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## THE BOOK-KEEPER.

A PARODY.

With fingers weary and worn,  
With aching heart and head,  
A book-keeper sat in an old frock coat,  
Plying his pen for bread.  
Write—write—write—  
Throughout the live-long day,  
And the midnight hours have heard him still  
Conning this doleful lay.

Write—write—write—  
A figure to find the proof;  
Write—write—write—  
Till the stars shine over the roof;—  
It's oh! to be a slave,  
In the land of the barbarous Turk,  
Where men are never allowed to shave  
If this be Christian work!

Write—write—write—  
Till the brain begins to swim;  
Write—write—write—  
Till the 'wildered eyes are dim,  
The weary while I check the sums  
The columns endless seem,  
Till over the figures I fall asleep,  
And add them up in a dream!

Oh men who have pleasant homes—  
Oh men who have mothers and wives,  
Think of your book-keepers, sad and worn,  
Who are wearing out their lives.  
Write—write—write—  
'Till in anguish deep I groan;—  
I'm penning a long account, that soon  
Will send me to my own!

Write—write—write—  
The labor that never flags—  
And what are my wages? scarce enough  
To keep my raiment from rags  
Write—write—write—  
And 'yering for bread,  
My sinking heart within my breast,  
Is like a lump of lead.

Write—write—write—  
From weary chime to chime;  
Write—write—write—  
As prisoner's work for crime!  
Still ever I ply the pen,  
And figure the dreary sum,  
Until my brain is in a whirl,  
My fingers stiff and numb.

Oh but for wages enow  
To sweeten this bitter life,  
And a little time to smell the air  
With which the country's rife.  
Oh! tears my heart would ease,  
But I cannot weep—for then  
The time it would take to weep and mope,  
Would hinder my busy pen!

Oh men immersed in trade—  
Oh men who are dreaming of gold,  
Bestow a thought on the weary drudge,  
Who is growing rusty and old.  
A decent reward for toil  
Is all you are asked to give,  
So don't, while coining his brains for you,  
Begrudge him enough to live!

## VOICES FROM THE CROWD.

WANTS OF THE PEOPLE.

What do we want? Our daily bread;  
Leave to earn it by our skill;  
Leave to labour freely for it,  
Leave to buy it where we will.  
For 'tis hard upon the many,  
Hard—unpityed by the few,  
To starve and die for want of work,  
Or live, half-starved, with work to do.

What do we want? Our daily bread;  
Fair reward for labour done;  
Daily bread for wives and children;  
All our wants are merged in one.  
When the fierce fiend Hunger grips us,  
Evil fancies clog our brains,  
Vengeance settles on our hearts,  
And Frenzy gallops through our veins.

What do we want? Our daily bread—  
Sole release from thoughts so dire:  
To rise at morn with cheerful faces,  
And sit at evening round the fire;  
To teach our babes the words of blessings,  
Instead of curses, deep though mute;  
And tell them England is a land  
Where man is happier than a brute.

What do we want? Our daily bread:  
Give us that; all else will come;  
Self-respect and self-denial,  
And the happiness of home:  
Kindly feelings, Education,  
Liberty for act and thought;  
And surety that, whate'er befall,  
Our children shall be fed and taught.

What do we want? Our daily bread,  
Give us that for willing toil;  
Make us sharers in the plenty  
God has shower'd upon the soil;  
And we'll nurse our better nature  
With bold hearts, and judgment strong,  
To do as much as men can do,  
To keep the world from going wrong.

What do we want? Our daily bread,  
And trade untrammell'd as the wind;  
And from our ranks shall spirits start,  
To aid the progress of mankind.  
Sages, poets, mechanics;  
Mighty thinkers shall arise,  
To take their share of loftier work,  
And teach, exalt, and civilize.

And so we want our daily bread:  
Grant it; make our efforts free;  
Let us work and let us prosper;  
We shall prosper more than we.  
And the humblest homes of England  
Shall in proper time, give birth  
To better men than we have been,  
To live upon a better earth.

## SIR ROBERT PEEL'S SPEECH ON THE COMMERCIAL POLICY OF THE COUNTRY.

(Concluded.)

Let us review some of the burdens which are falling upon the land, and see if some of them, at least, are not capable of alleviation, not by their transfer to other parties, but by introducing reforms into their administration. We must first let me take the case with respect to one of our most onerous penitentiaries—one great burden which is constantly and justly complained of by the agriculturists—I mean the rate that is levied on the highways. (Hear.) What is the law and practice now with respect to the highways? There are 16,000 separate local authorities that have the charge of these highways. As railways advance, the parish highways will become of increased importance. What is the practice in regard to them? There is a nominal appointment of a surveyor in each parish—of a surveyor who knows nothing about these rates. It cannot be doubted, that having each portion of the highways subject to different authorities affords room for great abuse, gives rise to a lax expenditure, and is on the whole a bad system.—What I propose, not merely for the benefit of agriculture, but for the benefit of an immense mass of the community, is to make that which is now voluntary compulsory, and to compel parishes to form themselves into unions for this purpose.—With respect to the number of those to be constituted, if you take the scale of the Poor Law, you will have 600 local authorities instead of 16,000. There are in some counties cases in which that voluntary union of which I have spoken has existed. I should like to inquire now what have been the results arising out of this voluntary union of parishes for this purpose. In a district in the north of England the local authorities, with their own consent, have been superseded, and the parishes of the district formed into an union. The effect of the change is remarkable. The expense of the high roads there was formerly from 6d. to 9d. in the pound on the rents, the greater part of which was money completely thrown away. All that is now altered; the management of the whole is performed in a manner satisfactory to the rate payers, and the rate now levied is only from 1s. 2d. to 3d. in the pound, whilst in nine townships in the neighbourhood the rate varies from 4d. to 1s. 3d. in the pound. I come now to a law which has been complained of—and I think fairly and justly complained of—by the agricultural body—I mean the law of settlement. (Hear.) Under the operation of the present law, the population of the agricultural district is invited into the manufacturing towns; the agricultural labourer removes to a manufacturing town, the prime of his life is consumed upon manufactures, the best of his strength is spent in that town, but then a reaction takes place; a revulsion of trade ensues; the man does not prosper. What is the consequence? The man and his wife and family are sent back to the rural district to which he belongs by settlement. I propose to alter this law, and in this way,—I propose that five years industrial residence in a town shall give the labouring man a settlement. I propose also that the children of any person, or the children of his wife, whether legitimate or illegitimate, under 16 years, residing with the father or mother, shall not be removed, nor shall the wife of any person be removed (hear,) where such person is himself not removable. We propose, therefore, that the children and wife shall not be separated in such case from the husband, (hear, hear,) and that he who has an industrial residence of the term of five years shall have the right to relief for himself and his family, not from the place of his rural settlement, but from the place of his last industrial residence.—We will also propose that no widow residing with her husband at the time of his death shall be removable from the parish in which he resided at the time for one year after his death. There is one point more. At present, when the working man is exhausted by the labours of a life-time, an apprehension often arises in the minds of the parish authorities that he will become chargeable to the parish, and they immediately set about his removal. Now we propose that there shall be no removal on the ground of chargeability, on account of accident, or by sickness of a man or any of his family, from the manufacturing to the agricultural districts. (Hear, hear.) I approach to another matter on which we are prepared to advise

an alteration, and one which I think can be carried into effect without loss to agriculture. In fact, I anticipate not only that the alteration will be an advantage to agriculture, but a benefit to all parts of the country. There is a dread—a natural dread of competition on the part of agriculturists. It is impossible, I think, for any man to deny that agricultural science is yet in its infancy in this country. But there are means of meeting this competition which is so much dreaded, by the application of capital, skill, and industry; and by the adoption of those means, I feel persuaded that both the agriculturists and the labouring man will be enabled to meet the competition which will be raised up against them; and, in order to facilitate this effect, we propose that the State shall encourage agricultural industry. Among other means, I believe, draining might be employed so as greatly to increase the produce of the land. (Cries of 'hear, hear.') Now with respect to cases of this description, we shall recommend that the public should, for the purpose of facilitating those improvements, advance sums of money to parties applying for assistance, not, however, subjecting the public to any ultimate loss; but advancing sums of money for the purpose of improvement, upon sufficient security.

Besides the general effect of facilitating improvements in agriculture, by these means improvements throughout the country will be stimulated to an extent which would not easily be capable of being overrated. I would propose to advance Exchequer-bills for this purpose; I would pledge the public credit for the time; I would propose that the Exchequer-bill Commissioners should have power of lending on due security for the purposes of improvement. In constructing the machinery of the plan, I should propose to take advantage of the lately-erected Board of Enclosure; and that they should give the power of application to the Exchequer-bills Commissioners. I should also propose that the cost of any preliminary survey which it might be necessary to make of the estate should be borne by the individual himself who makes the application for aid; and that original expense should be defrayed by the party applying. That is another mode which I propose of enabling the agriculturists to meet the competition which they may be threatened with. (Hear.) Now, with respect to direct local burdens. Her Majesty's Government have applied themselves to this subject with great anxiety. First, there is the Poor-rate. Now, the Poor-rate is an immense burden, there is no doubt. But then it is said, and said with apparent justice that this rate was a charge on the land, and that, therefore, there ought to be some great alteration in the principles on which such a charge is levied. Now, in point of fact, this is not a charge on the land. (Hear.) So far as this charge is imposed, it is unequal. It is not a charge on the land, but on the person who resides on the land, and on all real property, as mines, quarries, and other things which are subject to the payment of the Poor-rates. If, indeed, the Government were to take the rate upon themselves, and levy it as a tax uniformly, it might, perhaps, be justice, and might be an advantage to make personal property pay; but recollect, this is a local, and not a general tax (hear) at present; and the land would gain nothing by making Manchester contribute to the southern counties. There would be no advantage to Yorkshire, the principle of the law of assessment being changed, to make Halifax, Macclesfield, Stockport, and other towns, pay part of its tax; it would merely be a different distribution of the burdens in that locality. I am sure that, for the State to take upon itself the maintenance of the poor would be a course that most Hon. Gentlemen would consider open to the greatest objections. (Hear, hear.) So long, therefore, as the charge of the poor continues a local one, I am not of opinion that the landed interest would derive any advantage from a change of this kind. I believe that what I shall propose will lay the foundations of great social improvements. I shall propose to take on the public some of those charges. (Hear.) You have already taken upon you one part of the expense of the maintenance of prisoners, in Great Britain and Ireland, under sentences for felony or misdemeanour—you, by Courts of Assize or Lunatic Sessions, have taken the charge of convicts under sentence of transportation; and we propose that you shall relieve the counties from the whole charge of maintenance of prisoners, and place it upon the consolidated fund. We propose that this and other charges of a similar character should be provided by an annual vote of this House. (Hear.) We estimate this at £64,900. With respect to the expense of prosecutions in England, one-half of this charge is already paid by the Treasury. In Scotland the charge is altogether borne by the Treasury. In Ireland there remains a portion of the charge, which still falls by presentment on local funds. We propose in the cases of England and Ireland, that that portion of the charge of expenses of prosecution which is now paid from the local rates shall be borne altogether by the Treasury. (Hear.) The relief is not great, but I think the charge of importance, as affording an increased means of control over prosecutions.—At present, a part of the expense of the police force in Ireland is borne by the land; we propose that the whole of the expense shall be borne by the Executive. I believe this will be of immense advantage, as enabling us to place the police force entirely under the control of the Executive, and to prevent the possibility of all interference of local parties. Her Majesty's Government are disposed to recommend to the House that the whole expense of the rural police of Ireland shall be borne by the Treasury. (hear.) There is another charge which is borne by the land in this country, of which again, for social purposes, we propose that a share shall be borne by the Government—I allude to medical relief. There is no part of the administration of the Poor Law which has given more dissatisfaction than the administration of medical relief. (Hear.) There has been great unwillingness manifested in many cases to grant this relief—the Guardians, perhaps not unnaturally, thinking that their more immediate duty was to relieve the poor from the danger of starvation. We estimate the amount for England at £100,000, and for Scotland at £15,000. Ireland is under a separate law in reference to medical relief; but the whole subject is likely to occupy the attention of Parliament in the course of the present session. The charge of the prison of Pentonville was borne by the public, and the people of Scotland expected that in the same way the public should bear the charge of the General Prison at Perth; and it might be some satisfaction to their feelings to yield this point to them, if it were no great relief. (Hear, hear, and laughter.) We propose, then, to apply the same rule

to the prisons of Pentonville, Parkhurst, and Perth, and all other prisons not used for immediately local purposes. We estimate this sum at £12,000. There is another charge which I propose to take on the Government, but which I think will be generally acquiesced in by the House. I believe that in the parish workhouses, at least in many of them, there is a just ground of complaint respecting the inadequate provision for the purposes of education. In many of them, I believe, there are people perfectly unfit to be instructed with the education of youth, appointed for that purpose at a salary perhaps of £10 a year. Now we do not propose in any way to interfere with the right of appointment; we wish to avoid, as far as possible, raising any religious question. The right of appointing schoolmasters and schoolmistresses shall remain, as formerly, with the guardians of unions; but we propose to take the expense of providing for them upon ourselves. We estimate the sum which will be wanted for this purpose at £30,000. Then, again, with respect to the Poor Law auditors in England and Ireland, we propose to pay them also out of the Consolidated Fund, and for this purpose we shall require a sum of £15,000. If this great scheme shall meet with the approbation of the House, I beg you to observe what it does for the great body of the public. At a very early period, all legislative restrictions upon the importation of food will be removed, and immediately many of these restrictions will be removed.—With respect to clothing, I beg you to remember, also, that the people will be at perfect liberty to purchase clothing wherever it is the cheapest; and, with respect to medical attendance on the poor, we propose an arrangement which is a great improvement on the system at present in operation. Before this plan is rejected, I do hope that both parties will bear in mind these advantages. Whether or not we shall be able to induce both parties to adopt the views we entertain, I cannot say. I wish, however, that while it should be freely and temperately considered, you will on each side reflect upon the consequences of the immediate rejection of this scheme. I ask for no expression of opinion from you at this time, but I do hope that after an interval of some days we shall approach the consideration of this question in, I may say, the same temper in which both sides have listened to my explanation. (Loud cries of hear, hear, from both sides of the House.) Now let me conclude with two observations—the one connected with our foreign policy and the interests of our commercial intercourse with other countries; and the other having reference to our domestic circumstances. I freely avow to you that in making these great deductions upon the import of articles of raw material, and upon the import of foreign manufactures, I immediately follow your example. (Hear, hear, from the Ministerial benches.) I bit exactly give you that advantage in argument. Weighed with its long and unavailing efforts to enter into satisfactory commercial treaties with other nations, we have resolved to length to consult our own interests, (hear, hear, from the Opposition benches,) and not to punish those other countries for the wrong they do us in continuing their high duties upon the import of our products and manufactures, and encouraging unlawful trade. We have had no communication with any foreign Government upon the subject of these reductions. We cannot promise that France will immediately make a corresponding reduction in her tariff. I cannot promise that Russia will prove her gratitude to us for our reductions on her tariff. You may say, in opposition to our present policy, what is the use of all this superfluous liberality in giving away all these duties, and yet exacting nothing in return? I may be told that many foreign countries, which are to have the benefit of our relaxations, have not only not followed our example, but have actually, in some cases, imposed a higher rate of duty upon the importation of our products and manufactures. (Hear.) I give you the whole benefit of this argument, and yet I rely upon this fact as a proof of the benefit of our policy.—Why, what has been the result of the amount of imports? Have we not defeated the regulations of other countries?—Has not our import trade increased in spite of those regulations?—(Hear.) And why? [Here the Right Hon. Baronet spoke in so low a tone that we could not satisfactorily hear what he stated.] But, whatever be the reasons there can be no doubt of the fact that the declared value of British exports have increased £10,000,000 during the last few years. Hostile tariffs, therefore, so far from being an objection, are an argument in our favour. And you may depend upon it, that whatever may be the immediate effect, our example will be ultimately followed.—(Cheers from the Opposition Benches.) When our example was so largely quoted in favour of restriction, you may depend upon it that when our example can be quoted in favour of relaxation, it will be so too—it may not be at first by Governments or Boards of Trade, but ultimately the interests and feelings of the great body of the community—the consumers—will prevail, and, in spite of the desire of Governments and Boards of Trade, the power of reason and common sense will induce a relaxation of hostile tariffs.—(Hear, hear.) That is my firm belief. I see symptoms of it already. I trust this improved intercourse with foreign countries will constitute a new bond of peace, (hear;) that it will control the passions of those European Governments who still indulge themselves in visions of war, and that every lover of peace between nations will derive material strength from the removal of impediments upon commercial intercourse. But observe if this be the effect, the continuance of this great blessing will expose us to more extensive competition. The more certain that a guarantee of peace is, the more formidable will be the competition which we shall have to encounter in our commerce and manufactures. In order to retain our pre-eminence, then, it is of great importance that we should neglect no opportunity of securing those advantages which this pre-eminence secures. I believe that abundance and cheapness of provisions are one great constituent by which the continuance of manufacturing and commercial pre-eminence may be maintained. (Hear.) You may say that our object in proposing these alterations is to foster the love of gain, and to minister to the desire of accumulating money. I advise this measure on no such grounds. I believe that the accumulating of wealth, of which the increase of capital is a main element, is one of the means by which we may hope to retain that eminence among nations which we have so long enjoyed. I ask for your consent, on the proof I have shown that abundance and cheapness lead to diminished crime and increased morality. I could bring you many proofs of the sources of this comparative cheapness. But I may be asked