act as he pleases.

There is, however, a need of trustworthy information, and it would be a boon to the growers if such papers as the South Eastern Gazette, the weekly hop reports of which enjoy a deservedly high reputation, or if the valuable weekly reports of the state of the crops in the Maidstone Journal, were supplemented by a register of the market prices and quantities imported as well as the state of the markets of the last preceding year. By this means the growers might know more of the pro-
bable requirements of the trade. If such information were given from authorities perfectly independent of the profit and loss account of hops, the growers would be in a better position than they now are, and be able to turn their advantages to account not only in selling their crop, but to some extent in increasing or decreasing their acreage, a matter in itself requiring more certain and speedy knowledge than that which comes in a slow, awkward, and costly application of the laws of supply and demand. A table of weights by which hops are sold in various countries would be a boon to the grower; the "kilos" and "centners" of the foreigner, and the pounds of the American and colonial grower, as also the pocket, which varies in weight in different districts in this country, being alike reduced to the hundredweight of the Englishman and prices quoted at per cwt. in English money. So long as the price of the best of the foreign or colonial crop is rising and running near that of the best home-grown hops, the Englishman need be in no hurry to sell; subject to some little variation, his price ought to keep ahead of the foreigner.
CHAPTER III.

"Home-pickers and hoppers"—Hopper-houses, tents, wigwams, sheds, and their furniture—Abuses and frauds by itinerant purveyors of food and others.

With upwards of 53,000 acres of hops within convenient reach of the metropolis, situated in Kent (41,676 acres at the last return), Surrey, and Sussex, and with due facilities provided by the railway companies, there is little fear of the supply of hands falling short of the demand. The provision of lodgings suited to the requirements of the immigrants, together with due care and supervision in all that relates to their proper accommodation in a sanitary point of view, will enable numbers of women and families whose breadwinners are in constant employment in London or towns adjacent to the hop country, to come for the season, and if need be
WANTING WORK. "SHALL I GO HOPPING?"
considerably augment the available strength for the "general picking." The lodgings will, however, always be rough at the best, and all that can reasonably be required is attention to the essentials by which morality, health, and decency may be maintained.

The Irish harvester and the few "strangers" who in former times found employment in hop-picking were allowed to sleep in barns, cattle-sheds, or lodges on the premises, their employer providing them with straw for bedding and wood for fires, which were lighted in the most sheltered and safe spot conveniently near to, if not in, the farmyard. The grower took the best precautions in his power to diminish the risk of being burnt out, and not always with success. Fires occasionally occurred which were disastrous to his property, and inflicted loss of life among the weary wretches who were placed at the mercy of a drunken fellow whose lighted pipe fell on the straw as he dropped asleep, or candle was left burning till it set the place alight.

The problem of lodging the hop-pickers, who
began to find their way in larger numbers as the means of drying the hops were greatly increased, soon presented unexpected difficulties to the growers. It was at first thought that the accommodation which, sufficient for a score or two of Irish labourers, and was perhaps little inferior to that which they had in their own country, would answer the requirements of the men, women, and children who flocked to the picking. The difficulty came suddenly, and it is no matter of surprise that nobody was prepared to deal with it. The landlords did not come to the rescue. It seemed unreasonable to be called upon to provide substantial lodgings which could be required, if at all, for barely a month in the year. The tenants felt that they ought not to be called upon to make permanent improvement on an estate in which their interest would expire with their leases, and thus between the two the lodging of the pickers was little better than on the cold ground.

The first application made by me to the Lands Improvement Commissioners with a view to have the "hopper-house" included in outbuildings on property on which money could be secured was laughed at. The commissioners had seen the dens and hovels—the "dog-holes" as they were described in the newspapers—which some of the growers had provided for the people, and very naturally declined the proposal to consider a hopper-house as any security for a loan. Some years elapsed
before the improvement in the lodgings, which the owners and occupiers of hop-lands set about making in earnest, led to their expressing their readiness to advance money on such improvements.

It will be interesting to describe the better class of accommodation formerly provided for the people and which, with some improvements, is now commonly to be found in Kent, and in districts adjoining that county. Superior lodgings will also be noticed.

The hopper-house is generally a long low-pitched building, divided internally into ten or more compartments or rooms, each with entrance from the outside. The size of the rooms is ten, twelve, or fourteen feet square. They are open to the roof, side walls about six feet high. Internal division, if any, is brick or wood,
with lattice work above. The building is brick, with tiled roof. Some houses are built of shingle, or wattle and plaster, with boarded or thatched roofs. No window is provided. Each compartment is allotted to a bin's company, leaving the inmates to make their own arrangements as to sleeping. The floor is thickly littered with straw, and upon this are laid such articles for comfort as the immigrants bring with them—blankets, or counterpanes or rugs of some kind. Sheets are rarely to be seen. A screen between the beds is occasionally supplied, and is made of straw twisted in a sheep-gate or hurdle, which the grower is willing enough to provide if requested to do so; but as a rule there is little attempt to secure such limited privacy. Nor do the occupants "make much trouble about decency when they have had a little experience of the lodgings and have become accustomed to it."

The use of tables and chairs is also wholly foregone during their sojourn in the hopper-house. Lanterns are occasionally provided, but it is customary to extemporize a candlestick and fix it on the wall, or hang it from the roof beam, or set it on the straw. A few pegs driven into the wall and a stick or two fixed cornerwise near the eaves to hang clothes on at night, complete the fittings of the house, while a tin pan or two, a basin or bowl, and a tub for washing clothes are the property of the occupants. The bowl is placed on the ground, "so that to wash one's face requires the performer to kneel."
Irish are fond of washing their faces, and by no means particular about the cleanliness either of the water or the basin.

But poor as the accommodation of the house commonly was within recent years, the barracks or sheds in which the people herded together promiscuously, and which were not long ago described in the *Times*, afforded and still do afford much worse. It will suffice to say that they are not now to be found in Kent, and to express the reasonable anticipation that they will not long be found elsewhere.

A "lodging for hoppers" is at times ingeniously constructed by means of sheep-gates thatched with straw and fastened with hazel bands. The walls are the height of a single gate or hurdle; two gates tied together lengthwise make the roof, and the building may be of any length required; at the middle an entrance is obtained by the hurdle being movable, and is closed at night on a miscellaneous company, the members of which may be as moral and comfortable as circumstances allow. The sheep-gate houses of late years are rarely seen. Where this makeshift is constructed with inner divisions and in a sheltered spot, it serves indifferently well for a few of the men who cannot be accommodated elsewhere. It does not, however, turn a steady downpour. In ordinary autumn weather it is snug, and always well ventilated. The latter recommendation is, however, entirely contrary to the
view of the London pickers, who abhor ventilation. Some ingenuity is displayed in securing ventilation in the modern buildings, so that the occupants cannot possibly prevent it.

Tents, which have of late been used much more than is desirable, were formerly but occasionally resorted to. Their use at first arose from the difficulty caused by the landlord, or the trustees of an estate, in providing the accommodation required. The tenant did not wish to go to more expense than was absolutely necessary, and was glad to have recourse to lodgings which he might claim at the end of his lease. There were growers, as there are now, who purchased a sound and serviceable tent, and took care to pitch it properly and attend to the drainage with almost military precaution. And if it is kept dry and duly ventilated, and left open by day, the tent answers fairly well. The objection which the hop-pickers make is their want of security. Where a number of tents is required a boy is left in charge during the day, to look after and duly protect the possessions of the occupants.

The pickers are not always in the same mind about their lodgings. A grower who provided both a hopper-house and tents, used to give them their choice, and they made much ado in coming to a decision.

Rarely, however, was it thought necessary to dig a trench round the tent for the rain-water to be carried away. As the rain came busily down,
the water would slowly and surely penetrate through the brushwood or hop-bine on which the straw for bedding was placed. The drip, which no crazy umbrella or tattered shawl could resist, came freely through the canvas, which being no longer serviceable for the use of our hardy veterans, had been sold, "old government stores, second-hand tents, cheap, and worthy the attention of hop-growers." The condition of the wretched inmates, men, women, and children, in a reeking and steaming atmosphere, in which the wet from above recruited the puddle which gradually arose from below, was pitiable in the extreme. The marquee extemporized out of the rickcloth upreared on a crazy pole, to which the scared and weary occupants clung while the canvas flapped and banged in the howling midnight wind, and which, notwithstanding their efforts, would all come down about their ears, and deprive them of their poor shelter, was not much better.

The cart-shed, thatched over the entrance on the straw and hurdle plan, was another contrivance. The arrangements were simple in the extreme. The people were provided with straw, and told "to settle in," till the lodge was as full as it could hold. I visited one in which a woman lay who had met with an accident, and had not been taken at once to the union—the right course in all cases of sudden illness. The shed was nearly dark in the early afternoon; there was no internal division of any
kind. "We are pretty comfortable, sir. In that corner four young men sleep; next to them are the married people (of whom she was one), and the children. In the opposite corner are the girls." This was at the commencement of the season, and there was a general wish to maintain decency and order. It was impossible to do so. On the first Saturday night, when the wages had gone partly in food, and mostly in drink, all the good intentions were abandoned, and long before the close of the picking the shed was a den of iniquity. In no better plight were those who were allotted cattle-sheds, which were not cleaned out previous to entry. Hop-bine was first thrown on the manure, and straw for the beds was littered above the bine. "If they treats us as beastesses, we behaves accordingly," was the remark of a savage old crone from the Borough, as she and her party settled down in their lair in the beautiful district of Three Bell Vale. The growers who provided lodgings of this kind, appear to have adhered too strictly to the order of precedence in the commandment, which places the cattle before the stranger within the gates.

Notwithstanding these discomforts, and their attendant and inseparable evils, the change from their densely crowded lodgings in town to "our Brighton," and the prospect of earning sums of money considerable in amount to their eyes, would make the poor folks forget the miseries of former years and come "just this
once again." The railways began to offer facilities for their conveyance, and a series of "hopper trains" was established by the South Eastern Railway Company, by their late excellent secretary, Mr. Eborall, the details of which were entrusted to Mr. Knight, then the out-door superintendent, whose skill and abilities were taxed pretty severely. In early days the company provided cattle-trucks to meet the unexpected demands of the new passenger traffic. These were considered by the country people to be quite good enough for the purpose.

"The Lord hath made all things conformable; first and second classes for the nobility and gentry and clergy, third for poor folks, and cattle-trucks for 'oppers." The conveyance by rail and road will, however, demand a separate chapter. It is enough here to note that neither the want of good lodgings, nor the exposure to the worst possible contamination of morals, nor the occasional contraction of illnesses, which often proved fatal, prevented the poor from crowding down into the districts. Large and liberal was the pay in the estimation of persons who are but little acquainted to silver coins, and whose pittance of food and fuel is thought to have been bought at a good bargain when the costermonger will abate a farthing or two of his price in the coinage of bronze.

The immigrants were formerly very much at the mercy of itinerant purveyors of food, who disposed of supplies which were unfit
for consumption, "unless by hoppers." Nor were the costermongers the only sinners in the commissariat department. On visiting a "hopper-house" one Sunday morning, I noticed a couple of men drive smartly away, as if they wanted at all events to keep clear of the clergyman. I found that a butcher and his man from a neighbouring town had sold a large quantity of diseased beef and mutton "wonderful cheap, some only tuppence a pound." The purchasers were very poorly the next day. The fellows did not return to sell any more meat to the inhabitants of that house. Abuses of this kind led to the examination of the costermongers' sales in localities where the hop-pickers were numerous, but it was long before the protection they required was generally forthcoming. Not only was the food they bought bad, but the supply of drinking water was in many cases equally bad, and occasionally where it was not bad it was insufficient for their requirements. If I add, that the provision of cooking-houses or sheds, for the double purpose of cooking and drying clothes, was rarely made, and that to this day in certain districts it is still wholly inadequate, and that the provision of latrines, which was once laughed at by some of the growers as "entirely unnecessary for hoppers," is still far from what is required, enough has been stated to show the need of improvement in the lodgings and other accommodation for them.
CHAPTER IV.

Habits and customs of the hop-pickers—Anecdotes—Their abject poverty and degraded condition.

It will, however, be interesting to relate something about the habits and customs of the people, on whose behalf a number of the principal owners and occupiers of hop lands formed the Society for the Employment and Improved Lodging of Hop-pickers, and subsequently, in conjunction with the clergy, formed an Association for their religious advancement. The difficulty of carrying out any plans of any kind on their behalf was greatly increased by the lawless and predatory habits of those whom it was desired to benefit. To provide them with lodgings, "clean on entry" seemed utterly useless. To purchase for them candlesticks, sconces, or lanterns, tin-pans, dishes, or
pails; to supply screens between the beds, of drugget, carpet, or even "hop pocketting;" to lend them any portable furniture, was like throwing the articles into the sea. Anything which could be pounced upon, carried off, and disposed of speedily disappeared. Half monkey, half tiger, the typical hopper was often a thief. Thus at the outset of their efforts, the committee of the society were embarrassed by difficulties made, not only by the lower class of growers and a few owners of hop lands whose co-operation was withheld, but by the people themselves. From the vagrant character of the uncleanly and ill conditioned, their common disregard of all restrictions but such as are imposed by fear or necessity, labour and money spent for their benefit seemed to be utterly wasted. Many were the prophecies that the attempt would entirely fail, on account of the general lawlessness of our annual visitors.

The moral and social aspect presented even a worse condition. There were numerous instances of men and women coming for the hop-picking as married persons, who had been coupled, neither in holy church nor profane registry. There were not wanting many who exchanged wives for the excursion. Marriages were also on occasion celebrated in the gardens, in what was called true hopper fashion. The ceremony consisted in the couple being made to join hands by an extempore priest, one of the biggest old rogues on the ground. He repeated some dog-
gerel, which need not be committed to paper, after which the pair were made to take a short run, hand in hand, and jump, if they could, over a hop-pole held by a boisterous party of the bridesmaids and their young men. The two were excused picking hops for the rest of the day. These unions were probably not long lived, and were occasionally broken off at the end of the picking, when new arrangements were made. I saw a mere lad and a woman, probably double his age, attack her reputed husband on the way to the train. They had made him tipsy and then robbed him of every farthing of his wages. On trying to regain his purse, and violently assaulting the young fellow who helped the woman, a policeman, who came up at the moment, interfered, and threw the injured husband, whom he took to be the aggressor, into the ditch. The return train was at the time running into the station hard by, and the guilty pair got off by it, leaving the man bruised and penniless to find his way back to London as best he could. This occurred in a crowd which had become exasperated by weary waiting for the train and half mad with the drink which their earnings enabled them to obtain. The people were beyond restraint and ready for any mischief. The poor wretch in the ditch had as much attention afterwards as he deserved.

Efforts were made by some of the growers to secure decency and morality with more or
less success. The results were not generally encouraging. A worthy landowner was shocked and horrified at the scandals of the hopper-house accommodation, and set apart lodgings, which were duly numbered and lettered, "for married persons," assigning also rooms for single persons of both sexes. On visiting his hopper-houses on the first Sunday afternoon after their occupation, he found the people living "all higgledy piggledy," as they informed him, by way of a capital joke. His remonstrances were derided, and he was constrained to abandon the effort he had attempted for their good.

The committee of the society above mentioned, on finding that the growers were frequently much perplexed and annoyed at the failure of their efforts for better regulation of the houses, and believing that the remedy was sought in the wrong direction, appended the following notice to the "recommendations relating to the lodgings," in 1867. "While all reasonable care should be taken for the encouragement of morality and good order among the hop-pickers, great caution is needed in dealing with the arrangements in the lodgings which the occupants prefer to make for themselves. These should not be unnecessarily disturbed. Attention to the recommendations and to the comfort of the inmates will be productive of good." *

* This notice is signed by the late Major-General Fletcher, of Kenward, who took a warm interest in the good of the immigrants.
Experience has proved the soundness of the advice here given. Due care for the immigrants and the provision of good lodgings, has aroused better feeling on their part, and encouraged the moral sense in a considerable degree. Many have of their own accord repressed the evils here referred to, which were beyond the reach of their employers.

So formidable and rampant was the vice commonly practised by the hop-pickers, that men who longed to do them a kindness were afraid—the writer for one—to enter their lodgings or go among them. They stood apart, distressed by the language which shocked their ears, and appalled at the reckless profligacy which they witnessed and knew not how to grapple with. If some from a sense of duty ventured among them, they were commonly subjected to insult and abuse.

It was all but hopeless to go among them and speak of the anxiety which some felt for their good. They would point to the filthy dens assigned them, and bid the parson go and preach to their masters, saying that their religion which allowed such treatment of the poor was nothing but a delusion and a sham, and more to the same purpose. And, indeed, if persons are crowded without any reference to decency, or modesty, or comfort, into a dirty shed or a dilapidated tent, or even if the lodging is fairly good as far as it goes, but not suited to accommodate more
than two-thirds of the number assigned to it, one is at a loss to know what answer to give to their just remonstrances.

There is and always was some feeling among the people in favour of morality and decency, but fair play was seldom given it; a little encouragement was sure to be appreciated. A party of eight or ten young unmarried women arranged on one occasion with the binman to have a compartment of the hopper-house to themselves. The only means of securing their door was by a padlock on the outside. At their own request, they were locked in at night and released in the early morning. A number of young fellows were next but one to them, and being of a musical turn, generally enlivened the young ladies and the company with a song or two before betaking themselves to their slumber. The girls always joined in the chorus, their shrill voices sounding in the still night like the cries of sea birds on a rocky shore. They would conclude their concert with the Evening Hymn.
CHAPTER V.

Efforts to remedy the evils—A society formed—Difficulties and success—Anecdote of Archbishop Longley.

A REPORT of the state of the lodgings, preliminary to further effort, was obtained in 1864, from which it appeared that in all essentials to health, decency, and comfort, less than one-fourth of the accommodation was tolerable, the remainder either indifferent or thoroughly bad. Then, as now, a good house might be utterly ruined by overcrowding. It would be invidious to the growers to record the names and places where great pains were taken to remedy the evils inflicted on the people before any systematic effort to abate them was attempted, but as a rule, those who had the fewest improvements to make, were among the foremost to join in the movement to “wipe away the reproach of the hop-picking.”
An article in the *Leisure Hour*, in 1865, by the writer had a good effect in drawing public attention to plans and suggestions which have since been carried into effect with more or less success. While on the one hand it was insisted that the lodgings and accommodation of the immigrants should be such as to secure comfort and at least encourage decency and morality, it was urged that the employer should have his position improved in respect to his labourers. "He ought to be able to exercise a fair and reasonable control over them." Experience, however, proves that the grower is not unfrequently in the power of the picker. If the supply of labour should be scanty, or should any pretext for a strike present itself, demands for exorbitant wages are enforced, the persons foremost in the agitation being commonly disorderly immigrant hop-pickers whom he cannot afford to discharge." On the other hand, there was need of such control of the labour supply that it might be easily and quietly regulated by the demand. By this means not only would the grower, it was thought, be enabled to obtain the assistance he required at a fair remuneration, and under occasional emergency be saved from extortion, but the people would ascertain with certainty, and without coming in order to see for themselves, to what extent their services were likely to be required. This part of the subject it was proposed to deal with by a

* "Address to Hop-planters," urging remedial measures, 1866.
system of agencies, to be established in London and other populous places, by which both the employer and the workpeople would, it was thought, be the gainers. The history of the agencies will be given in its place. The suggestions relating to the lodgings and accommodation of the immigrants were principally as follows:

(1) That an inspector of these "tenements" (the term includes hopper-houses, tents, wigwams, cattle sheds, cart lodges, barracks, etc.) should be appointed to certify their fitness and the number to be lodged therein.

(2) That the lodging, of whatever kind, should provide for the occupants a security against wind and wet, above and below.

(3) A sufficient amount of latrine accommodation to be provided, the custom being either to provide none at all, or that which was utterly inadequate, by which means such provision was much worse than none.

(4) The appointment of an inspector of the meat, food, and water, supplied to the people, the appointment of such officer to be by the boards of guardians of the districts visited by hop-pickers. This provision had already been attended to by the justices in certain places.

(5) That a sufficient floor space should be secured to each occupant; that screens or divisions between the beds should be used "sufficient to protect their occupants from indecent exposure;" that the house, or shed, tent,
or wigwam, used for hop-pickers, should be clean on entry and the ground adjoining should be kept free from offensive matter.

(6) That a sufficient supply of good water should be provided, and that cooking-houses or sheds should also be built.

There were other points of importance, which were not forgotten, but the above claimed attention first of all. The religious care of the people could not be dealt with so long as the lodgings and accommodation were an obstacle. Nor was this specially urgent. It was already in the hands of the parochial clergy, or of other ministers of religion, where the people did not belong to, or objected to the ministrations of, the Church. Certain proposals for providing them with other advantages, were deferred, and but one suggestion outside the lodgings and agency questions was entertained, namely, of the means of inducing all the immigrants to travel by rail. A meeting of some of the principal owners and occupiers of hop lands in Kent was privately held in Maidstone, at which the foregoing suggestions were carefully discussed, and it was agreed that steps should be taken to carry them into effect. It was not, however, forgotten that the reform in view would probably put the growers to some expense, and that the effort was not likely to be a popular one. There were, however, two or three members of the provisional committee,* which was

* The following were the members of the committee:—
then formed, of whom the late Earl of Romney, was one, who seemed to like a good work none the worse for being unpopular.

It soon transpired that the committee were likely to meet with a good deal of opposition, rather indirect than open. The press, with hardly an exception, supported the movement; but there was a strong undercurrent which threatened to throw the committee off their ground, so that it was necessary to devise some kind of additional support. "A memorial," said the late Earl of Beaconsfield, "is a wonderful and mysterious document which exercises such an influence on all the transactions of life." A memorial, therefore, was brought to the rescue. A few lines expressing approval of the movement were drawn up and signed by some of the principal landowners,* residents, and others in the hop district. Signatures were obtained

F. B. Elvy, Bow-hill; Thos. Balston, Chart Hill; W. Gilbert, The Rocks, East Malling; J. R. Warde, Yalding Parsonage; Thomas White, Mereworth; S. Maitland, Ditton Place; M. Onslow, East Peckham Vicarage; E. T. Luck, Hermitage, West Malling; Romney, the Mote; Chas. Gus. Whittaker, Barming Place; Henry Peppercorne, Bradbourne; E. C. Fletcher, Kennard; Charles Wykeham Martin, Leeds Castle; Thos. Robt. Cutbush, Yalding; Robt. R. Ellis, Courtlodge, Yalding; Robt. Troutbeck, Mereworth; James Johnson Ellis, Priory, East Farleigh; John Savage, Saint Leonards; James, Whatman, Vinters; Charles Whitehead, East Farleigh; H. Bannerman, Hunton Court; J. Y. Stratton.

* Among them were the Earl of Darnley, Sir W. Hart-Dyke, the late Earl of Abergavenny, and the late Earl Stanhope. The Earl Sydney, Lord Lieutenant of Kent, was among the earliest supporters of the movement, and is now the president of the society.
generally without difficulty. The document was signed by the Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr. Longley), who expressed his cordial support of the movement, which he heard of by accident. The signatures were always closely scanned by parties who were doubtful about joining. "Who is C. T. Cantuar?" asked one. "Is he a 'op-grower?" The reply was in the negative. "What does he sign for, then, and who is he?" It came out that C. T. Cantuar had figured under several aliases—"that he was once called Ripon;" "that he once lived in Yorkshire." "Why, then he is Yorkshire;" and with a melancholy shake of the head, the man decidedly refused to sign. However, the publication of the memorial not only strengthened the opinion, which had begun to waver, but encouraged all those members of the company who stood in need of a little encouragement, and the Society was formed on the 25th of October, 1866.*

So far as pecuniary support was concerned, there never was any difficulty. The growers would willingly have given far more than the subscription which was required of a member of the new society. There was enough common ground for action without exact agreement in all points.

* The following are the committee:—The officers of the Society, together with—T. Balston, T. D. Shafto, H. Peppercombe, E. J. Goodwin, C. Neve, R. A. Seymour, T. Reeves, J. R. Raggett, John M. Clabon, George Marsham, W. L. Wigan, C. Whitehead.
The first step taken by the committee of management was to draw up and circulate among the owners and occupiers of hop lands on which immigrant labour was required, a series of recommendations relating to the lodgings, already alluded to, describing the buildings suitable for the purpose. The estimated cost of construction in the case of a brick and tiled hopper-house varied from 25s. to 45s. per hop-picker, allowing sixteen square feet for each person; so that a house built for one hundred adults would cost from £125 to £235 according to the plan adopted by the owner and his tenant. Among the recommendations was one intended to defeat the attempts which the London poor make to prevent ventilation. An arrangement of the tiles above the cross plates was resorted to, and secured ventilation without draught. The recommendations stated that in reference to the ground space for an adult, two children under twelve were to count as one adult; that screens of wood or thin metal, six feet by four, should be placed between the beds, so that their occupants might put on or divest themselves of their clothes out of the public view, and sleep without exposure. A window in the roof, eighteen by fourteen inches, was to be provided for each room. Doors to have a bolt inside and padlock outside. Shelves and cupboards where possible, pegs for hanging clothes on; iron sconces to be driven into the wall for holding candles. Lanterns at 1s. 6d. to 2s. 6d. each to
be supplied. To check the tendency which all portable articles had to disappear the binman was made responsible for loss or damage. This regulation was found tolerably effectual against theft, damage, or loss.

The recommendations on the lodgings gave further some good hints about building the cooking sheds and other accommodation to be made at a trifling cost, and is still consulted with advantage by persons who are desirous to provide better accommodation for their hop-pickers and other immigrant labourers than that of the tent or shed.* It was also recommended that an oven to every twelve companies, or one for the use of the pickers where the number is less than twelve, should be provided, and that "hoppokes filled with straw, such as the 'driers' sleep on, might in some cases be used for beds in preference to loose straw."

Wooden or straw hopper-houses were condemned, chiefly on account of the risk from fire, although it was considered that hopper-houses of hurdles and straw might be used to prevent crowding in certain cases. Tents might also be used, "if due care was taken to see that they were weatherproof, for which purpose they should be of good canvas, dressed with a composition of one-fifth of Stockholm tar, and four-fifths of cod-oil."

The above extracts will show that the recommendations were drawn up with extreme

* Apply to the writer for copies.
regard to economy. Nothing was allowed to find a place in them, which in the experience and knowledge of the committee, to whom the task was entrusted, was not absolutely necessary for the due accommodation of the people. It is right to add that many of the growers in the improvements which they made, did not restrict themselves to the bare recommendations of the society, but greatly improved upon them, in some instances making rooms to hold two couple of married people, raising the beds from the floor by a platform, high enough to allow their packages to be stowed away under them. Arrangements of this kind were not considered absolutely necessary by the society, however desirable in the opinion of the members of the committee, and welcomed by the people for whom they were made.

It was not very long before the society was able to report that an improvement had taken place in the hopper-houses, many of the alterations made in them being traceable to its direct influence, and that buildings of a better class were provided by growers who did not belong to it, but whose labours were cordially recognized. In the following year, the society stated in the annual report that bad lodgings were no longer assigned to the large majority of the immigrants, but were "the hard lot of the minority." It was again thought necessary, as indeed it is always, to remind the growers of the care needed to guard against overcrowding. "Hopper-houses,"
said the report, "become unbearable from this evil. Morality and decency, as well as comfort, are banished from the lodging, the occupants of which are huddled together irrespective of age or sex. When it is considered that on emergency clean and dry lodgings may be readily, or cheaply provided, the society expressed the hope that overcrowding will on no account be permitted."
HE attention, however, of the Government had been drawn to the mischiefs of the gang system in use among farm labourers in Lincolnshire and other counties. In the course of the summer of 1868 inquiries into the condition of the lodgings and accommodation of the hop-pickers were made by the commission on the employment of children, young persons, and women, in agriculture. For this purpose a paper of questions was drawn up, under the auspices of the commission and the society, by the Hon. E. Stanhope, M.P., and forwarded to the principal growers in Kent. A personal inspection of the accommodation was also made by Mr.
Stanhope, and a valuable report was the result of his labours, in which he generally concurred in the line of action already adopted by the society, and bore willing testimony to the good already secured. “It may be said with certainty that more than half of the pickers are now decently lodged, and the improvement which takes place in every successive year is very marked.” After describing the lodgings, he continues, “Such accommodation cannot be called luxurious, but it renders decent habits possible; and considering that the hop-picking lasts only three weeks, appears to be as good as can reasonably be expected. The improvement is mainly due to the public opinion of the country, but in the second place to the society, which, by the information and advice it has issued, and still more by the standing protest it continually affords against the indifference formerly shown, has done much good.”

The remarks in this report on the duty of the landlords to provide the lodgings deserve careful notice, and are of importance. “Oast-house accommodation for drying the hops is universally recognized as a permanent improvement to be made by the landlord; and on the same grounds accommodation in proportion to the acreage under hops for those employed in picking them, ought to be provided by him. Such tenants, indeed, are bound by agreement to keep a certain amount of land under their
crop, and hopper-houses are at least as necessary an appendage to such a farm as an oast-house."

This view, I believe, to be generally true, though at one time it was far from being commonly approved. There are, however, one or two exceptions which require notice. If a tenant, after covenanting with his landlord in say a twenty-one year's lease, that he will not allow the hop cultivation to fall below a given number of acres for which the oast-house and other accommodation suffice, determines on a very considerable increase, the landlord would not probably object to provide the additional buildings he required, and his objection would not be removed by the offer of additional rent in the way of interest on the capital so expended. For the owner might reasonably suppose that, although his present tenant chose to grow hops, they being somewhat of a speculative venture, he might break down, and leave the estate saddled with the cost of buildings which his successor would desire to remove. The landlord might also be unable to afford the expense, and be unwilling to borrow, even if he concurred in the proposal to increase the acreage under hop. So that the tenant with a long lease before him, and land suited to hops in his occupation, at a merely arable rent, would not be deterred from building the oast-house himself. Much ingenuity was expended in devising plans for making these ponderous and costly buildings tenants' fixtures. It was
thought that laying a thin sheet of iron on the foundation when level to the ground, and building thereon, would bring the superstructure within the valuation list at the end of the term. No dispute, however, appears to have arisen, and the tenant has been known to provide the kilns and storage he required, and to leave them as a permanent addition to the estate on his giving up possession. The difficulty about providing lodgings for the additional labourers which his increased cultivation required was more easily adjusted. He would provide tents, or wooden hopper-houses, or the "sheep-gate" house; in some instances he would also build cooking-sheds; in others, the people would be left without, and shift for themselves. In general, however, the principle quoted by Mr. Stanhope has made its way; and it is now commonly held that the argument for substantial buildings, whether oast-house or hopper-house, is not affected by their being required for a few weeks only of the year.

There are some instances in which the hopper-house may be used for other purposes than lodgings—for storage of vegetables, etc.; where great care is taken thoroughly to cleanse them, they may be used for stock also. The late Mr. Bannerman, of Hunton Court, who had three hundred acres of hops, and a large arable and dairy farm in addition, made very considerable use of some of his hopper-houses throughout the year. As a rule, however, they
are but little wanted after the close of the picking.

The report of the commission considerably strengthened the influence of the society, which it did not fail to turn to good account. At the same time, the report received the attention of the Local Government Board, and prepared the way for its intervention in behalf of the immigrants.
CHAPTER VII.

Difficulties lead to intervention of the Government (Local Government Board)—Amendments of this Law—The clause applying to the lodgings of hop-pickers extended to fruit, pea-pickers, etc.—District Sanitary Authorities—Manoeuvres to get rid of the trouble of looking after the accommodation of the immigrants—Various obstacles caused by the Rural Sanitary Authorities.

HERE were three classes of persons who were concerned in the duty of improving the lodgings and accommodation of the hop-pickers. Those who were anxious from religious and moral considerations to promote the good of their work-people. In the next place were some who required the encouragement of public opinion in order to induce them to begin, and lastly was the residuum, the members of which cared for nothing and nobody so long as their hops were picked. The difficulty was how to deal with this last class, numerically
small, but yet capable of preventing the successful and speedy progress of improvements. It was at length (in 1872) unwillingly determined to seek the intervention of the Local Government Board in order to complete that which moral suasion and public opinion proved unequal to accomplish.

The hop-picker’s grievances were by no means new to the permanent staff of the Board, of which Mr., now Sir John, Lambert was the chief. They were one of the legacies of the defunct Poor Law Board. It was found that no legislation dealing with lodging-houses affected the hopper-house. Mr. Thomas Lloyd Murray Browne, the excellent inspector to whom the duty of reporting on the accommodation was entrusted by the Board, wrote that "the present enactments against overcrowding all speak of a ‘house.’ It is doubtful whether a temporary shed can be called a ‘house.’ A tent certainly could not be so called. There seems, therefore, to be no available legislation at present upon the point in question." Mr. Browne reported that the character of the lodgings was generally improving so far as Kent was concerned; "but on many farms, in every district, the accommodation is still seriously and often scandalously defective; that overcrowding of the most serious description is common, and that the lodgings are often very filthy; that internal divisions are constantly neglected, although without them in the larger-
huts occupied by many persons of both sexes decency is impossible and morality must be endangered; that some buildings are frightfully exposed to danger by fire, against which no provision is made (six children * were recently burnt to death in this manner; that privies, which are needed, at least for the women, are comparatively rare, and fireplaces, which are required for cooking, for drying the wet clothes of the children, etc., are very insufficiently furnished; that no washing accommodation is supplied; and that although the effects of this state of things are largely counterbalanced by the generally healthy character of the employment, at least in fine weather, yet that results injurious to health do not infrequently arise, while the injury to decency and morality is of the most serious description.

Nor does the question concern the immigrant hop-pickers alone. It concerns also the resident inhabitants of the district who are exposed to infection, should disease break out among the pickers. Thus the smallpox was introduced at Alton (Hants) in the summer of 1873 by a hop-picker's family, and should cholera break out amongst the pickers, as in 1849, when forty-three deaths took place in one parish in Kent,† the consequence might be of the most serious character.

It remains to consider the remedies for these

* In the union of Rye, Sussex.
† East Farleigh, near Maidstone.
acknowledged evils. Public opinion may do and has done a good deal, but there are some hop-growers who set it utterly at defiance; . . . the work should be completed by law. . . . The utmost care is taken by the Local Government Board that proper accommodation should be provided for vagrants and tramps, and it does not seem unreasonable to ask that some similar attention may be paid to the lodgings supplied to an important class of labourers.”

Mr. Browne then states that to remedy the state of things direct compulsory legislation is to be preferred; but he adds that it would be difficult, from the nature of the case in the varying circumstances of the different districts, to apply it at present. “It would perhaps be better, therefore, to follow the suggestion made by Mr. Lambert, and to give power to each sanitary authority concerned to make bye-laws upon the subject.” This course, he notes, was in accordance with the precedent of the Common Lodging-houses Act, and with the views of others, among them of Mr. E. Stanhope, already quoted. The valuable report of this officer, whose removal to another post was a grievous loss to the reformers, concludes with a suggested clause in an Act of Parliament by means of which Local Sanitary Authorities should, with the concurrence of the Local Government Board, make bye-laws for the lodgings, etc., of hop-pickers, and administer the same.

* Report to the Local Government Board.
This suggestion was followed up without loss of time. A clause was introduced into the Sanitary Acts’ Amendment Act, 1874, sec. 45, which was again amended in the year following, and is as follows (sec. 314):—“Any Local Authority may, if they think fit, make bye-laws for securing the decent lodging and accommodation of persons engaged in hop-picking within the district of such authority.” The Local Government Board further provided a model code of bye-laws, which were originally drawn by Mr. T. L. Murray Browne, who incorporated in them the Recommendations of the society relating to the lodgings, the cooking places, and other accommodation. The proposed bye-laws were to be adopted, and, after confirmation by the Local Government Board, administered by the district authority. They provided that for any and every offence against the bye-laws, there was to be a penalty of £5, and in case of a continuing offence, a further penalty of 10s. a day. Copies of the model code were sent, with a circular letter urging its adoption, to all the authorities of districts visited by hop-pickers.

The progress of the bye-laws among the authorities was not a particularly speedy or prosperous one. First of all, the consent of the authority was to be obtained, to frame bye-laws, or in other words to adopt, the model code,—a matter of no small difficulty which has been to this day only partially overcome. The district
of Bromley—of which the chairman was Sir J. Farnaby Leonard, who succeeded Lord Sydney, the former chairman of the Guardians,—led the way, and was followed by the authorities of Cranbrook, Tenterden, Milton, North Aylesford, and Maidstone. The bye-laws were adopted with but little alteration by all excepting the Maidstone authority. The district of Bromley, which has comparatively but few immigrant hop-pickers but many fruit-pickers, included the lodgings of the latter in their bye-laws.

Hereupon ensued an ominous pause. There was an evident disinclination on the part of other authorities to avail themselves of the powers conferred on them by the Sanitary Act, and to frame bye-laws, for which every facility was offered to them by the Local Government Board, whose circular letter, setting forth the evils and the dangers of delay and dwelling upon the encouragement their model code had met with in several districts,* by no means

* "The board have found that their suggestion (to take the series of bye-laws as a model for the adoption in districts), has without exception commended itself to the Sanitary Authorities to whom it has been addressed. The board, therefore, think that the bye-laws are such as might with advantage be made generally by the sanitary authorities throughout the hop-growing districts. It is evident to the board that evils seriously threatening the public health are among the consequences which result from the neglect of providing decent lodging and accommodation, and in order to obviate these evils they urge upon the authorities the propriety of taking steps to secure, before the commencement of the next hop-picking season, effectual means of enforcing proper accommodation within their several districts."—Circular Letter of April 30, 1876. The letter is accompanied by a revised draft of bye-laws.
elicited the response which was hoped for, or secured the action which was desired. The authorities were in no humour to be wooed and won by the Local Government Board, and long continued obdurate to persuasion, and turned a deaf ear to entreaty. With but little exception they were composed of all the guardians of the poor in the union, the nominated members of which are generally double or treble the number of the guardians ex-officio. While the latter, as a rule, were prepared to adopt the suggestions of the Local Government Board, and were supported by a few who held office by annual appointment, they were pretty sure to be out-voted in the attempt to carry a resolution in favour of the proposal.

Various devices were resorted to, and a good deal of ingenuity displayed, in “shelving the question.” The board being near the end of its official year, “it was considered expedient to defer a matter of such admitted importance till after the election of the new guardians, as they would possibly throw some light on the opinion of the ratepayers on it.” On their election in the spring of the year, there was so much pressing business that questions which would bear postponement, of which this was one, were postponed accordingly. The proposal to enact bye-laws was thus allowed to stand over till the approach of the hop-picking, when the information was
elicited that whatever course the authority might decide upon, the confirmation of the bye-laws by the Local Government Board, after their due publication in the newspapers, would render the task useless for the season now about to begin, and therefore there was little difficulty in securing another postponement, when the same tactics might possibly be repeated with success. Some authorities desired to wait a little and see what the result of the measure would be in districts which were already under bye-laws. If their adoption was pressed, the resolution would be postponed till the next meeting of the authority, when all the guardians who could be persuaded to vote against it would muster and try conclusions with the three or four magistrates and as many of the nominated members who voted with them.

At Sevenoaks the supporters of the movement were beaten on a division by thirteen to five, and in the following year were again well beaten, though by a less majority. Lord Stanhope and members of parliament who had a seat on the board, among them Mr. Talbot, M.P., then president of the Local Government Board and a staunch supporter of the reform, could not attend and help to reverse the defeat of the former year. The argument on which the opposition mainly relied was that the number of immigrant pickers in their district was inconsiderable, and that therefore no special supervision, or any intervention of the authority
were necessary. To rebut it, a census was obtained, and about fourteen hundred immigrants were found in their district. The authority, however, were slow to change their opinion for so inconsiderable a number as fourteen hundred human beings; but at length a code of bye-laws, modified to suit the views of the unwilling majority rather than to secure the adequate care and due accommodation of the people, was adopted. Their code appears to have been badly and inefficiently administered to this day. The authority contrived to let upwards of five years pass from the time the proposal was made to the date of confirmation of the mutilated code of bye-laws now in existence in their district, which date was September 18th, 1880, when the hop-picking for the year was approaching its close and the people on the eve of returning to their homes.

The authority of the Maidstone district, into which the principal number of immigrants resort, had less difficulty in framing a code of bye-laws, but could not see their way to adopt the entire code of the Local Government Board. The improvements which had already been made in the district, left little to be done, compared with others, and there was from the first a strong and praiseworthy feeling on the part of the growers to improve the lodgings wherever necessary. In some instances the cooking places were in the hopper-houses, and all well and substantially,
built; and from the absence of a clause in the code, leaving arrangements for the cooking department to be at the option of the grower, either in, or detached from, the "house," a misconception arose that they would be compelled, if they adopted the code, to go to fresh expense in building detached cooking places. Led by this consideration, and by the fact that little improvement in this direction was now required in their district, in which indeed some of the principal supporters of the hop-pickers' reform were to be found, the authority resolved to omit the rule relating to the cooking places. Having thus driven into the model code the wedge of a successful alteration, objection was next taken to the provision of latrines, which had been hitherto entirely inadequate, and failed to secure decency and privacy. Instead of resorting to the obvious remedy of providing sufficient accommodation, the cost of which is almost nominal, and leaving the employer to the remedy in his power to abate a nuisance, when no cause existed for its continuance, the authority resolved to provide no accommodation of the kind whatever. Screens between the beds fared no better. Notwithstanding the unwillingness of the government to sanction these alterations, the authority insisted on them, and a reluctant consent was given to the bye-laws of the Maidstone district, on the conditions of careful administration, and due supervision of the lodgings. Sufficient
consideration was not given by the authority to representations concerning the difficulties which would be caused by the example of this important authority in districts in which the lodging and accommodation of the hop-pickers were greatly inferior to Maidstone. It is mainly on the ground, that the example of this authority has led to mischievous results in other districts, that its action has been open to unfavourable remark, and has given rise to the feeling of regret which has found public expression on various occasions. It is only right to add that the authority are careful to carry out the provision of the law such as it is, and that their supervision and inspection are efficient.

The example set by Maidstone was not long in finding imitators. The adjoining district of Hollingbourne, which had approved of the model code, and adopted it so far as to advertise their code in the local papers, were induced to retract and withdraw it. A delay of upwards of two years followed, when rules and regulations similar to those adopted in Maidstone were sanctioned by the authority of Hollingbourne.

It soon followed that in districts in which cooking places and other accommodation required for the people were almost entirely unknown, such provision was not to be required by law. The Local Government Board have given a reluctant sanction to bye-laws which, if badly administered, leaves the condition of the
immigrants in little or no respect better than they were before the intervention of the government. A grower may now provide tents, and neglect to make any provision for cooking food, and drying clothes, beyond the customary allowance of wood for fires in the open air, and he may, by neglecting the provision of latrines, not only render common decency impossible among his hop-pickers, but become the means of encouraging a nuisance in his locality, which one would suppose no sanitary authority should permit for a single day. Instances have been found within the past two years in which immigrants under the fancied protection of the bye-laws of the local authority, are in no respect better lodged or cared for than they were twenty years ago. The Local Government Board may, on sending their inspectors at the next hop-picking, satisfy themselves of the breakdown of the permissive legislation for the hop-pickers, in several of the districts of the Rural Sanitary Authorities.

The committee of the society were yet, as the result of their unremitting exertions, occasioned in great part by the inefficiency of the law and its slack administration, able to report, in 1879, that, notwithstanding the defects above noticed, "they did not undervalue the improvement now secured by law in nearly the whole of the districts in Kent frequented by hop-pickers who came from the metropolis, and in certain portions of the county which were
visited by poor townspeople of Kent and Sussex. The consideration that hop-pickers prefer employment where good lodgings and accommodation are provided, and possess the information * necessary for them to make their choice, is likely to be of weight with the sanitary authorities of districts in which no steps have yet been taken for the due care of hop-pickers."

There are now (1883) thirteen districts, numbering two hundred and thirty parishes, six of which districts have the bye-laws framed on the model code, and adopting in the main its provisions. The others have bye-laws which omit the provision of cooking sheds, screens, and latrines.

I subjoin their names, with the date of confirmation of the bye-laws by the Local Government Board.

Tenterden, Jan. 1, 1876.  |  Tunbridge, Oct. 28, 1878
Maidstone, July 26, 1876. |  Wrotham, Aug. 18, 1879.
North Aylesford, Sept. 7,  |  Sevenoaks, Sept. 18, 1880.

In addition to the foregoing districts there are as many more, the authorities of which have not as yet seen their way to adopt bye-laws. It must not, however, be supposed that there-

* "The Hop-picker's Itinerary or Railway Guide to the Hop-gardens," distinguishing all parishes in districts under bye-laws, published by the Central Labour Agency, 15, Russell Street, W.C.
fore they are altogether unmindful of the claims of the hop-pickers. The authority of Bridge, in Kent, replied to the inquiries of the Local Government Board by forwarding a copy of "regulations," which, "combined with vigilance, on the part of the inspector of nuisances, have been found to answer local requirements." The "regulations" stipulated that sufficient accommodation should be provided. That temporary huts should have a dry foundation, a cleanly interior, and sufficient space in proportion to the numbers intended to be lodged in each hut, "250 cubic feet of space for each adult as a minimum allowance, may be considered a reasonable requirement." The authority further required that separate closet accommodation should be made for each sex in the most secluded spot available; and a plentiful supply of pure water for culinary and general domestic purposes to be provided.

The following caution was also added to the "regulations," and deserves attention of all the authorities concerned with immigrant hop-pickers:—"As it has hitherto been a common practice for hop-pickers to bring along with their families some amongst them who have recently recovered from communicable diseases, notice is hereby given that any person suffering from any dangerous infectious disorder who wilfully exposes himself in any public place, or any person in charge of one so suffering, or any person who without previous infection exposes
any bedding, clothing, or other things which have been exposed to infection from such disorder, will on conviction be liable to a penalty of £5." The notice directs that on the outbreak of disease of an infectious nature such should be immediately reported to the medical officer of health or to the sanitary inspector.

Recommendations were also circulated in the Malling district, and in the East Ashford district, showing that the authorities were by no means indifferent to the requirements of the case. The Malling authority after replying to the Local Government Board that they considered that their recommendations rendered the adoption of bye-laws unnecessary, subsequently, as will have been seen, adopted those already in use in the district of Maidstone.

In the important district of Farnham, no steps appear to have been taken by the authority. There has been no lack of effort to induce them to abate evils which have been described in the newspapers, and have been reported upon adversely for the best part of twenty years. Mr. F. H. Norman, in his report to the Commission on the Employment of Children, etc., in Agriculture, drew attention to the defects in the accommodation and lodging of the pickers in this union. From the medical evidence which is appended to his report (p. 289), "it appeared that overcrowding and want of accommodation in the sheds in which they live, are the only causes which have a bad effect
upon the health of the pickers; fevers sometimes break out here in consequence, or the pickers catch fevers here which do not show themselves till after they have returned home. The gipsies are pretty healthy, but the tramps, who only occasionally camp out, get ill. Formerly the growers were (in the Farnham district) more particular about the accommodation provided for their pickers. Formerly the class of persons who came out hop-picking were more respectable than those who come now: the respectable people will not now come out because the accommodation is insufficient and they are unwilling to associate with the low class of persons who now come.”

Another source of evil, says Mr. Norman, is the want of clean straw. If the season lasts only about three weeks, it is thought unnecessary to change the straw. There is no washing accommodation. Many do not wash all the time they are here; about five thousand strangers come into the town and neighbourhood during the picking. Wet weather increases the unhealthiness of the employment greatly, because the pickers have no change of clothing, and have no means of drying their clothes when they get wet, besides which the damp rots the straw, of which the beds are composed. At Dippenhall Farm, Mr. Norman reported the accommodation (a large number of sheds) to be “very favourable specimens of that usually provided in the union; a pair of sheets and
counterpane being provided for each bed by Mrs. Paine, the owner of the estate. I found it difficult to count the beds owing to their being placed so close together that I could not tell where one ended and the next began. . . . As a general rule there are no offices and no washing accommodation.” The overcrowding and insufficient cleansing of the sheds previous to entry are noticed, it being stated that many of them are used for farm purposes during the year, such as cattle-sheds, storing grain, etc.

So long ago as the month of September, 1872, the question of the accommodation provided by the hop-planters in the Farnham district was brought before the attention of the board, and certain evils (from the promiscuous “herding together of old and young, married and single, male and female”) were strongly remarked upon by a member of the board who had personally inspected a barrack near to West Street. The clerk replied that the question was one “very difficult to answer satisfactorily unless it could be shown that the herding together involved overcrowding.” Severe remarks were (as usual in such complaints) made on the hop-growers, and with that the matter was allowed to stand over.

Mr. T. L. Murray Browne adds that he found that “grave abuses existed unchecked at Farnham.” Serious evil also arises among the pauper women and children in the Farnham Workhouse, owing to their leaving the house
in the season to go hop-picking. "I myself visited a barrack in the immediate neighbourhood of the Farnham Workhouse, in which I was informed some forty people of all ages and sexes had slept throughout the season. It had no internal divisions of any sort, no privy, and no fireplace, except space for a single fire to be made on the ground." *

It will be interesting to relate the steps the Sanitary Authority of Farnham have taken to abate the evils complained of. The following is their reply to the circular letter of the Local Government Board, which letter was dated April 25, 1877:—

"The Rural Sanitary Authority have not considered it necessary to take any public action in the matter. They leave it to the good feeling of individual owners, to provide the best accommodation they can, the board feeling that in the present increased consideration manifested for improving the morals and comforts of all, this class in particular will not be overlooked."

There are upwards of seven thousand poor persons who, in the ornate phrase of this recalcitrant authority, and notwithstanding the evidence of the deterioration of the lodgings and consequent abandonment of the more respectable pickers, in the Royal Commission above quoted, are consigned to "the present increased consideration manifested for improving the morals and comforts of all." There is no reason

* Report, Local Government Board.
to doubt that public opinion, which was carefully formed and moulded by those who devoted years of anxious work to secure its influences in rooting out the moral and social evils connected with the hop-picking, has been beneficially exerted, and has had its influence in "the increased consideration" spoken of by the board. But public opinion has not hitherto had the good fortune to bring about, in any appreciable degree, an improvement in the morals and comforts of the immigrant hop-pickers in the district of Farnham.

Many years have passed since the principal hop-growers in Kent and elsewhere acknowledged the claims which their work-people had upon them, by doing their best to abate the evils complained of. There are some growers, as there are persons in other classes, who require a stronger influence than that of public opinion, and the aid of the authorities was obtained to complete that part of the work which voluntary effort failed to accomplish. The authority of Farnham were provided with the means of abating the grievances of the immigrants. They are pressed by public opinion and called on by the government to discharge the duties for which they are morally responsible. Their answer is a policy of persistent evasion. The excuse they put forward on the score of the difficulty is one which, though entirely inadequate before the assistance placed at their disposal by the government was provided, has
had, for years past, no vestige of reason to justify it. All that they have to do is to adopt the bye-laws offered to them, by the Local Government Board, and administer them with due care, ignoring neither the difficulties which the growers have to contend with, nor those which are suffered by their work-people.

Of late years the proposal to entrust a larger share than hitherto assigned of county business to persons of the class to which nominated guardians commonly belong has been under consideration. No stronger argument could be adduced in favour of such a proposal than the superior manner in which they are acquitting themselves in the duties already undertaken by them. If it is found that these duties are not being efficiently and well discharged, on what grounds can a further share of work hitherto entrusted to justices be safely transferred to them?

The manner in which the inspection of the lodgings is now performed will, in the next place, claim the attention of the reader.

In several of the districts the supervision of the inspection is carefully maintained by the authorities; in others they are rather less than lukewarm in the support rendered to their inspector. If that officer perceives that his authority are indifferent to the administration of a law which some members of the board do not greatly relish, however zealous and diligent in the discharge of his duties he may be, and
commonly is, the man is discouraged, and by degrees relaxes in his vigilance. If he persists in his obnoxious representations, he fears that he may some day suffer for his obstinate fidelity. Nor is this all. He is called upon, in addition to the regular duties of his office, to visit every hopper-house, tent, wigwam, or inhabited shed in his district, in order to see that they are clean on entry, and in all respects such as the law requires. Not a few nocturnal visits should be paid to ascertain that the lodgings are not overcrowded. His report must be carefully prepared, and complaints must be attended to, and injuries redressed. It is then evident that a very arduous addition to his usual duties is imposed on the local officer, and unless he is provided with some assistance, and also an addition to his salary, he is being treated with some hardship and unfairness.

Let me, however, here point out that considerable trouble would be saved if a notice was placed (by law) on the premises of every grower who required immigrant labour, in a conspicuous position, stating the number of persons which each lodging, of whatever kind, would accommodate, the penalty for breaking the law, together with the address of the inspector. In this case the pickers, like the passengers of an overcrowded omnibus, would have their protection in their own hands, and over-crowding would soon be stopped. The grower can always provide additional
accommodation at a very small expense, and the evil of overcrowding, which is as bad as ever in some districts, would be abolished. The duties of the inspector would by such means be considerably relieved. But it must be thoroughly understood that he shall be properly supported by his authority, instead of having his knuckles rapped for coming up to them and reporting possibly that one of the members of the authority is infringing the bye-laws in one or more particulars. The attention of the authorities was drawn to the necessity of careful inspection in the subjoined circular letter,* dated August 22, 1882.

* "Sir,
  "As the hop-picking season is now approaching, I am directed by the Local Government Board to state that they deem it desirable to draw the attention of the Sanitary Authority to the necessity of a supervision by them and their officers of the accommodation provided for the hop-pickers employed in their district, and the sanitary arrangements connected therewith. The Board trust, therefore, that the Sanitary Authority will not fail to impress upon their officers the importance of giving special attention to these matters, and of frequently visiting the premises in which the hop-pickers are housed. As regards those districts where bye-laws relating to hop-pickers are in force, the Board rely upon the necessary measures being taken for securing a strict enforcement of their requirements.
  "I am, sir, your obedient servant,
  "JOHN LAMBERT, Secretary."
CHAPTER VIII.

Compulsory in lieu of permissive legislation required.

PRESENTATIONS were again made by the society to the Local Government Board in 1878, stating that it was not possible, in the opinion of the committee, "to provide for and to maintain the proper accommodation of immigrant hop-pickers under the permissive powers of the Act as it now stands."

They stated that the society, which consisted of some of the principal owners and occupiers of hop lands in districts visited by hop-pickers had "for many years brought a friendly influence to bear on the employers of such labourers with results which may be seen in the improved lodgings and better care of the people; but much evil remains which cannot be dealt with by
moral and social influences, and which requires the intervention of the law.” They urged that the model bye-laws, which were framed mainly on the “recommendations of the society, relating to the lodgings” would, if they became compulsory, instead of being a permissive code, secure a remedy, and added that, inasmuch as in their opinion “a uniform code of bye-laws is required in all the districts, they submit that representations be made to the Local Government Board with a view to obtain the further amendment of the Public Health Act, sec. 314, so as to provide that bye-laws shall be made securing the decent lodging and accommodation of persons engaged in hop-picking within the districts of all such authorities.”

Before offering an amended section of the Act above referred to, it will be well to recall to the attention of the reader the short Act passed last year, which extends the Public Health Act to the making of bye-laws for vegetable and fruit-pickers; “Sec. 314 of the Public Health Act (above referred to) shall be deemed to extend to and authorize the making of bye-laws for securing the decent lodging and accommodation of persons engaged in the picking of fruit and vegetables.”

The amendment would run as follows:—

“Instead of ‘Any local authority may, if they think fit, make bye-laws for security . . . ’; to substitute, ‘Every local authority of districts visited by persons employed in picking of hops,
of fruit, and of planting or picking vegetables,* shall adopt bye-laws for securing the decent lodging and accommodation of such persons within the district of such authority, subject to the sanction and approval of the Local Government Board for such alteration as local circumstances may render advisable: We, the (Rural) Sanitary Authority of , in the County of , do ordain the following bye-laws for regulating the lodging and other treatment of persons engaged in the picking of Hops, of Fruit, and of Vegetables, in the district of the same authority.'"

BYE-LAWS
(UNDER THE SANITARY ACTS AMENDMENT ACT).

Application of Bye-laws.

I.—These Bye-laws shall be applicable to all houses, sheds, tents, barns, or other constructions within the district aforesaid, in which persons employed in the picking of hops, fruit, and the planting or picking of vegetables, are designed to be lodged, save and except houses commonly used for human habitation at all times of the year.

Character of Habitation.

II.—All such habitations shall be weatherproof and dry, and shall be clean when required for occupation. They shall be ventilated, so far as may be required, and where practicable lighted.

Space.

III.—The number of adult persons who shall be received into any such habitations or any room therein, at any one time, for the purpose of sleeping therein, shall not be greater than will

* The Fruit-pickers' Lodging Act omits the care of the lodgings of immigrants employed in planting vegetables, potatoes, etc.
allow sixteen square feet at the least of available floor space in every sleeping apartment for each adult person, two children under ten years of age to be counted as one adult. The number of persons to be accommodated in each room shall be stated in a conspicuous part of the building.

**Internal Divisions.**

IV.—In every construction occupied by adult persons of different sexes, for the purpose of sleeping therein, there shall be provided such screens or partitions between the beds as shall be sufficient to protect the occupants from indecent exposure. The screens or partitions shall not be less than 5ft. in height and 5ft. in length.

**Cooking Houses.**

V.—Cooking-houses or other places available for the lighting of fires, the cooking of food, and drying of clothes, and other articles, shall be provided in the proportion of one to each fifteen persons of whatever age. There shall be a roof over the fireplace covering a ground space of not less than 7ft. by 9ft.

**Supply of Water.**

VI.—A sufficient supply of good and wholesome water, for drinking, cooking, washing, and other like purposes, shall be provided, or shall be available within a quarter of a mile of the cooking-houses.

**Bedding.**

VII.—Clean dry straw or other clean dry bedding shall be supplied in sufficient quantities for the use of every person, and shall be changed or cleansed if and so often as shall be requisite.

**Cleansing, Limewashing, etc.**

VIII.—Every such habitation shall be thoroughly cleansed, and the ground adjoining thereto made free from offensive matter before any periodical occupation thereof, and also during such occupation if and so often as may be necessary for the preservation of health and decency; and the walls and ceiling of every room constructed of brick, stone, iron, concrete, wood, earth, or plaster, shall be well and sufficiently limewashed at least once in every year.

**Privies.**

IX.—Privy accommodation shall be provided for every twelve persons. Separate privies shall be provided for men and women.
Provision against Fire.

X.—Whenever straw is used for the walls or internal division of such habitations, or whenever straw not enclosed in a coverlet is used for bedding, a sufficient number of lanterns shall be provided for use of the pickers, with the view of diminishing the risk of fire.

Infectious Disorders.

XI.—In case of fever or any infectious or contagious disorder occurring to any person, the employer of such person shall forthwith give notice to the Medical Officer of Health, or to the Inspector of Nuisances of the District, and shall comply with all reasonable and lawful directions given by them, or either of them, in relation thereto.

Rights of Inspection.

XII.—The Medical Officer of Health and Inspector of Nuisances of the District shall at all times have free access to any such habitation or any part thereof.

Penalties.

XIII.—Every person offending against any of these bye-laws, shall for every such offence be liable to a penalty not exceeding £5, and to a further penalty not exceeding 10s. for every day during which the offence shall continue, after conviction.
CHAPTER IX.

Agency of Hop-pickers—Welcomed by the immigrants—Opposed by middlemen, binmen, gangers, and others who made a profit out of their engagements—Coldly received by the growers—The subject discussed and (in the interests of all parties concerned) the system of agency advocated.

The agency of hop-pickers has been already alluded to, and will now receive further attention. "As the cultivation of the hop increased and improvements in the mode of drying and preparing the hops enabled the hop-picking season to be much shortened, more hands were wanted, and a new class of pickers was attracted from the metropolis. They consisted of the poorest inhabitants of London and its suburbs, of costermongers and small tradesmen, whom the dead season set free from their usual avocations, and of tramps. Children, however young, were generally brought with them, not only because even a very small child can earn
something at hop-picking, but also from there being no other means of taking care of them.

Two or three weeks before the commencement of the picking, the exact date of which they had no means of ascertaining, thousands of poor persons overran the county of Kent, sleeping in the tramp wards of the union-houses or in the open air, and in the day time going round the country in search of employment. The inhabitants of the villages to which they went showed no sympathy towards a class of persons whose filthy, indecent, and disorderly habits made them unfit to be taken into their cottages, and who before the time of picking lived mainly by their depredations. The effect of this influx of strangers upon the resident population was grievously complained of; and when the hop-picking was over and the vast population was paid off to return to their homes, the scenes of debauchery and riot were described as frightful. Still worse was the state of things if, as not unfrequently occurs in the hop garden, a strike took place for an increase of remuneration, or some petty offence gave rise to a pitched battle between the immigrants and the natives.

"It is not to be supposed," Mr. Stanhope continues, "that all hop-growers looked on at this state of things without attempting to remedy it. The efforts made, however, were very partial in their operation, and it was not until it had reached its climax that the public opinion of the county was fully roused, and it
was determined to make an endeavour to remove the reproach which rested upon it in respect of the accommodation given to this population, and to devise some means by which the class of pickers might be improved and more control over them obtained by the planters. But only in 1866 was any united action taken, in which year the Society for the Employment and Improved Lodging of hop-pickers was formed by the adhesion of the principal hop-growers of the county, and by the support of many of the landowners. . . . One of its objects was to establish a system of engaging them by means of respectable and trustworthy agents living in the town from whence they came. The religious aspect of the question—how best to provide for the spiritual wants of this immigrant population—was designedly omitted, to prevent any chance of thereby alienating any of the planters.

"The class of persons employed in hop-picking varies according to the mode of hiring. In East Kent a class of pickers more akin to the home dwellers is to be found in those who come from the seaport towns or from Sussex villages, bringing with them furniture, beds, and cooking utensils. They are superior to the ordinary immigrants, and the inhabitants of the hop-growing villages are often not unwilling to receive them into their homes. They are not unfrequently hired through an agent in each town. In the neighbourhood of Maidstone,
many pickers are also hired through the agency of the binmen or 'gangers.' A man living in London or the suburbs agrees beforehand with the planter by letter to bring down one or more 'bins' companies, from six to eight persons each, beside children. Generally each picker is paid separately for his or her work, but sometimes a system analogous to that of the public gang is adopted, and the ganger brings down his party to the scene of action, paying all expenses, feeding them miserably, † and giving them perhaps a trifling sum at the finish. Sometimes a costermonger takes them all down in his cart, feeds them, and gives them fixed wages, taking for himself the rest of the profits. In other cases also, even where each individual is paid what he or she has earned, extortions by these binmen are represented as by no means uncommon, and at any rate some treating or remuneration ‡ is expected by them in return for their services in collecting the party. This system appears on the whole to work fairly well, if the grower carries out his engagement. Sometimes, however, when the hops go off suddenly and the planter finds himself in no want of hands to pick them, he is careless about

* Commonly.—J. Y. S.
† Two lads stated to one of the society's agents that a costermonger engaged them both to go to the picking for half a sovereign each and their food—which, they added, consisted mainly of bad herrings.
‡ I believe it is almost always given, and is sometimes as much as 5s. per head.—J. Y. S.
HIRING FROM THE TRAMP WARDS.

giving notice to them not to come, and in one case no less than one hundred pickers, arriving from London in accordance with their contract, found themselves thrown upon the road without employment or money.

"The most objectionable mode of hiring is that already mentioned of collecting them from the roads or from the tramp wards of the union-houses. It is no uncommon thing for a grower to send up at night to the union and to hire all who are to be found there, without any reference to decent behaviour or ability to perform the work. This system has been described as a direct premium on vagrancy, and is a very great hardship to the respectable poor who have to leave London without any certainty of employment." *

In a report of the committee of Justices of Kent on Vagrants, in 1868, it is stated that "much evil arises from persons coming from London into the hop districts in hope of getting employment in hop-picking, without having made arrangements with the growers. The consequence is that, having wandered down in misery and having failed to get employment, they have only to return in the same state, begging in the day and getting, as far as practicable, assistance at night, by means of orders in the casual wards. Your committee had an interview with the secretary of the

* Stanhope, "Report and Evidence." The evidence is ably summarized by Mr. Stanhope, and is given above.
Society for the Employment and Improved Lodging of Hop-pickers. The society has agents in London who would make arrangements between the growers and the pickers, and arrange for their being sent into the country when they are wanted and for their return. If this system became general, poor persons in London who really wanted work would not thus wander down, knowing it was useless, because the growers would have made their arrangements; and the excuse of seeking work being thus taken away, the idle who came down with no such intention might be dealt with under the vagrant law, and would then possibly be deterred from so obtruding themselves.

In order to remedy these evils and then to attempt to place the relations of the grower and picker on a satisfactory footing, the system of agency was devised. The advantages offered thereby to the immigrants were briefly these: (1) That they would, without fee or any expense, be placed on a register, and on their services being required would be informed of the time when, and place where, to go, with information of the trains, and the nearest station to the hop-garden of their employer. (2) That if by failure of the crop there should be little demand for immigrant labour, they would receive timely warning, and remain at home. (3) And lastly, the society stipulated that lodgings and accommodation in accordance with the recommenda-
tions above mentioned should be provided by the growers for those supplied through the agency.

Thus, then, it will be seen the pickers had a friend in the agent. The growers were on their part to arrange terms, it not being doubted that they would act, as they have always in the main acted, liberally and fairly. They in turn would (1) find persons of a less defiant and self-abandoned class, to whom it would be of importance to be retained on the agency-register of the society. (2) That in case of unruly behaviour or unreasonable demands for wages, the ringleaders, even if they were home-pickers, should find their services dispensed with, and by a telegram to the agent a few additional hands would be supplied immediately to replace those who were discharged; (3) and that not only should the grower be relieved of the pressure of destitute and starving persons whom he had employed in former years, from hanging about his premises and establishing themselves in the lodgings a fortnight or so before the commencement of the picking, but (4) that the residents of the district should be relieved of claims which were as difficult to reject as to admit. The latter were but too glad to hear of any plan which promised to lessen the burden * annually thrown on them of

* Not only country people, but the townsfolk suffered under this annual visitation. It was stated "that in 1865 upwards of 1100 persons on the journey down slept on the doorsteps and
assisting the hordes of poor and penniless vagrants who tramped from town to the gardens, and commonly mistook their road, and made many days of a journey which would not occupy more than two or three hours by rail. The proposal to establish an agency appeared to be, what it really is, sound in principle, and it will be of public use to relate the history, and consider carefully the advantages to be derived from a well-managed and trustworthy method of hiring labourers.

The first operation was as indispensable as that which is referred to in the old cooking-books. We were to catch the agent, and this was a work of very considerable difficulty. In the hop country it was prophesied that it was not possible to obtain the right men. The notion of the founder of the society was to select the most intelligent and trustworthy of the "binmen" for agents, pay them well, and let them arrange with other binmen, pole-pullers, or gangers, to bring their respective "companies" of eight or ten pickers. A serious obstacle, however, to the success of the proposal was about the streets of Gravesend." One could not pass along the highways towards nightfall without meeting families who had literally no place where to lay their heads; I have found them sleeping under the hedge, or under a tree, or under the porch of the cottage on the wayside, provided that the mother could keep the little children from crying sufficiently loud to disturb the inmates, when they were compelled to move on. The complaints of such infliction on the resident population were not unreasonable, but how much worse was the lot of the poor wretches on the road!
speedily forthcoming from a quarter from which the general public had no reason to expect it. The difficulty was with the committee of management of the society. The committee consisted of some of the principal hop-planters of this country, who had each one his own system of engaging pickers already in use, and was unwilling, unsatisfactory as he admitted it to be, to take the serious step of reconstructing it on new lines for the common good. They were, with a few important exceptions, unwilling to alter their custom of engaging through the binmen, or in other ways, though they supported the effort to promote the agency on the grounds of benefit to the people, and certain probable advantages to the grower and the district. As they stated in one of their earliest reports, many were anxious to see the plan tried, but did not try it for themselves. The difficulty was foreseen, and its consequences were accurately estimated by those on whom the principal share of the work devolved. We were as one man on the resolution to improve the lodgings and accommodation, and in the establishment of an agency for informing the people when and where to come, and supplying information of obvious use to them. We were unanimous in the effort to reduce the turbulent to good order; some thought much of the advantage of using the agency in repressing a strike; but the proposal to put all the pickers under an agent who should, by means of the grower’s binmen, en-
gage and register all the hands he required, selecting, of course, all steady and good pickers who had been employed in former years, and striking off persons of indifferent or bad character, was revolutionary. The assistance and support of our fellow-labourers up to the point they were willing to go could not be dispensed with. Nothing could be done without them, and their reluctance to change their old customs did not prevent their strenuous aid in other anxious parts of the work. The charge of "3d. per picker," made by the society was never considered in any way objectionable. But the society could not go to the public and offer to share with others the advantages of a system which had been, first of all, adopted by its principal members. It was yet thought possible that the agency might work so well that it would in process of time recommend itself, and that the committee would gradually adopt it. This anticipation was but partially realized, and though the influence of the minority and their testimony in favour of the plan were of great value, the committee were always divided on its merits. The result was that the society failed to secure the commanding position which must be held if the supply of immigrant labour is to be regulated by the demand, without entailing more or less hardship on the labouring classes from which the supply is drawn, and occasional disappointment to the employers.

Another difficulty was at the outset a formid-
ABLE one. The society insisted on inspecting the accommodation which the growers, who applied for hop-pickers, provided. This was sometimes found to be deficient, and in such case it refused to supply pickers. It will thus be seen that the effort to establish a system of agency, which is from time to time discussed in the newspapers, and supposed to be an original idea by the correspondents, is, like the generality of practical proposals, by no means new, and I may add it is by no means so easy to carry into effect as it appears at first sight.

On finding that the support of the committee would not be available for the original design of selecting the best of the binmen for agents and making other binmen work subordinately to them in the selection of their companies, the next step was to provide a staff of agents, and train them to their duties. For this purpose inquiries were carefully instituted among men who had retired from the Metropolitan and City Police, collectors of the rents paid by the London poor, superannuated workhouse officials, former relieving officers, and others who knew a good deal of the classes which supply the immigrant hop-pickers of London and suburbs. Scripture readers, and tradespeople whose custom was mainly among the dregs of the population, were also visited, and as the result of a task which entailed no little trouble on the solitary individual who undertook it, five agents were appointed by the society in 1867, and a.
"corresponding agent" (on the suggestion of the South Eastern Railway Company) was placed in Maidstone. Of the original five, three were Scripture readers.

Their duties were:—(1) To engage hop-pickers on the order of the hop-grower, with or without the intervention of a binman, as might be required, "experienced pickers, unless of disorderly character, to have the preference."

"All engagements to be conditional on the state of the crop," the latter regulation being to guard the people against a fruitless journey.

(2) To obtain and circulate information of the time when and the trains by which pickers may be conveyed to and from the district, and to aid in the arrangements for their conveyance; the agent to be present at the departure of trains conveying pickers engaged by him, and to send a list of them to the employer.

(3) To keep a register of hop-pickers; and lastly, to carry into effect the directions of the society, or of the officers appointed by that society.

The remuneration for the office of agent was to be 50s. a year, and a commission of 1s. 6d. per bin's company of ten, or a proportionate sum where the hop-pickers were engaged without binmen.

The society thereupon offered its services to the hop-growers, in securing for them hop-pickers on the order of the grower; all engagements to be conditional on the state of the crop.
There was to be no liability to the society, its officers, and agents, in case of failure in engagements or for bad conduct of the pickers. The society was not to interfere with the contracts "between the planters and the pickers." The agents were directed to exercise care in their selection, and to send experienced pickers, unless of disorderly character. The commission charged to the grower was, as already stated, 3d. a picker, and it was stipulated that orders should be sent before the end of July to the corresponding agent, who was placed at the head-quarters of the hop district. Immediately on the receipt of an "order for pickers," an officer was sent by the society to see the lodgings and accommodation, and these being found, as they generally were, sufficiently good, the order was placed in the hands of one of the agents for execution. Advertisements were duly circulated in the metropolitan hop-pickers' districts, offering to engage experienced and orderly hop-pickers; application to be made to the agent at specified times, usually from seven to nine in the evening.

Great numbers applied to the agents for employment, preferring to engage under the society to the means hitherto adopted by them of obtaining work. An agent, it was found, could secure upwards of five hundred pickers, who would be brought under the influences on the side of order, which arose from their names being retained in his register with a view to
employment in future years, and the provision of good lodgings and good treatment during their sojourn in the hop country, with reliable information of when and where to go.

The people who had been accustomed either to take the chance of employment by tramping down into the districts, or paying a considerable premium to the binmen, or of engaging themselves as servants of the binmen, were happy enough at the prospect of obtaining employment without cost, and crowded to the agencies when the hour named for making engagements drew on. Not so the binmen, who began to fear that the hope of their gains was gone, and took much the same line of opposition as the landlord of a beerhouse will adopt on finding that the benefit club which keeps up the connection of the house, and on which he depends for the free consumption of his ale, is threatened by the invasion of the large county friendly society in his preserves. The agency was therefore by no means encouraged by the binmen. The letter-writers also, who are commonly employed by the binmen and immigrant hop-pickers at 6d. a letter,* and 1d. the stamp, paper, and envelope included, did not at all relish the notion of the agency.

* [Specimen Letter.]

"HONNERD SIR.

"Hoping your helth and lady and family is well as by the blessin of God leaves me at present. Hoping as the hops is florishing and likely to require many oppers and that they will come down well and be lucky for Hall Concarne. Honnerd"
But that a great advantage was likely to result to the immigrants, provided that the system gained the general support of the growers, was soon apparent. The applicants for employment through the agency were registered, and informed that as orders for hop-pickers were received they would be engaged; but on account of the slender support afforded to the attempt, they were advised not to lose an opportunity of engaging elsewhere, the system being new and untried. The people were reasonable enough on this view of the case, and very properly looked out for employment in various quarters, so that the same parties would apply at two or three of the agencies, and after all obtain engagements by seeing the binmen. What they were especially grateful for was trustworthy intelligence from the hop districts. This the agents were always able to give them. By simply informing them of the probable requirements of the growers, the agents were often able to render good service, without so much as engaging a single picker. Applicants were content to remain in town, instead of setting off on tramp on the chance of meeting with employment.

Sir I has a Company of frustrate pickers. Wife 2 gals 1 boy and neebors willing to come as afore. Hoping you has a bin for same

"Your humble sarvint"

"J. Jones."

"No. —, Rochester Row.

"To Mr. M——. Button Place near the Hopper-house on Button Green, Maidstone, Kent."
It only remained for the hop-growers to support the efforts of the society. It was neither matter for surprise nor censure that they were shy of the agency. Upwards of three hundred pickers were, however, engaged in the first year; the number being distributed among the agents, in order to give them a little practical acquaintance with their duties, and to show that something was likely to come out of the newly established system.

Each picker had the following ticket, called the "Hopper Letter," the blanks being duly filled in:—

"Society for the Employment and Improved Lodging of Hop-Pickers.

"No. . To

"You are expected to be at , on , for the hop-picking, and are recommended to travel by railway train leaving Station at o'clock, on , and to take your ticket for Station, and pay your own fare.

"Please take notice that you will lose your chance of employment if you are later than the time above named.

"(Signed) , Agent.

"Date,

In red letters across the above was the caution:

"If you part with this to be used by another picker your name will be taken off my list."

This letter was to be delivered to the grower, who made what notes he thought good on it, and sent it back to the agent at the close of the picking.

In the first year of the agency the general picking was unusually late, so that great diffi-
culty was experienced in preventing the stream of immigration from setting in weeks before there were any hops to pick. This annual trouble, which the society has done much to lessen, is usually started by the announcement of some advertising people in the Borough. A grower is induced, by the prospect of "having his name in all the newspapers in England," to pick over his gardens and send up what is called by way of compliment the first pocket of hops. The transaction would not signify to any one but the grower, who shines in print, and his factor who is driving his business, if it did not act on the people like a red rag on a bull. They are apt, on seeing it, to make a rush, and set off to the hop country as soon as they can get clear of their lodgings, under the belief that the agents have been deluding them, and that the picking is already in full swing.

In order to act as a deterrent on ill conduct, the districts were placarded with notices, that by means of the society hop-pickers of good character would be supplied. The notice was, by the kindness of the South Eastern Railway Company, posted at all their stations in the hop country, and had an excellent influence on the conduct of the people. It may be well here to correct a misconception that the society ever attempted, or even intended, to displace the common run of the immigrants, and to substitute for them persons of classes commonly considered more respectable than they. The
opinion was from the first, that if only the pickers could be brought to understand that it would be to their advantage in all respects to behave well, and that disorderly or vicious conduct would make it difficult for them to obtain employment, there would be no necessity to induce respectable persons to come who were as yet untried in hop-picking. A wholesome check of this kind, together with good accommodation, and lodging as comfortable as circumstances permitted, and the due care of the employer, was thought sufficient to secure general good conduct; and without doubt this is the right way to deal with the people. If, however, all proved to be insufficient for the purpose, there was in the background the agent with an unexhausted list of applicants for work, who would under extraordinary circumstances replace disorderly pickers and make it more or less difficult for them to find work in future.

There was, however, at that time, and as will continue to arise at uncertain intervals, the sudden demand for pickers, which rendered it advisable to have a reserve which might be drawn upon. For this purpose it was considered that, provided the growers made the hopper-house sufficiently comfortable, many wives of labourers and artisans of the lower class, who were in permanent employment and could not leave their homes for a single day, would be able to send a part of their
families, and come to the hop-picking while the men remained at home, with or without the rest of the children. And if the time ever comes when, either by the competition of the foreigner, or by the increase of the cultivation of the hop at home, it will be necessary for the grower to be more careful than hitherto in his management, and to be able to secure a great part of a valuable crop by expediting the picking, and reducing it by additional hands to half or two-thirds the time, instead of letting a good part of his crop suffer from delay, there will be an additional argument for an agency to supply his labour to those with whom he is already familiar. That time, however, has not yet come.

The efforts of the society in providing good pickers were attended by different results. In some cases there were very reasonable grounds for complaint, and short of having the command of the labour market, which was the aim of the society, it was hardly likely that the best pickers could be always obtained. In others, however, the growers spoke well of the skill of the people; their conduct was never the subject of complaint. The advantage of reporting persons who were not satisfactory, and who were struck off the list, others being sent in their stead, was fully proved. The same hands were, as a rule, to go to the same place from year to year. The plan, where it was fairly tried, was found to answer very well. It is right to add, that some of the growers, after
employing the society's pickers, told them to come again in the following year, by which arrangement they saved the trifling commission and further trouble to the society.

In one case, where the grower complained of the party sent to him, it subsequently transpired that he had quietly told them they might write to him the following year, and some of them were retained in his employ for many successive years. For the purposes of income, the deficiency from this leakage was inconsiderable; the people of course no longer needed the help of the agent, but by this arrangement the power of the society in the effort to obtain the control of the labour market was somewhat weakened.

Many of the growers who did not care to trust their arrangements for the pickers to the society were not insensible to the advantage of an additional supply of hands in case of emergency. One remarkable instance occurred in which the pickers suddenly struck for an unreasonable advance, and were met by the refusal of their employer to give way. The dispute ended in the immediate discharge of the whole of the party, upwards of thirty, who were speedily replaced by a number of pickers from the agency in Westminster. The people who were thus supplied did their work and behaved very well, and were employed at the same place in future years, without, however, further reference to the society.
The promptness with which a supply of fresh hands was sent did good in the district; but, at the same time, it was not a case which the society was formed to provide for. It was stipulated that there should be no interference between the employers and the workpeople in the matter of terms. It was neither intended nor desired that the whole number of hop-pickers, on the outbreak of a strike—which is sometimes the only means they have of redressing a grievance—should be summarily discharged, and the society called upon to replace them. An experiment of the kind was attempted. A grower suddenly discharged all his pickers, nearly two hundred, at a time when the season was well advanced, and all hands were in demand. Special efforts were made on his behalf to secure a fresh detachment. It was, however, not possible to induce the people to leave London for the short time that remained to the close of the picking. Unluckily, the services of one of the society's agents, who was on the ground at the outbreak of the disturbances, were not resorted to. The tale of the dismissal was told by the pickers to their friends in London, and not a man or woman would engage. One or two similar misunderstandings were easily set right in other quarters by discharging the ringleaders, whether "home or foreign," and replacing them by trustworthy persons from an agency. As a rule, hop-pickers do not like to give up their lodgings in town,
for which their weekly rent is paid in advance, before the end of the week, and there is additional trouble in securing their assistance in the earlier part of it. It is easier to obtain hands towards the end than at the beginning of the week.

The society also established agencies in Woolwich and Deptford, and other convenient local centres, as they found necessary. Little troubles occasionally arose from the agents misunderstanding their instructions. One of the "hop kings" of Kent, as the largest growers are sometimes called, joined heartily in the movement, and volunteered his assistance in the task of selecting agents. He chose one, and gave him an "order for pickers." The agent engaged the number required, "taking any one who came along promiscuous," and giving his "hopper letters" to them without inquiry or so much as registering names and address. He immediately demanded his salary and commission, under the threat of legal proceedings, not from the Society, but the unlucky grower. His further services were dispensed with.

Another worthy agent registered everybody who applied to him, and promised upwards of a thousand poor wretches, also "taken promiscuous," good lodgings and excellent pay, at a time when there was the barest possibility of one-tenth of the number of carefully selected pickers being required. He then wrote to the
secretary of the Society informing him what he had done. This was, as anticipated, speedily followed by telegrams and a second letter, saying that the people were getting furious with him, and he was in danger of having his shop and property destroyed, and had difficulty in escaping personal injury. The hop-pickers, who were justly aggrieved, and to whom nothing could be explained, demanded the address of the officers of the society, with a view to send a deputation, the members of which were charged not to content themselves with merely verbal arguments. However, the officers escaped their attentions.

The supply of hop-pickers by means of the agencies in no year exceeded 1900, the general run being under 1000. No account, however, is taken of many who were originally engaged through the society, and who subsequently went to the growers without the intervention of the agent.

Inquiries were made in 1873 of the agents what number of pickers they could conveniently obtain and send to their destination. Mr. Knight replied thus:—

"I find some difficulty in my answer, for this reason: many who come to me say, 'Is there any hope of your finding us a master to pick for?' I may state that in almost every instance they would prefer being sent by us as agents; but if they find that we cannot give them the promise of work (and we cannot do so unless
we have the orders), they naturally say, 'We must look out for ourselves, or we shall be left behind.'

"I have not the slightest doubt that if I could hold out to them such a promise I could send a thousand from my agency (Lambeth) as easily as a hundred. But if I take a number of names and addresses, and cannot promise the people work, the result would be that after the time of commencing the picking, or perhaps a day or two before, these very persons are off in search of employment, and I should seek for them in vain. If I could answer 'yes' to their inquiries, they have sufficient faith in us, and desire to be employed by the agents, that they would wait without a doubt. I have great numbers who are just in that condition of mind at the present moment" (August 18).

Information to the same effect was forthcoming from other agents.

The general conclusion to which a careful review of the system of agency brings us, is that to the immigrant hop-pickers it offers very considerable advantages, which I briefly enumerate:

First, they obtain trustworthy information of the time when their services will be required. Secondly, if by failure of the crop, which is a difficulty always imminent, and in the very nature of the case their services are not wanted, they are relieved from the hardships and disappointment of a visit to the hop country in the fruitless search for employment. Thirdly,
they know where to go, having precise instructions, by which, after one or two blunders which they commonly make when they first come into the country, they at length reach the hop garden where they would be. Fourthly, they are assured of fair and considerate treatment. Fifthly, they are informed of the time when they should be at the trains, both going and returning, the agent being in the way to see that all is right for the journey down; and lastly, they are relieved of the exactions of binmen or gangers, who are apt to squeeze very hard bargains with them.

Further, the relief to the resident population of the burden of a great number of poor persons on the tramp by such a system is an obvious advantage. The relief also of the strain on the accommodation for casuals in the workhouses * will not be lost sight of. The agency

*As an instance of the evil the following extract from the Maidstone Journal, September 13, 1869, may be given:—"The number of persons who have applied during the past eight days to the relieving officer of Maidstone for lodgings for the night or food during the day has been 618 men, 817 women, and 1800 children, giving a total of 3235 persons. The average number accommodated nightly at the Coxheath Maidstone Union (four miles distant from the town) is from 600 to 700. With but few exceptions, the conduct of the applicants has been most orderly. This has not been the case at Chatham (Medway Union). The master reported to the board that he had received about 2000 casuals during the week, and their conduct had been so disorderly that he had to obtain the assistance of the police. Many of the pickers arrive in a destitute and forlorn condition, and the wet and stormy weather of the past few days has added to their difficulties." Other evidence to the same effect was forthcoming from workhouses in the neighbouring unions of Malling, Hollingbourne, etc.
of the hop-pickers was commended by the late Poor Law Board as the best means yet devised to diminish vagrancy and prevent distress commonly suffered at the hop-picking.

The plan, however, did not find favour with the growers sufficient to make its way to assured success, and the society, after a persistent and patient effort for many years, determined to abandon it, preserving, however, certain advantages which it had secured for the hop-pickers, in furnishing them with trustworthy information, and the best means of conveyance to the district, and the districts in which the supervision of the lodgings and accommodation were under the care of the sanitary authorities. The agency itself was transferred to the Labour Agency, 15, Russell Street, Covent Garden, W.C., which had for some time co-operated with the society, and which has continued to the present time to render strenuous assistance in all efforts made for the good of the hop-pickers.

The subject of the agency of labourers is of sufficient importance to claim careful investigation. It is the best if not the only solution of the difficulty of the supply of labour on reasonable terms, and it is the only known means of abating the evils which are inflicted on the poor who are "on the road" in search for work. The command of the labour market would soon be attained by any party of considerable growers, say ten or a dozen, who agreed to place all their hands under such a system of
agency as that which has been described, and allow all arrangements relating to the selection and engagement of hands, the journey to and from the district, to be managed by their agent. It is essential to the success of the method that they shall begin by transferring all their hop-pickers to the registry of the agent. They might with advantage avail themselves of the assistance of the old staff of agents of the society who are experienced and good men to take charge of and manage the people, with certain assistance to be rendered by the binmen as sub-agents.

A few difficulties in the course of the agency work may be mentioned. Applicants who have never seen a hop garden should as a rule be refused unless they are younger members of a family going for the picking. They are easily detected where they attempt to impose on the agent who possesses a little experience in his duties. In the society's experience, the exchange or sale of the "hopper letter" occasioned more difficulty. John Jones, of No. —, Rochester Row, would engage to go to the picking at Mr.——'s, and either change his mind, or sell his ticket to a friend, who, if he could not read, was to be sure to remember the name and address of Mr. Jones, whom he was to personate. The substitute would probably be of no use in the hop garden. "An experienced and orderly hopper" called on one of the agents, and put down his name.
and address, and those of his "relations," to the number of ten, receiving their letters "to save 'em all trouble." He went away and sold them forthwith for 2s. a letter, making a pound by his negotiation. That gentleman did not keep his appointment with the grower, but "his relations" did, and found out how they had been victimized, as they might of course have had their letters for nothing. The agents, however, after a time came to know the applicants pretty well, and the chance of such imposition was thereby lessened. The trick, however, led to the notice in red ink which was printed across the hopper-letter, saying that the person who parted with it to another picker would be struck off the register.

The chief difficulties in the agency were occasioned by some of the growers of the rear-rank degree. In years when hands were greatly in demand, the people would be accosted on leaving the agency with their letters by some one on the look out for hop-pickers, and told that the person they were going to "was a bad lot," with lodgings and accommodation corresponding to the said lot. The pickers, always credulous, were easily persuaded, and for a consideration would desert, to the great inconvenience and loss of the grower who engaged through the society, as well as injury to the agency. In 1875, upwards of one hundred out of 1900 were persuaded in this way to break faith with their employers.
This abuse the society endeavoured to correct by transferring the central agency, the duties of which had for some years been well discharged by Mr. J. Raggett of Maidstone, to London; by raising the commission per picker from 3d. to 6d., payable by the grower; and by requiring that every hop-picker should pay the agent on receiving his letter, the sum of 6d., which sum was to be repaid with 6d. in addition, on delivering the letter to the employer at the commencement of the picking. This arrangement brought the grower and the picker under a contract, so that the protection of the law was available on either side. The society was also thereby protected against persons who enticed hop-pickers to break their engagements. The plan was too ingenious to work easily, though it deterred the growers from attempting to entice the people from their employers, and in this respect answered pretty well. The cost of this regulation fell on the growers, who were called upon to pay 1s. per picker instead of the original commission of 3d. The remedy was not complete, as the experience of the following year showed. A large increase of the acreage and a very considerable crop caused the usual demand for labour to become something like a scramble for pickers. "Tips" were offered to railway porters to help the growers who were short of hands by getting some of the travellers to book for other stations than those named in their letters; but the society did not fare so
badly in this respect as the growers who engaged through the binmen. Seven out of a party of twelve engaged by the society for a grower near Etchingham were adroitly captured by a farm bailiff, who offered them a pot of porter just as the train was starting. Nor could the benevolent intention of prosecuting his master be carried into effect, as he could not be found out.

One or two attempts were also made by growers to induce the main body of his hop-pickers to take lower terms than they might fairly expect. The threat of discharging all on the eve of the picking and telegraphing for a fresh supply was occasionally used, and partly acted upon. An agent has been known to receive a telegram for twenty or thirty pickers to be sent immediately, the accommodation being stated to be good. The matter being urgent, he would possibly, in the exercise of a discretionary power, send them. On reaching their destination, they would meet with anything but a welcome from the main body, and find that the good lodging, if any, was already assigned, and the accommodation provided for the new comers was as indifferent as the pay, which all who saw the arrival of the society's hands felt themselves constrained to take or go about their business. One of these urgency cases led to a visit from the society's officer, who found that the grower had sufficient hopper-house accommodation and cooking-sheds for
about half the number he required. The rest, including those for whom he had telegraphed to the agent, were to pig together anyhow in the barn, sheds, and outbuildings. The application was instantly withdrawn, and no harm was sustained by the hop-pickers.

With due care on the part of the employers, the agency of the town labourers would succeed. The system is capable of development in all towns in which there are persons available for field or fruit cultivation, as well as the hop-picking. The strawberry grounds, vegetables, peas, "bush" fruit, etc., require an increasing number of hands over and above the inhabitants of the district. An ample supply may be obtained at a very moderate cost, provided that the employers will go the right way to work—make all the arrangements necessary for their purpose and carefully superintend them. By establishing an agency and managing it with efficiency, they will be able to obtain the help they need at the time it is wanted, and thereby be enabled to secure the crop when it is at the best. This advantage cannot be attained if the employer must wait for the performance of his work, whether in the hop garden or orchard, by an inadequate supply of labourers.
CHAPTER X.

Conveyance by rail and road—Special trains for hoppers.

In the course of these pages the sufferings of the immigrants on tramp, and the annoyances inflicted on the resident population of the localities visited by them, have been described. The means of abating the evils complained of, by their conveyance by rail, and the additional facilities by which railway conveyance may be extended and improved, will now claim attention.

The number of pickers required for 65,000 acres of hops at four to the acre is 260,000. The villagers and townspeople within easy walking distance of the gardens, or who may be conveniently brought there daily by waggon or traction engine, as the case may be, are the "home pickers," and compose the main body.
HOP-PICKERS FROM LONDON.

A very considerable addition to them, which is estimated by the police to be 80,000 in Kent alone,* is required, and is supplied from London and towns within convenient reach of the districts by rail and road. The town’s poor, together with “those that dwell among hedges,”—gipsies, basket-sellers, and caravan people,—are the strangers or foreigners, commonly called the hoppers, in contradistinction to the home pickers.

In 1876 an estimate was made that there were upwards of 36,000 persons who leave London for the hop-picking if they obtain employment. About 23,000 of this number came for the hop-picking in that year. It is probable that this estimate is within the mark. There is, however, a good deal of difficulty in finding out who will go. They are shy in disclosing their plans. Instances are not uncommon in which lodgers in the same house will resort to the hop-picking without

* The estimate is said to be too high. A census obtained from other sources will soon be forthcoming, which it is anticipated will show that the number does not exceed 60,000, of which the majority come from London. They live principally in Lisson Grove, Maylebone, Islington, St. Giles, Barbican, Golden Lane, Whitecross Street, St. Martin’s-in-the-Fields, Westminster, Battersea, Lambeth, Bermondsey, Stratford, Stepney, Whitechapel, Bethnal Green, etc. The occupations of the people are chiefly costermongers, shoemakers, wood-cutters, hawkers, dock-labourers, tinkers, tailors, tin-workers, brick-makers, “painters,” fish-basket-makers, dustmen, brickies, sweeps, footmen, wharfingers, needlewomen, toymen, peg-makers, paper flower and fire-grate ornament makers, itinerant jewellers, dressmakers, wives and daughters of arsenal men, charwomen, waterside labourers, fish-driers, tan-yard labourers, and others.
a word to their equally reticent fellow-lodgers, whom they may possibly meet in the country. Many consider the occupation in some sense degrading, partly because some of the worst characters are employed, and partly from the evil, not yet wholly extirpated, of insufficient accommodation and overcrowded lodgings.

For hop-pickers from London and suburbs, and from places at a considerable distance from the hop districts, the railways are the high roads to the gardens. The immigrants are thereby brought with expedition, and are protected from the inclemency of the weather and the fatigue and hardships of a journey on foot.

The South Eastern Railway Company, on finding that there was a considerable demand for tickets at ordinary fares from persons whose manners and customs made them obnoxious to the travelling public, were in a manner compelled to provide special accommodation for them. All the third-class carriages which could be spared from the ordinary traffic, and not a few of the cattle-trucks, "providentially available for hoppers," were brought into use; and it was announced that hop-pickers would be conveyed to any station between Tunbridge and Strood for the uniform fare of 2s. 6d. by train, starting at 6 a.m. on the Sunday morning, to be followed, if need be, by a second train.

To the surprise and dismay of the officials, the Bricklayer's Arms Goods Station, which
was to be the starting-point, was beset before four o’clock in the morning by a howling and seething mob of several thousands of the elite of the slums of London, all clamorous to be admitted forthwith to the train, abusive and jocose in turn. The people had brought their baggage, consisting of blankets, rugs, cooking utensils, and a few spare clothes, where they were the happy owners of anything more than the tattered habiliments on their backs. “Children in arms,” said the too confiding company, “may go free.” This privilege bore, in the opinion of our friends, the most liberal construction. Here was a venerable dame from Ratcliffe Highway, without bonnet or shawl, with a strapping up-grown damsel on her back,—“My baby, my baby, measthur,” who insisted, despite the efforts of guards and porters, to lug her baby into the truck, amidst the uproarious applause and glee of the crowd. Big lads and bouncing girls were tied up as luggage, and shoved under the seats of the carriages till the train started, and kept there, if they did not look out for themselves, till it stopped, when they were unpacked and brought to light under the full persuasion that they “had done the rascally company.” In this respect, however, they were mistaken—they had to pay at the end. On one occasion the station-master at Paddock Wood took upwards of 30s. from passengers who had been smuggled into the train as parcels and
"My baby, my baby, measthur."
luggage. In another train he detained the shoes of such as had no money to pay till they brought their fare. It was impossible to give them into custody for defrauding the company. I think there were more than a dozen pairs of shoes detained at one time. Such passengers had certainly never in the history of railways been known to travel before. The excellent class of officials were harassed and worried almost beyond the limits of human endurance. The awful curses and horrible expressions with which their passengers are accustomed to urge their remonstrances at the top of their voices, were alone sufficient to appal those who were compelled to hear their cries, and the staff indeed had an unenviable commencement of the organized hopper traffic.

The organization of the traffic is improved greatly, and the people are, as a rule, not so violent. They understand more than they did of the railway, but there is much to this day to shock and horrify those who have the misfortune to be mixed up with the people. Much might be done to secure improvement.

In 1865 the number of hop-pickers by special trains from London, Woolwich, and Gravesend (which place they reach either by steamboat from London, etc., or from places in Essex), was 11,090 down, and 12,000 up. About 2,500 in addition, probably return by ordinary train of the South Eastern Railway. Since the year
1875 the Sevenoaks and Maidstone branch of the London, Chatham, and Dover Railway have conveyed a good many at reduced fares, although no special arrangements have been made for hop-pickers' trains on that line. The latter company brought in their first year 2226, and took home 4535. The numbers using the railways have greatly increased, mainly by the action of the society, which by means of "The Hop-picker's Itinerary, or Guide to the Hop Gardens," and the recommendations to the people to travel by rail, have incidentally done the companies good service. The highest number conveyed by rail to the district, was in 1878, being 20,241, and from the district 24,117, besides those who paid ordinary fares on the railways, of whom no separate account is kept. In the recent disastrous season no special traffic was organized, and the total number of immigrants from the metropolis did not greatly exceed 6000, who were compelled to pay the ordinary fare. Such was the hard treatment shown the hop-pickers by the directors of the South Eastern Railway Company.

The exigencies of the service overrode the desire of the South Eastern Company to avoid Sunday traffic. There is another reason why Sunday travelling is resorted to. The custom of the people is to give up their lodgings, which are hired by the week, on the Saturday, and in many cases they pack up their things, and are absolutely without a place of shelter till they
reach the station. With this explanation, the arrangements to bring them down by night-trains, which for some years has been in use, is by no means so bad and inconvenient to the people as would appear at first sight, although it is open to great objection. Where they have been wandering about for many hours of the night, and have a little money to spend, their cash is very apt to go in drink and increase the disorderly behaviour, and general misery.
CHAPTER XI.

The subject (conveyance) continued, and suggestions for improvement in the management and extension of the traffic considered.

In the "Note on the Conveyance and Supply of Hop-pickers," which attracted much attention at the time of its publication in 1876, the desirability of increased accommodation was urged. "The railway traffic arrangements for hop-pickers have secured to the companies a considerable source of revenue, and in the opinion of the committee of the society, there should be improvement in the service of the trains, as well as an extension of the limits to which the special service had been restricted." Hop-pickers are now brought from London by railway to stations within convenient reach of the gardens in Mid Kent and Sussex.
SPECIAL FARES.

It is to be desired that the companies would arrange to convey them to Faversham and Canterbury, and that the South Eastern Railway would convey them to stations beyond Tunbridge as far as Battle at low fares. A fare exceeding 2s. acts as a powerful deterrent to the majority of persons from going to growers at long distances, say fifty miles and upwards. They cannot walk so far, and circumstances might arise without a fault on either side which might lead to their being discharged, or to their discharging themselves from their employer at the beginning of the picking, when they would have no means of returning to London but on foot, the ordinary fare being out of their reach. Nor is the difficulty removed by the offer of the grower, not uncommonly made, where he is a long distance from the labour supply, to pay the fares both ways. The people may accept it, but they will take employment nearer home if they get the chance, and thus disappoint him, and very likely cause him pecuniary loss. A fare not exceeding 2s. from London to any station in the neighbourhood of which immigrant labour is required, appears to be the best way to get rid of the difficulty.

There are, however, a great many persons who cannot afford to pay 2s. 6d. or even 2s., and who will walk part or all the way to the grower who promises them work. They will take the steamboat down the Thames to
Gravesend if their destination is Mid Kent, and find their way on foot for the remainder of the distance. The costermongers and their companies, provided that their employer will allow grazing for their beasts of burden, will "come in their own carriages," as they will not fail to remark when they pass by the admiring spectator; their baggage and provisions, not forgetting the herrings, on the overloaded cart, and two or three of the party riding in turn, while others attend on foot to "spare the poor animal," which is constantly exhorted to get along, and persuaded so to do by many striking arguments. These persons, together with the harvesters who remain in the district for the hop-picking, are not destitute, nor as a rule do they seek assistance on the road, though ready enough to accept it if they have the chance. The bulk of the immigrants, however, come by rail, and in encouraging them to do so, and in furthering the efforts for better and extended facilities for their conveyance by rail, we are promoting their good. That they greatly prefer this mode of conveyance is shown by the numbers who return to London by the trains. Invariably many more return than those who come by them.* It is only a question with them of expense.

What, then, can be done to increase the facilities for their conveyance by rail?

* In 1880 the number "down" was 18,902 by the two railways, and in 1881 it was 14,951. In 1880 the number "up" was 22,607, and in 1881 it was 17,589.
The hop-pickers must be accurately informed of the time when the general picking is expected to commence, and the train arrangements depending on it. The season may be accelerated or retarded for a few days by the state of the weather, and therefore the arrangements for their conveyance will be made as a rule somewhat earlier than they would otherwise be. Great care is taken to inform the railway companies of the date when, in the opinion of the principal hop-growers, the general picking will probably commence, and the information is also given through the society and the Central Labour Agency to the people in London, by means of handbills and placards. The special train arrangements are also printed by the railway companies, and duly circulated. In this respect, therefore, the poor in the metropolitan districts are kept tolerably well informed, though the difficulty of holding them in till the time they are wanted is still very considerable, and could be efficiently obviated only by the employment of agents.

The next point is to convey them into the hop country at much lower fares than those which the companies charge. The latter might yield a little, one would almost hope, to the consideration that in proportion as they increased the numbers conveyed by them, they were diminishing the troubles of the people, and the annoyances to which the resident population of the districts through which they journey on foot.
are exposed, by helping to clear the Queen's highways of such travellers. Those who cordially approve the suggestions of the society in recommending all hop-pickers to travel by rail, will perhaps allow a hearing to the suggestion for reduced fares. Unless, however, they can see their way to a profit directors look very coldly indeed on any proposal of this kind. Without desiring the intervention of the Railway Commission, it is right to call attention to this special traffic. It is extremely doubtful whether any passenger traffic pays so well as the hop-pickers' traffic. A special train from London Bridge via the North Kent Railway to Maidstone, and thence to Paddock Wood, starting with 650 passengers at 2s. each (and the company now charges 2s. 6d.), pays £65 for a journey out and home of four hours and a half.* The train sets down its passengers at stations between Gravesend, Maidstone, Paddock Wood, and Tunbridge, from which latter place it returns via Sevenoaks or Redhill and is ready for a second journey if need be. A fare of 1s. to 1s. 6d. for the journey down to stations not beyond Tunbridge via Maidstone would possibly entail some loss, though the larger number of travellers to the hop districts would probably prevent any loss. But when the people are in funds there would be a larger number to return by rail, and a higher fare

* The charge for an express train on this line is 8s. a mile and first-class fares for the passengers.
might be charged for the home journey. They would readily pay 2s. or even 2s. 6d. on their return, and would be sure to come back by rail. Provided that they were informed by the companies' handbills, which are issued on the eve of the season, that the fares were arranged with a view to what they could conveniently pay, the smaller fare down and the larger one on their return to London they would have no just ground of complaint. To take them out and home for 4s. is not the point on which an opinion need be offered; but to divide the sum in such a way as to suit the convenience of the travellers, who, once in the country, must come back again, is a method likely to benefit the people, and bring a larger number of them to the railways.

The London, Chatham, and Dover Company, with its extensions, has not yet organized any special traffic, merely charging the "hopper" fares. The time is probably not distant when it will be able to take a larger share in the conveyance of the immigrants than it has yet done, and certain suggestions will be offered in their place as regards booking-offices and other arrangements, which may aid in the extension of this profitable traffic to the advantage of all concerned.
CHAPTER XII.

The return home, and disorders incident thereto—Representations to the South Eastern Railway Company, and results—Suggestions.

IMPROVEMENTS in the service of the special trains for the return journey on the South Eastern Company’s line have of late years repressed the disorder and license at the stations in the hop country to some extent. It is, however, no uncommon sight to find hundreds of people waiting for the train for several hours in the vicinity of the stations. Ordinary passengers who have undergone the infliction of a much shorter detention, will be at no loss to understand the feelings of the untamed hopper, who endeavours to while away the time by any means that come in his way. If the weather is fine the temper of the mob will keep for a time, but sooner or later it gives
way. People who get tired of waiting for a train are often more thirsty than common. The hop-pickers have their wages and speedily find their way to the nearest public-houses. Let the publican do his best to keep the supply of drink on the safe side, yet his customers soon get tipsy. The whistle of an approaching train will start them off as fast as their unsteady legs can carry them to the platform. If the train passes through without stopping, they will vent their disappointment in horrible terms, and possibly begin fighting with each other. If it draws up at the station they will make a dash at the train, seizing the doors and crowding and crushing in before it stops—there are no means of keeping them off the platform till the train stops. It is a marvel that accidents do not occur more frequently. They will happen sometimes. It is not long ago that a life was lost at East Farleigh Station; "but it was only a hopper," who was crushed under the advancing train in the struggle to secure places. The crowd had waited long, and was drunken and desperate. The police are ineffective to cope with the mob. They cannot lock them up for being drunk and disorderly, and are only too glad to get them into a railway carriage of some kind. "Bundle 'em in, and ha' done with 'em," was the remark of a sorely harassed officer. It is an inexpressible relief to see the train resume its journey, and bear away the howling, cursing, and crying, which wax fainter
till the ear can no longer distinguish the voices of the mob.

Cattle-trucks are no longer requisitioned for the return journey. There is, however, no protection afforded by the company against the carriages being crowded to excess, so that women and children fare very badly in the carriages.

There can be no question that steps should be taken to secure the better regulation of the hop-pickers' traffic. The evils are in no way the fault of the officials of the company, but are traceable to maladministration, and the indifference of the directors in providing accommodation for their passengers, and making such arrangements for the trains as will enable them to be conveyed, without undue delay and overcrowding, to London. The directors of the South Eastern Company are responsible for arrangements, the state of which entail much misery on the people and hardship on their working staff.

In 1881, the railway company had notice that the hop-pickers on the Preston Hall estate, near Aylesford Station, would be paid off and ready for the train at a time named. They went to the station, in accordance with their directions, in the temper which a tolerably good picking and the invariably kind treatment shown them on the estate was likely to produce. Their tickets were taken for the incoming train, and every one supposed that
they would soon be comfortably and quietly seated in their carriages. The train, however, to their surprise and annoyance, steamed slowly past the station without stopping, and was seen to be already crammed with hop-pickers. A long detention was then inflicted on the people, and the consequence was that they speedily made their way to the nearest public-house, with the inevitable result of drunkenness and ill-humour, getting off late at night, in disorderly fashion and as they could. In this case the company was in fault. The hop-growers are not, however, entirely free from blame. A train will at times draw up at a station with room for two or three hundred pickers, and find hardly one on the platform. The grower, whose party was expected, has not completed the "paying off," and there is a busy scene at his pay-table. The train cannot wait, and must make the best of its way to London, and return, on the "all round" system already described, to take up another load. It may easily happen that those who were not ready for the train which had room for them will thrust their way into carriages of a following special which is already loaded by pickers from stations below.

What can be done to lessen or remove this state of disorder? The answer is that the company should not adhere to their hard and fast time, that they have merely to convey, and have nothing to do with any arrangements outside the booking-office for the convenience of
their passengers. The co-operation of the company and of the hop-grower should be secured. Greater facilities for engaging special trains should be offered to the latter. Three or four growers in the same locality might occasionally join in engaging a train, and a notice by telegram should secure the conveyance required.

In order to lessen the pressure at the booking-office, the grower might also have the offer of taking a sufficient number of tickets for the return journey, and supplying his labourers with them at the time of paying off, returning to the railway company any tickets which were not sold. The plan of obtaining tickets and deducting their cost to the hop-pickers was tried with success a few years ago by two or three growers at Wateringbury. The station-master, the late Mr. Elias Lane, as well as others who took an interest in the experiment, noticed a marked diminution in the disorderly conduct common at the return trains.

A correspondence took place between the South Eastern Railway Company and the Society for the Hop-pickers in 1881, in which the above suggestions were offered to the consideration of the Board of Directors, but without any result.

One other suggestion then made deserves a place in this work, as it may be useful to the London, Chatham, and Dover Company, and probably to the South Eastern also. It is to
increase the facilities for issuing tickets for hop-pickers' trains and diminish the pressure of the crowd at principal stations in London. "No tickets to be sold at the London Bridge (or Victoria) Station, but certain convenient centres to be selected for special (hop-pickers') booking-offices. Each ticket to be issued as near the time of departure of the train as conveniently may be, and to be stamped with the hour of starting and time of admission to the station." The effect of this arrangement would be to break up the crowd at the principal metropolitan stations. The tickets would not be issued sufficiently early to enable forgeries of them to be made and palmed off on the people. The latter would come straight to their train, and get into their places without confusion, there being no more at any given time than the train could conveniently receive, the number of tickets determining the size of the train.

There would be no danger of forging tickets for the return journey, but precaution is necessary for the prevention of forgery in London. A special stamp for the ticket, and possibly a change of the colour of the same, for different trains would secure a check sufficient for the purpose.

Admitting the difficulties of the satisfactory conveyance of the immigrants by rail, and writing with no other view than to obtain their removal, the suggestions offered above are submitted to the practical sense of the parties
concerned in the control and management of the traffic arrangements. The railway companies and the hop-growers might, with advantage to each other, confer together and ascertain what is best to be done for their solution, and perform the doing of it. The hop-pickers are nearly helpless in the matter. They cannot be dealt with as passengers in the ordinary sense of the term. It is right to add that the service of the running round trains on the South Eastern Railway has been greatly improved. More, however, may still be done in this direction. No efforts should be spared to relieve the resident population of the hop country expeditiously of the immigrants when their work is done; to convey them safely and comfortably home; and lastly, to lighten in some degree the labours of a meritorious staff of officials who are sadly overtasked in their efforts to discharge their duties during the season of hop-picking.
CHAPTER XIII.

Countryman in London and Londoner in the country compared
—On the road.

AILWAYS have done much to efface the typical countryman in London, though he may still be recognized in his holiday after harvest in the neighbourhood of the museums and picture-galleries, performing his limited ablutions in the early morning at the nearest drinking fountain, and wiping his face on his solitary blue-check cotton pocket-handkerchief, or standing with his coat tails carefully tucked under his arms for fear of pickpockets, while his boots are cleaned for once in his life on a week day, and that not by himself but by a shoeblack boy for the sum of one penny.

But whatever amusement the countryman in London may afford to the labouring poor of
the metropolis, the latter in their turn do not fail to exhibit the helplessness of human nature unassisted by training and experience on coming into the country. The difficulty which the passengers who have just left the train experience in finding their way to their destination is extraordinary. They seem to think that every highway must be a street of houses duly numbered, that every lane is an alley, and street and alley alike should be distinguished by names as in town. To tell them that if they will go straight on for a quarter of a mile, then take the road to the left, and keep it till they come to the mill, is too bewildering. Some think the "mill" means two men fighting; others ask you kindly to say what sort of a mill you do mean? After the most precise directions they will take, not the first road to the left, but "the second street on the right, as they se'ed something like a mill, and thought that was wot the genelman must ha' meant." They are difficult in the matter of country roads, and unless they have travelled the same road before, or have some one to meet them at the train, will commonly lose their way. Occasionally they are misled purposely, and provided with employment by another grower. But misled or not they are prone to wander. On one occasion a number of pickers set off to "Mr. White's farm in Kent." They thought they would first "thry" Maidstone by train, and then inquire. There being several hop-growers of the name,
it was impossible to give them satisfactory directions.

The angle which the North Kent, Maidstone, and Paddock Wood line makes with the South Eastern main line gives occasional trouble in getting the pickers to their destination. A hop-grower at one of the Suttons, whose grounds were at nearly equal distances (five miles) from Maidstone and Staplehurst, directed his party to come to the latter station, where he sent a waggon to meet them. They preferred to alight "half way," as they said, between the two stations, and left the train at Paddock Wood fifteen miles or more distant from their employer. Some of the party, who were not intercepted on the road by growers who were on the look out for hands, found their way, weary and footsore, to him on the evening of the following day.

Another source of trouble is the similarity of names, or even identical names of different places. It is not many years since a party of hop-pickers who were sent to a farm called Aldington, in the parish of Thurnham, went to the village of Addington, eight miles distant, arriving at night. The great kindness which they chanced to meet from strangers who had taken a house in that parish for a few weeks will not be forgotten by those who otherwise would have spent the night in the open air and without food, or by some friends who were anxious about their welfare. The party failed
the grower, as they found employment in the neighbourhood. It is, however, not uncommon for the growers to send to meet them at the train, and bring all who cannot walk, and their luggage, to their destination. Nobody would suppose that a waggon would hold as many people as one will see stowed away in it, when the passengers are on their road from the train to the hop garden.
Efforts (miscellaneous) on behalf of the immigrants described — Refreshment and provision tents — Coffee-barrows — Lodgings for wayfarers — Bread-tickets — Stanhope’s hop-pickers’ Penny Bank.

In addition to the efforts made for the comfort and due accommodation of the immigrants under the auspices of the society, it will be interesting to record what has been done by individuals who, feeling deeply for them, have devised and carried out plans for their good. The arrangement made to convey pickers by night-trains from London entailed on them the necessity of a night march from the station to the lodgings. Some benevolent persons started a supply of coffee and buns, at one penny the cup and bun, at Wateringbury Station. “Our work,” says one of these friends of the poor, “with
two temperance barrows, has been a difficult and perplexing one. . . . I have again to express my gratitude to those members who assisted at three on Sunday morning, August 28th, in providing coffee and buns for the invading army. A thousand cups were had at the station that morning, so we may be sure the undertaking was appreciated. I have also to thank others who have given shelter and warmth to our boilers, cans of coffee, etc."

In order to meet the demand for relieving the distressed, without encouraging vagrancy, the system of bread-tickets was devised many years ago, and for a time carried out in the county of Kent in such a manner as greatly to repress the number of tramps on the road. When, however, the hop-picking drew near, a few of the "experienced hands," who had, it is believed, for the most part remained in the district during the interval between harvest and picking, and who were not by any means destitute, turned the opportunity to account. Upwards of eight hundred tickets were supplied from a country vicarage, the charitable donor being under the impression that they were bestowed on wayfarers. It transpired that most, if not nearly all, went to a large party of immigrants who had established themselves in a neighbouring hopper-house a fortnight before they were required, and who contrived by a little management to provision the garrison so far as the staff of life was concerned. There was
a rumour that they had come to an understanding with the worthy landlord of a beerhouse within reach, who in his turn arranged with the baker, so that the loaves not unfrequently went in exchange for beer. It was singular that the hop-pickers were not generally found to turn the bread-ticket to greater account. The truth was that they did not commonly perceive their advantages for several years after the commencement and working of the system. In process of time, however, they made the discovery, and then the run on the tickets was so great that the system itself received a shock from which it has hardly recovered in the county of Kent to this day.

The hardship of sending wayfaring persons who had reached Maidstone to the distant union workhouse for a bed and a meal, led to the provision of temporary lodgings under canvas for them in the Fair Meadow, adjacent to the London Road. There was a question whether the cost should be borne by the union, or the town; but so strong was the feeling which found expression among the municipal authorities that the accommodation of tents, separate for the sexes, was provided without waiting to settle who were the parties to pay. The tents were quickly crowded. Advantage was taken by benevolent persons in Maidstone who desired the religious good of the wayfarers, to provide them with religious privileges, and also tea, morning and evening. For this purpose a large marquee
was obtained and erected near their lodgings. The people soon found that, together with the help of the Mendicity Society, the night’s lodgings provided by the worthy citizens, and the refreshment tent, they might do worse than prolong their sojourn. In 1877, the depression in trade in London caused a larger number than usual to leave their homes for the hop gardens.

“Many left London at least a month before the commencement of the general picking, and lived as best they could. The tents provided by the Maidstone Local Board for a night’s lodging were crowded by occupants, many of whom, with the help of the Mendicity Society, and relief by charitable persons in the town and neighbourhood, contrived to remain till the general hop-picking commenced, when numbers, finding that work could not be obtained, were compelled to return home.”

The committee of the society trusted that the abuse of the kindness shown by the Maidstone Local Board, the Mendicity Society, and by private individuals, might not lead to a refusal to provide lodgings and accommodation for hop-pickers in future years. They suggested that persons should not be permitted to occupy the tents for more than one night, unless a charge of equal amount to that paid by poor travellers at the lodging-houses in the town was made. “If a regulation of this kind were enforced so far as practicable (due notice of it being previously given in London), the liberality
of the town and neighbourhood," said the committee, "may be continued with good results."

The committee did not, however, cease to urge the necessity of the general co-operation of the hop-growers in maintaining "such a system of agency in London and other populous places as may deter poor persons from leaving their homes in search of hop-picking, and thus repress vagrancy and diminish distress."

Additional good, highly appreciated by the objects of it, has been secured by the establishment of the provision tent. Coffee, tea, eggs, cheese, bacon, bread, butter, and buns, etc., are sold at low prices, all the articles supplied being of good quality. The lead in this good work was taken by the Lady Caroline Nevill, of Malling House, near Maidstone, who, together with Mrs. Prevost and other ladies, personally superintended the sale, usually remaining on the ground from noon to dusk. The provision tent was opened at five a.m., on the ground of Mr. R. Mercer, all the supplies being purchased of the tradespeople in the adjoining town of West Malling, by which means no loss of custom was sustained by those who drive a very considerable trade in the hop-pickers' commissariat department. Hundreds of hop-pickers were thus supplied daily. They were quite as exacting and occasionally as difficult to please as any customers are said to be whose purses are long and tastes are various. The ladies
were cautioned to keep off the ground on "paying-off day," but rightly considering that their assistance was likely to be more required on that day than on any other, went as usual, and had quite as much to do as they could manage.

"The people used no improper language, were very civil and well behaved, many very grateful for the kindness shown them." It is not many years since this was one of the "roughest places" in Kent.

The efforts of this kind, together with the religious work among the people, which will have special notice in my concluding chapter, have exercised a remarkable influence in improving their conduct. One might at length walk about among them, and take the children of the family, not only without insult, but without witnessing or hearing anything of an objectionable kind. Similar efforts, attended by similar results, have been made in other localities by those whose good works will not be forgotten by the objects of them or, we doubt not, by Him who "careth for the strangers."

The coffee-barrow which has for several years been in use on the Preston Hall grounds, in the parish of Aylesford, on hop lands at East Farleigh, and other places, is generally valued. There is not much difficulty in making the barrow self-supporting; in some cases a fair profit is made. The supply is appreciated by the home-pickers no less than by the foreigners. In supplying food and drink to
the people, it is well to avoid inflicting a loss of custom on the local tradespeople, who naturally dislike being undersold, even for the sake of charity, and who as a rule will supply the benevolent purveyors of eatables and drinkables on fair and equitable terms.

An effort was made some time since by the Honourable Edward Stanhope, whose labours among the agricultural classes of this country have been already noticed, to establish a system of hop-pickers' banking accounts. The receivers were to attend when the weekly wages were paid and take the deposits of all who liked to go to them, and pay over their money to any branch of the National Penny Bank in London, which they desired. The depositors were to find their savings all right when they got home—no slight advantage to a provident hopper. But from their customs of drawing in advance, and liking to have a little extra allowance at the end of the week, and their prevalent habits, which make and keep men poor, the well intentioned project did not succeed. Mr. Geo. T. Bartley, the principal secretary, took a great deal of trouble to get the plan to work. On one occasion he addressed a large number of the foreigners in a tent pitched for the purpose in the Three Bell Vale, being assisted by the employer, Mr. Thomas White, who took the chair on the occasion. The result, however, was not encouraging, as there was but one depositor who opened an account for the sum
of threepence. There is, however, no reason why this effort should end in failure, and it would be worth while to persist in it. The influence of a few depositors would tell in time and attract others. The distrust which they manifest at first in confiding their money to strangers would soon disappear.

Enough has been related to show that there is no lack of support on the part of the growers and the resident population of the hop country to efforts on behalf of the annual visitors, and that they willingly respond to the calls made on them to unite in promoting their good. The means of accomplishing this by religious effort will now be related.
CHAPTER XV.

Religious efforts—A hopper congregation—Church of England missionaries and tents for services provided—Cost of services, tents, and appliances—Mission tent in gale of wind—Stampede of the clergy and congregation—Pitching large tent for service by country vicar and hop-pickers—"Pilgrim's Progress"—Exhibition by magic lantern in hopper encampment.

ROM the foregoing history of the efforts made for the moral and material good of hop-pickers, it may be inferred that the most important part of the undertaking—their religious good—was not likely to be overlooked. The little band of fellow-labourers, to whom these pages are dedicated, felt strongly the necessity of attempting some organized plan for promoting Christian knowledge and practice among them, but there were not wanting good reasons why such an attempt should not be made at the outset. In
the first place, their religious good was no matter of indifference to the parochial clergy, to whose ministrations the immigrants had the same claim as the settled population in the parishes, a claim which was generally recognized, and the duties of which were fulfilled as well as circumstances permitted. The circumstances themselves, however, constituted a very formidable bar to religious ministrations. By many of the hop-pickers, they were considered an intrusion, and met either by direct insult or jesting "not convenient," to use the mildest term. Attempts to address them were often systematically interrupted, and the clergyman would have to retreat, amidst the derision of those who, to outward appearance the scum of London, were yet people for whom Christ died. Some of the employers did not much care for the parson to come prying about, and seeing what sort of lodgings and manners were in fashion on their grounds. Many persons who took an interest in the attempt to improve the former, among them the late Mr. C. Dickens, who knew a good deal about hoppers, were at least doubtful of the expediency or even the use of religious effort. Many who supported the movement which was led by the Society for the Lodgings and Agency, would have nothing to say to the religious aspect of the question, which, as Mr. Stanhope noted in his report, was kept carefully distinct for this reason.

There was also another difficulty which, like
all the rest, turned out to be greatly overrated when it was grappled with in earnest. It was said that most of our visitors were of no religion whatever, and the remainder were Roman Catholics, and would refuse to listen to any but their own priests. But the main obstruction to religious effort was the state of the lodgings and accommodation.

"Look ye, sir," was a remonstrance not to be forgotten, "what is the use of talking to us about your religion, as we are all wet through and can't light a fire to get a cup of tea and dry our things. 'Go and talk to our master, and make him do what is right.'" Hereupon followed various speculations of the said master's spiritual peril, in language garnished with the strongest quotations from Scripture, and also in language which though strong was by no means scriptural. If the weather was fine the people would be in a better humour, though greatly indisposed to encourage religious services. The clergyman who attempted to address them, would meet with a running and free commentary calculated greatly to disturb and perplex a worthy divine who was accustomed to the decorous attention given him in the pulpit. As soon, however, as his words gained the notice of the bystanders, they gradually began to close in on the speaker. The children mostly came first, and then older persons, peering from the houses, or turning an ear from the camp-fires, would approach nearer,
till he found himself surrounded by a congregation numbering from fifty to two hundred or more, unkempt, unadorned, in rags and tatters, but as attentive and quiet as one could wish to address.

A great opportunity was thus secured for imparting to them the main truths of religion, not in the way of a sermon or a set speech, but in homely and almost conversational terms. Lasting good has been done to many in this way. The clergyman would be heartily thanked on bidding them good-night, and was sure of a welcome on his next visit. Generally a sufficient number of old hands would return in the following year—indeed, on many grounds the principal number return year after year to inform the main body of the probable visits of the parson or “teacher” as some of them must call him, and thus the initial difficulty of obtaining a hearing does not recur. The task, however, of addressing them is by no means so easy as it appears, and there are instances in which men who have attained eminence as preachers, entirely fail in gaining the attention of a congregation of hoppers.

The attempt to bring the immigrants to attend church has often been made, but as a rule with indifferent success. The objection which many of them make is their “want of good clothes.” On one or two occasions when the evening was chill or rainy the clergyman wanted them to accompany him into the
church, and was followed by a large number of those who were expecting an open-air address. They almost "drowned the organ," from the heartiness with which they joined in the singing. Among the tunes they best know is "Helmsley," now generally and deservedly discarded, to the hymn, "Lo, He comes." Ken's evening hymn, said to be the best known sacred poetry in the world, they will sing to a somewhat curious variation of the tune to which it is usually sung.

The service, whether in the church or the open air, should commence with singing; then either a short prayer, or, which is the better way, a passage of Scripture, to be familiarly explained and illustrated. The hymn which precedes or follows the address should be chosen with reference to it. Then invite all to join in the Litany, or portions of it, not omitting the intercession for the Queen among persons who are occasionally harangued by disloyal mob orators. The people will respond with care, and will attend to the prayers, many in a devout manner. A hymn and extemporary prayer and the blessing bring the service to a close. "It is plain by the behaviour of the people that many of them have not been accustomed to public worship, some probably have never been within the walls of a church before. They sit or stand or walk out in the middle of the service, and will perhaps look in again for a few minutes. The service is to them a peculiar and interesting ceremony,
in which many do not apparently think they have any special concern.”

In addition to the objection to attend church in their vile array, is one which in some degree arises from our English peculiarities, but is in no class so strong as among farm-labourers, against intruders in their seats at church. Like their betters, they do not care to have persons of a lower class of life than themselves to sit among them, and indeed the company of uncleanly people can be desired by no one. Nor are the books left in the church safe amidst such a motley congregation. For although the bulk of the people may be trusted, some will go to see if there is anything worth taking, and it is as well when arrangements are made for a hopper congregation, to look after the books. Notwithstanding the need of such precaution, whatever one lends to them, they will carefully return with thanks, or will ask to retain it for future use. In the early times of the efforts in a small parish, where the church was pretty well filled by the hop-pickers, it was broken open in the following night, in the hope, probably, of obtaining the church plate. The thief—one of the binmen there was some reason to believe —was disappointed, and speedily left the neighbourhood.

The best plan, on the whole, is not to open the church specially for hop-pickers, unless for a concluding service,* but, while inviting them

* See page 181.
to attend the regular services—which should on no account be suspended for the outdoor mission,—to arrange to hold services at some place protected from the weather and convenient to the people, and as the clergyman of the parish can hardly undertake the additional labour, to provide him with such assistance as he finds necessary.

For this purpose, the Church of England Missionary Association* for Hop-pickers was formed at Maidstone in 1877, the Archdeacon of Maidstone in the chair. Its object is stated to be for promoting the religious good of hop-pickers, for which it provides, at a reduced cost to clergy and hop-growers, the assistance of missionaries, clerical and lay, during the hop-picking, and where better accommodation cannot be conveniently obtained, the use of tents in which religious services may be held.†

It was at first intended to provide Bibles, prayer-books, tracts, hymn books, and other


† The association sent twenty-five missionaries in the season which has just closed, and provided four tents for services in parishes where better accommodation could not conveniently be secured. Two of the missionaries were paid out of the funds of the association; twenty, partly by the clergy and others who applied for their services, grants being made from the funds for the remainder; and three entirely by the clergy. Grants were also made for three tents and the cost of one was provided by the association.
religious books; but careful consideration led the original supporters of the movement to leave this part of the work to the care of others. Incumbents or curates in charge of parishes, or districts visited, are thus enabled to obtain the assistance of missionaries on undertaking to pay such portion of the expense as may be agreed upon. In certain cases the association pays the cost of the missionary. Lay persons may also obtain the same assistance on similar terms.

The use of tents suitable for divine service is provided, "at the cost of the hire, in certain cases free, or on a reduced scale of charge, all damage and cost of carriage to be made good by the parties to whom they are sent."

The committee of management of this useful association, which is now extending its operations to vegetable and fruit-pickers, immediately set to work to obtain missionaries for the ensuing season. It was soon found that the demand for clergymen was not likely to be considerable. This was fortunate, for it was not possible to obtain the assistance of the clergy best adapted for the work for the whole of the season. Volunteers came forward offering assistance for a week, or for a fortnight, all but the second Sunday—and Sunday was the day on which they were most of all required. The committee attempted, with better success, to provide an honorary staff of preachers, whose services might be available on the Sundays; but with the exception of Bishop Tufnell, the Rev.
J. G. Bingley, the rector of Snodland, and the Rev. J. S. Owen, formerly vicar of St. Paul's, Sheerness, and one or two others, it was resolved to rely principally, on assisting the parish clergyman by a lay missionary or two. There was not much difficulty in securing an efficient staff of laymen. Several readers of the Church of England Scripture Readers' Association, and also of the London City Mission and the useful Open-air Mission had already gained experience in the work. By the valuable co-operation of the former institution (which had already devoted attention to the effort made for ascertaining the approximate available number of the London hop-pickers) and other assistance, seventeen laymen were sent into the districts in the first year, two being at the cost of the association and the remainder, with one or two exceptions, where the cost was provided for, being paid in part by grants to meet other contributions.

Six excellent marquees were pitched and provided with the requisites for conveniently holding divine service, of which two were in the parish of Wateringbury, two at East Malling, one at Barming, and one at Nettlestead.

The following hints on the fitting of tents or places for divine service may be inserted here:

It was recommended that "a desk or table, a kneeling stool, and chair, should be provided for the missionary."
That the assistance of singers should, if possible, be obtained, and the loan of a musical instrument.

Seats may be provided, where better cannot be conveniently obtained, by planks placed on fruit "sieves" or baskets, turned upside down; or boards may be nailed on posts driven into the ground.

Texts of Scripture should be placed on the sides of the tents or walls of the building.

"Tent-wardens" should be chosen from the binmen or other hop-pickers willing to assist. They will use their influence to prevent damage to the tent, or other use of the same than that for which it is supplied. Their assistance in the arrangements for the services, in seeing that all is right and in good order, is of great value.
The cost of a tent for a month, to hold upwards of one hundred adults, is, to the association, £9, which sum includes insurance against fire, carriage to and from the nearest railway station, pitching and striking. The middle size, which is the best for use, unless in exceptionally large districts, costs £10 10s. The largest tent holds from five to six hundred or more, and costs £12. There is, however, a little additional charge for care-taking, which is not defrayed by the association, and which varies according to the place in which it is erected, some being more exposed to danger than others.

In some parishes, the hop-pickers readily help to take care of the tent, and will not allow children and others to enter it excepting for the services. In other places, however, they have not yet learned to value the provision. The behaviour has in one or two instances been such as to cause the clergy to refrain from renewing their applications for such accommodation. Much depends on a good start. If people are told that the provision is made for the decent and comfortable performance of divine worship, and that the same is done at considerable expense and trouble, and are invited kindly to do their part to see that the tent is taken due care of, there will, as a rule, be no lack of a hearty response to such appeal. The tent is not recommended in any case where an outhouse of sufficient size or a barn can be utilized, pro-
vided that due care is taken against fire. The
tent services are as a rule well attended, the
congregation often filling them to overflowing.
Much of the success in their use, depends on
the encouragement and support given to mis-
sionary efforts among the immigrants, by the
employers and residents in the district. They
generally assist, oftentimes by bringing in the
harmonium and joining in the singing with
members of their family. In all instances
in which the clergyman and parishioners unite
in promoting the worship and service of God
among their annual visitors, there is clear
evidence of the value of the arrangements made
for the purpose. They can hardly be better
employed than in thus joining together to bring
the comforts and blessings of religion within
the reach of the waifs and strays of the human
race.

A point which should not be lost sight of
in the due care of the tent, as also in the
beneficial effect on the people, is that they
should themselves be led to take an interest
in it, and prevent or repress, by the voice of
common opinion, mischief to the furniture and
fittings. Hence the precaution of inviting one
or two of their leading men to use their friendly
influence in the encampments, and "lend a
hand," as they say, in keeping all right.

For want of a little tact at the very outset,
there is danger of the miscarriage of the whole of
the mission, and the cost of the appliances for re-
TENT IN A GALE.

Religious service is thrown away. It is a mistake to suppose that the people do not respond to the call for their assistance in the due care of these temporary places of worship. A couple of years ago it was necessary to have a tent pitched at East Malling, the persons who had been sent for the purpose had gone to the wrong parish, and were not to be found. The vicar, with characteristic energy, called on the hop-pickers to come and help him, and with some thirty or forty volunteers set to work to pitch a huge "three masted" tent, capable of holding five hundred people or more. They worked with a will for the best part of the Saturday afternoon, and after various mishaps, contrived to have the whole fabric upreared, flags hoisted on the top, and the internal fittings duly placed and all in readiness. The services were very fairly attended on the next day, especially in the evening. Tents, however, require a skilled hand or two for both pitching and striking, and the weak points of the amateurs were soon forthcoming. The canvas was more or less "baggy"; and apparently the structure was not very secure. On the second Sunday evening, the wind blew pretty strong as the hour for service approached, and the huge tent was not by any means so steady as everybody wished it to be. A large congregation, however, assembled, and the service commenced; but what with the flapping and the banging of the canvas, and the dancing of the paraffin lamps which
were suspended by cords running across, and the somewhat serious lurches with which the frail tenement began to respond to the more furious blasts of the gale, the people and their missionaries were afraid of having the whole thing about their ears. Mr. Bingley, the rector of Snodland, who was doing duty on the occasion, invited his hearers to accompany him to a sheltered part of the field, which they speedily did, and the service, consisting of prayers, singing, and an address, was brought to a conclusion without any mishap. The tent weathered the gale. On the same evening, a smaller one which had been erected at Sutton Valence fell as the crowded congregation of hoppers were leaving it. "The wind got under it" on the canvas being opened to let the people out, and "so bust it up." By the terms on which tents were supplied to the association, and the thorough good will and energy of the manufacturers, Messrs. Piggott, of London, another was erected on the same spot, and fit for use within two days.

No more successful services have been held than those which were started, I believe, before the formation of the association, and carried on at considerable expense and trouble, under the auspices of the Hon. and Rev. E. V. Bligh, on Offham Green. Mr. Bligh provided for the hop-pickers in the locality a large and handsomely appointed marquee, the seats of which were boards fastened on posts driven into the ground.
A platform was erected at one end for the harmonium, for the singers, and for the missionary. The sides were ornamented by large and beautifully illuminated texts, appropriate to the work.

Crowded assemblies, composed not only of hop-pickers, who mustered in force, but of many persons from the neighbouring parishes, including clergymen, were to be found there for the services. On Sundays the number exceeded six hundred; and evening services, which were very well attended, were held on week days. Mr. Bligh joined heartily in promoting the subsequent efforts of the association, which sent a missionary to the parish, and has continued to render valuable help in that locality. It may be maintained with great truth and for the encouragement of all who need encouragement that the religious and humanizing influences which of late years have been at work among them have succeeded, in a remarkable degree, in securing peace and quietness, and the spiritual good of many of the hop-pickers.

Open-air services, weather permitting, are also generally well attended on Sundays, the attendance is from under twenty, to upwards of two hundred; on week days, occasionally as many as a hundred. Children are not reckoned, but are numerous.

The highest number of missionaries sent by the association was in 1878, when twenty-nine were employed; six tents were also provided. The lowest was thirteen in the last year when
the failure of the hops led to the withdrawal of many applications for missionaries, and several "orders" for tents. The highest number of immigrants, to whom religious assistance was offered, in the year 1878, was nearly 28,000. The lowest, was 8,400 in last year. The total cost of missionaries in the former year was £134 10s., of which £59 15s. was paid from the funds of the association, and the remainder by the clergy and others who engaged them. The cost for tents was £56 10s., of which £27 was paid from the funds and the rest from other sources.

The following extracts from the "instructions" to the missionaries will have an interest for readers who desire information on the mode of proceeding.

The missionaries are requested to obtain the permission of the hop-grower to enter his grounds before visiting the hop-pickers in his employment.

They will offer religious assistance to all hop-pickers who may be disposed to avail themselves of their services. The following course is suggested for their adoption:

Sunday morning may be employed in visiting the people and having religious conversation with such as are accessible, and inviting them to the special services in the afternoon or evening, which are announced on leaflets for distribution. An opportunity is thus afforded for giving or lending books, tracts, or papers.

The services should be held in the afternoon
and evenings of Sundays, and should not exceed an hour in duration. Hints for the services have already been given.*

In the week days the missionary will visit the people at their work, and if they like, as they occasionally do, will read "some portion of God’s Holy Word" during the dinner hour. "He will go from bin to bin reading or conversing with the pickers." He will invite them to the services, either in the tents, or in the open air, or shed, or in the parish church. Week day evening services need not exceed half an hour.

The clergyman of the parish is to be referred to, for such advice and assistance as the missionary requires, and also for such hymn books and other books and tracts as may be needed.

It is found that many children and infants, and, I may add, adults, professing to be members of our church "if anything," have not been baptized. Baptism has been administered in the tents by the clergyman of the parish during service,—a very impressive ceremony in the crowded congregation, especially when adult baptism is administered. It is, however, administered whenever possible in the church. In one year as many as fifty-six persons, young and old, were baptized through the efforts of the association. Last year there were only seven. The vicar of East Malling holds a final

* See page 169.
service in the parish church, which was last year attended by upwards of two hundred adult pickers, besides children. Final services at which persons are baptized, have also been held in other parish churches in places where the immigrants abound.

The missionaries are requested to report immediately on the close of their duties to the association, stating the number, "home and foreign," of hop-pickers in the districts respectively assigned to them, their religious persuasion, the number of services on Sundays and week days, and average attendance, exclusive of children. They also inform the association of the manner in which their efforts are supported by residents in the district; and it is pleasing to find the valuable co-operation which they receive, not merely from the clergy, whose assistants they are in the work, but from hop-growers, and other persons, who take an interest in the welfare of the people.

The selection of the hymn book is left to the local authorities, and the use, of course, is various. The Mission Hymns published by the S. P. C. K., the collection of the compilers of Hymns Ancient and Modern, the cost of either being almost nominal, and other collections, supply an ample choice. A special hymnal for hop-pickers has sometimes been asked for, and would not be without its use. Moody's and Sankey's hymns are very effective, and are much liked. The people have, however, remarked
that they are now "out of fashion in town, but may pass pretty well in the country."

The choice of books and tracts, the association leaves in the same manner, merely requesting their missionaries to circulate them. The Christian Knowledge Society, the Religious Tract Society, the British and Foreign Bible Society are very liberal in their grants to those who apply for their publications for the immigrants.

Nor must the assistance of societies which have no connection with the Establishment, but which aim to extend the benefit of religion to the poor, be suffered to pass without the grateful recognition of all who take an interest in promoting the good of the immigrant labourers.

In 1874, "a mission society to hop-pickers" was formed, mainly by Mr. Percy Bankart, the object of which is to supply evangelists and city missionaries, to provide grants of money, tracts, books, and portions of Scripture. Tents also are provided, in which, in addition to religious addresses, prayer, and singing, "free teas" are given, the people to bring their own food.

In one of the annual addresses issued by the secretary, it is stated that "this mode of gathering the poor creatures together, has the double advantage of letting them feel that their temporal welfare is not neglected, while their spiritual need is especially the object of solicitude and prayer. . . . Several brought small money offerings, showing the power of kind-
ness upon even the roughest exterior, and many who in previous years had spent all their earnings and evenings in the public-house, thus returning from the hop gardens as poor as they entered them, went away with lighter hearts and heavier pockets. In one tent sent to Mr. Chinn, a hop-grower in the neighbourhood of Alton, Hants, 450 gallons of tea were gratuitously supplied during the season.”

The benevolent persons who set this good work going did not confine their exertions to Hampshire, but undertook a similar enterprise at Maidstone (already alluded to), which was heartily and most liberally supported by religious persons in that town. Much care was devoted by this society to hop-pickers at East Farleigh, Nettlestead, and elsewhere. The grants of money in aid of missionary effort and especially of books, etc., appear to be very liberal. Of late years the supply of missionaries has declined, only one having been sent by the mission in 1882. The management of this society is at present under the care of Mr. Burn, and in a state of transition, There is no very recent publication of the transactions of this little mission from which further information can be given.

Among individual efforts for the religious good of the immigrants, the long-continued work of Mr. Jay, a “town missionary” of Tunbridge Wells, deserves notice. Mr. Jay’s plan is to give religious addresses, and also by means
of a magic lantern he illustrates his lectures by scenes from the "Pilgrim's Progress." It appears that by the aid of supporters and friends, chiefly in Tunbridge Wells, he is enabled to give presents of tea, corn-flour, and in case of sickness or unusual distress, relief in money payments. One use of the lantern is that the hymn is represented on the canvas, and the people, English and Irish, respond heartily to the invitation to join in singing it. "Thousands of tracts, including British Workmen, Bands of Hope, Testaments, and Gospels are also distributed by this means."

It will be seen by the foregoing pages that the condition of the immigrant hop-pickers has not for many years been fairly open to the adverse criticisms which have been freely bestowed on their employers and the resident population of the districts into which they annually migrate. There has been no lack of honest and persistent effort to remedy the evils which are but too apparent, and are a part of the normal condition of the lowest classes in the metropolis.
CHAPTER XVI.

Recapitulation and conclusion.

A BRIEF recapitulation of the suggestions which have found a place in these pages, will be of service before bringing this little work to a close. The aim of the writer is to secure for the immigrants as many advantages as may reasonably and fairly be afforded them. By placing them in a position which will not degrade them in their own eyes or make them to appear vile unto their brethren, and by taking an interest in all that relates to their welfare, their moral sense is aroused, and the invaluable assistance of self-help, is forthcoming in the struggle to raise and improve them. To bring them under proper control, and enable the employers to weed out the worst characters, and refuse them employment till they mend their ways, requires a carefully managed system of agency. By
this means the employer may be saved much anxiety and some expense. He will secure, in the agency, an instrument by which the supply of labour may, with ease and tolerable certainty, be regulated by the demand. The immigrants, as we have abundant proof, are, by this means relieved of much distress and occasional hardship, while by the repression of vagrancy, both they and the resident population of the districts visited by them, are also substantially benefited. The agency, in order to succeed, must be managed by the planters themselves, and not by a mixed committee, a majority of which barely assent to the principle, though generously co-operating for a common object with those who support it.

The conveyance of the people should be greatly improved by the railway companies, both by reducing the fares and making arrangements for the booking and carriage of their troublesome but profitable passengers. We trust that they will give increased facilities for the conveyance of the immigrants, and respond to the claims which the public as well as their passengers have on them for the better regulation of the hop-pickers' traffic.

The supply of coffee-barrows, the provision of tea, and bread, and food, entail little or no pecuniary loss on the purveyors; there are, indeed, instances in which some profit is made. In any case the advantages of such provision to the people are very valuable,
There are some benefits which, like the offer of a first-rate friendly society to a farm-labourer, are beyond their present comprehension. The savings' bank system devised by Mr. Stanhope is one of them. The time may come when they will be glad of it, and it would be well to make another attempt.

Little need be added on the great duty of providing religious advantages by means of men skilled in and devoted to the work. Care should always be taken to make the objects of it feel that they, as well as the clergymen and pious friends who go among them, have their parts and duties to discharge. Let those who can read and sing, have the books, and where they know a little about music, the notes of the tune.

We want, and I hope some day we shall have, a hopper hymnal noted, as well as the words without the notes. The care of the tents for divine services, and their appliances, should always be shared between the hop-pickers, and those who provide them. The people, when brought to take an interest in efforts for their good, will be the best guardians of these temporary fabrics, the use of which in the services of religion carries one's thoughts back to the worship, rendered not unacceptably to God, by His people in the wilderness, to whose condition the hop-pickers, in their temporary sojourn in the country, present several points of resemblance.
The remaining suggestions relating to the adoption of a uniform code of bye-laws for hop-pickers' and fruit-pickers' lodgings and accommodation, together with efficient inspection, are matters which fall within the purview of the Local Government Board. The repeal of the permissive, and the substitution of a compulsory clause, are necessary. Under such amendment of the law, the code of bye-laws, already sanctioned and approved by that Board, would become obligatory in all the districts, and we should no longer find it tampered with or entirely ignored by rural sanitary authorities.

The arduous struggle for the due care and accommodation of the immigrants would have been brought to a satisfactory close several years ago had the Government dealt with firmness instead of resorting to merely permissive legislation, which, it was vainly hoped, would remove, but which has indeed done a good deal to render, the evils more difficult of removal than ever. Nor should the inspection of the houses and accommodation be entirely left to the district authority. If the sanitary officers find that their reports, instead of being coldly received and laid on the table, have the special attention of the Government Inspector, there will soon be little ground for complaint of the indifference of the authorities in the due supervision and care of the immigrants.

In bringing these remarks to a conclusion, it only remains to notice that the welfare of the
poor in the metropolis has in recent times become, to a remarkable extent, more the object of public sympathy and aid than formerly. It cannot be denied, however, that increased efforts are needed in the densely crowded homes of the hop-pickers, to raise the tone of opinion among them till it becomes a healthy, moral, and social power, so that vice of all kinds may be repressed, and the things which belong to their peace, and which are hidden from their eyes, may be followed and attained by them. It is not true that because they are extremely poor, they must therefore be dishonest or immoral. Difficult as the struggle to bring them to a better mind may be and is, there are imperative claims on their fellow Christians to join in and help. The call has not been disregarded, nor has the labour been in vain.

One may discern a change for the better among them within the last twenty years, which is distinctly traceable to such efforts. Let the endeavour to improve the masses of the poor be steadily persisted in, and the best lever for raising their social and moral condition diligently applied, by teaching, and encouraging the practice, of the principles of the gospel, and we need not fear that a substantial improvement in their moral and material good will be secured.

Many on whose behalf these pages are written will be encouraged to know that they have a large and sympathizing number of friends in the
CONCLUSION.

country to which they annually resort. Their friends have spared no pains, and have been at much expense for their good. They have a claim on their kindness, which only requires to be known by the objects of it, to secure a warm recognition. We ask our annual visitors to encourage their companions and fellow-labourers, by the quiet and powerful influence of a good example, and to promote, so far as lies in their power, the efforts which are made for the good of all immigrant labourers.

THE END.
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