

CORSETT OF SCOTLAND.

From *Cobbett's Register of Saturday.*

Cobbett's Advice to the Chopsticks of Kent, Sussex, Surrey, Hampshire, Wiltshire, Dorsetshire, Berkshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, and all of the other Counties in the South of England.

Edinburgh, Oct. 14, 1832.

My Friends,—This is the finest city that ever I saw in my life, though it is about five hundred miles to the north of the southern part of Dorsetshire; but neither the beauty of this city nor its distance from you and my home has made me forget you, and particularly poor Cook and Farmer Boys, and the men that were transported, in 1830.

This city is fifty-six miles from the river Tweed, which separates England from Scotland. I have come through the country in a post chaise, stopped one night upon the road, and have made every inquiry, in order to ascertain the exact state of the labourers on the land. With the exception of about seven miles the land is the finest I ever saw in my life, though I have seen every fine vale in every county in England; and in the United States of America I never saw any land a tenth part so good. You will know what the land is when I tell you that it is by no means uncommon for it to produce seven English quarters of wheat upon one English acre, and forty tons of turnips upon one English acre; and that there are, almost in every half mile, from fifty to a hundred acres of turnips in one piece, sometimes white turnips and sometimes Swedes, all in rows as straight as a line, and without a weed ever to be seen in any of these beautiful fields.

Oh! how you will wish to be here! "Lord," you will say to yourselves, "what pretty villages there must be there; nice churches and churchyards; oh! and what preciously nice ale-houses. Come, Jack, let us set off to Scotland! What nice gardens shall we have to our cottages there! What beautiful flowers our wives will have climbing up about the windows, and on both sides of the path leading from the wicket up to the door! And what prancing and barking pigs we shall have, running out upon the common, and what a flock of geese grazing upon the green!

Stop! stop! I have not come to listen to you, but to make you listen to me; let me tell you, then, that there is neither village, nor church, nor ale-house, nor garden, nor cottage, nor flowers, nor pig, nor goose, nor common, nor green; but the thing is thus:—1. The farms of a whole country are, generally speaking, the property of one lord. 2. They are so large, that the corn-stacks frequently amount to more than a hundred upon one farm, each stack having in it, on an average, from 15 to 20 English quarters of corn. 3. The farmer's house is a house big enough and fine enough for a gentleman to live in: the farm-yard is a square, with buildings on one side of it for

horses, cattle, and implements; the stack-yard is on one side of this, the stacks all in rows, and the place as big as a little town. 4. On the side of the farm yard next to the stack yard there is a place to thrash the corn in; and there is close by this always a thrashing machine, sometimes by steam; there being no such thing as a barn or a fall in the whole country.

"Well," say you, "but out of such quantity of corn and of beef and of mutton; there must some come to the share of the chopsticks, to be sure! Don't be too sure yet; but hold your tongue, and hear my story.—The single labourers are kept in this manner; about four of them are put into a shed, quite away from the farm-house and out of the farm yard; which shed, Dr. Jamsieon calls a "boothie," a place, he says, where labouring servants are lodged. A boothie means a little booth, and here these men live and sleep, having a certain allowance of oat, barley, and pea meal, upon which they live, mixing it with water, or with milk when they are allowed the use of a cow, which they have to milk themselves. They are allowed some little matter of money besides to buy clothes with; but never dream of being allowed to set their foot within the walls of the farm house. They hire for the year, under very severe punishment in case of misbehaviour or quitting service, and cannot have fresh service, without a character from the last master, and also a character from the minister of the parish!

Pretty well, that, for a knife and fork chopstick of Sussex, who has been used to sit round the fire with the master and mistress, and to pull about and tickle the laughing maids! pretty well, that! But it is the life of the married labourer that will delight you. Upon a steam-engine farm there are eight or ten of these. There is, at a considerable distance from the farm yard, a sort of barrack erected for these to live in. It is a long shed, stone walls and pantile roof and divided into a certain number of boothies, each having a door and one little window, all the doors being on one side of the shed, and there being no back doors, and as to a privy, no such thing for them appears ever to be thought of. The ground in front of the shed, is wide or narrow, according to the circumstances but quite smooth, merely a place to walk upon. Each distinct boothie is about seventeen feet one way, and fifteen feet the other way, as nearly as my eye could determine. There is no ceiling, and no floor but the earth. In this place a man and his wife and family have to live. When they go into it there is nothing but the four bare walls, and the tiles over their heads, and a small fire place. To make the most of the room, they, at their own cost, erect berths, like those in a barrack room, which they get up into when they go to bed; and here they are, the man, his wife, and a parcel of children squeezed up in this miserable hole, with their meal, and their washing tackle, and all their other things; and yet it is quite surprising to behold

how decent the women endeavour to keep the place. These women (for I found all the men out at work) appeared to be most industrious creatures, to be extremely obliging, and of good disposition; and the shame is that they are permitted to enjoy so small a portion of the fruit of all their labors, of all their cares.

But if their dwelling place is bad, their food is worse, being fed upon exactly that which we feed dogs and horses upon. The married man receives in money about four pounds for the whole year; and he has besides sixty bushels of oats, thirty bushels of barley, twelve bushels of pease, with ground allowed him to plant the potatoes. The master gives him the keep of a cow for the year round; but he must find the cow himself. He pays for his own fuel; he must find a woman to reap for twenty whole days in the harvest, as payment for the rent of his boothie; he has no wheat; the meal altogether amounts to about six pounds for every day in the year; the oatmeal is eaten in porridge, the barley-meal and pea-meal are mixed together, and baked into a sort of cakes upon an iron plate put over the fire; they sometimes get a pig and feed it upon the potatoes.

Thus they never have one bit of wheaten bread or wheaten flour, nor of beef nor mutton, though the land is covered with wheat and with cattle. The hiring for a year, beginning the 26th of May, and not at Michaelmas; the farmer takes the man just at the season to get the sweat out of him; and if he die, he dies when the main work is done. The labourer is wholly at the mercy of the master, who, if he will not keep him beyond the year, can totally ruin him, by refusing him a character. The cow is a thing more in name than reality; she may be about to calve when the 26th of May comes; the wife may be in a situation to make removal perilous to her life. This family has no home; and no home can any man be said to have who can thus be dislodged every year at the will of a master. It very frequently happens that the poor creatures are compelled to sell their cow for next to nothing, and, indeed the necessity of character from the last employer, makes the man a real slave, worse off than the negro by many degrees, for here there is neither law to ensure him relief, nor motive in the master to attend to his health or to preserve his life.

There, chopsticks of Sussex, you can now see what English scoundrels, calling themselves "gentlemen," get Scotch bailiffs for. These bailiffs are generally the sons of some of those farmers, recommended to the grinding ruffians of England by the grinding ruffians of Scotland. Six days, from daylight to dark, these good, and laborious and patient and kind people, labour. On an average they have six English miles, to go to any church. Here are 12 miles to walk on the Sunday, and the consequence is, that they very seldom go. But, say you, What do they do with all the wheat and with all the beef and all the mutton