

makes a quarry altogether unnecessary. With a compost of moistened clay and straw, without plumb, square, or level, but merely with an instrument they call a sprong (which is a fork, with four long prongs and a long handle), every man is capable of erecting a house for himself, compact and perpendicular, executed with such accuracy that the exterior walls are limited to eighteen, and its partitions to twelve or fourteen inches in thickness. These are sometimes made of raw bricks, carefully moulded, which, for inside work of this description, answer remarkably well.

The house when plastered with a finer preparation of clay, and whitened with lime, looks quite as well as if composed of stone; excludes the air better than ill executed walls of that material, possessing the advantage of being cool in summer, and warm in winter.

The form of the houses in these baronies is perfectly characteristic, never departed from by the affluent farmer or the poorest labourer. The scale varies with the circumstances of the proprietor, the elevation never. It in general consists of two stories, the upper story lighted by a well sized casement in the end. Every house has a central porch; one or two good windows at each side of it, and in the centre of the house invariably rises a chimney of brick, well built, and finished rather ornamentally on the outside. The gables are uniformly hipped, a little higher than is usual, to admit a sufficient window in the second floor, and to gain the proper head room. The roof is of a steep pitch, thatched, in general, with wheaten straw, and with as much attention to neat appearance as to the durable execution of the work. The eaves are made to project considerably, and are secured from the ruffling of the wind (as the ridge and hips are also) by scollops, forming a fancy border, which gives to the whole a character of skilful workmanship. At the extremities of the ridge are placed pinnacles, compactly formed with straw, securely roped, of eighteen inches high, and twelve inches at the base, which, never been in any instance omitted, either upon house or offices, constitute much of the characteristic peculiarity of those buildings. They are, besides, always unconnected, the offices standing at rectangles with the front of the house; and when it comes to be considered (which is well worthy of note) that no farmer in these baronies, even upon five acres of land, is without his stable and his barn, and that those are executed in the same form as the dwelling house, but separated from it, and thatched and pinnaced in the same manner, it will not be difficult to conceive the striking appearance which those multiplied and uniform buildings must afford in every populous district.

A person who rides through these baronies is seldom without ten or twelve of those groups immediately under his eye. In some places they neglect to whiten their houses, which, from the material of which they are composed, present but a dingy aspect; but in others, they not only whiten the wall, but the ridge and pinnacles; and if a group of this description happen to have the embellishment of a few trees, which is sometimes the case, the effect is picturesque. But it is not the exterior which is most deserving of notice or praise. A regular system of interior cleanliness and comfort is observed; one striking instance of which may suffice to obtain credit for all the rest.

It is thus that, throughout these baronies, the houses are well lighted, (a circumstance in itself friendly to cleanliness); the windows are of good glass, varying in size, in proportion to that of the habitation; but from the best to the meanest, are kept in a state of brightness. A sullied pane would be considered a disgrace to the house in which it was remarked, and the careful cleaning of the single window in the cottage of the poorest labourer, is considered a daily duty, and is fulfilled with a perseverance which might be adopted with much advantage in greater houses.

There can be no doubt that cleanliness is a test of the moral influence, without which there can be no amelioration of the condition of the lower classes.

In each house is a manufactory of almost every article for home consumption, even to the making of their own sacks and ropes; for which purpose the farm is supplied with a proportionate sowing of hemp. Flax is also cultivated by all, and manufactured for domestic use. Those who have not sheep, of which there are very few in this district, purchase the wool, and have it spun at a factory established for the purpose, and make it into stockings, blankets, and a species of clothing called linsey-woolsey.

The extreme degree of industry accounts for the corresponding comfort of these people.

In every house indiscriminately are also manufactured, for the use of each individual of the family, hats of straw, of a close texture, and remarkably well made. This is a source of occupation to the younger branches, and a most desirable application of their industry, furnishing a striking feature of civilization in the general appearance of the inhabitants, as neither male or female is to be seen out of doors without a straw hat or bonnet, except on Sunday, when the men, as a point of dress, wear purchased hats of wool and beaver.

The women work in the fields, and at reaping receive the same wages as the men. They are all neatly dressed, wear gloves, and shade their faces from the sun by a kerchief worn under their bonnet. They are in general very well looking, of a fair skin, and good complexion. This is in a great measure to be attributed to the absence of smoke, as there is no instance to be met of a house without a regular chimney. On Sunday they are dressed particularly well, and the comfortable and affluent appearance of large congregations returning from their places of worship in an orderly and decent manner, is truly respectable.

From the total absence of peat as fuel, and from the hardy habits of the people, they hold themselves independent of fuel, except for cooking purposes, and have even brought themselves to talk of it as an uncleanly and unnecessary superfluity. Some of the upper class of farmers make use of coals from Wexford at a high rate, including carriage. Not very many, however, indulge in this luxury. The general fuel is furze, with which the fences for the most part abound, and, where this is not the case, the haulm of the bean crop is wholly dedicated to this purpose. Nor is even this resorted to, except at the time of preparing for meals. Whether this self denial with regard to what is usually looked upon as a chief comfort and necessary of life, can be considered a prudent species of economy, admits of a doubt.

Their climate is certainly mild, and the inclemencies of frost and snow are but seldom, and for a short duration, experienced. Add to this, that their houses are impervious to wind, and secure from the admission of rain, being furnished with well fitted doors, and perfect windows. Yet is the ague prevalent amongst them, not so much, perhaps, from the evaporation from a retentive soil, as from the branch of economy in question, which induces them to wear their clothes insufficiently aired; for if either man or woman return from fair or market in wet weather, the coat or cloak, which has been drenched with rain, is merely thrown upon the hedge; and to avoid the cost and trouble of a good fire, is put on again in a state of dampness that must be obviously unwholesome.

In a country where so much good management is practised, one would think a more liberal use of fuel would be an improvement. Except in the scarcity of fuel, however, as has been before observed, the appearance of substantial comfort, which pervades these baronies is generally remarkable, and in some instances particularly striking. In one part of the district are eight tenants, on farms of fifteen acres each, who are supposed to be worth some thousand pounds. Their houses are most comfortable, and to each is added a small lodge of lime and stone, two stories high and slated, which they let for the season to sea bathers.

Their stack yards are well supplied with wheat, barley, beans and hay, which they are never obliged to dispose of till the market is at the highest.

Some of the wealthiest of them have lately ventured upon Government debentures, and one of the party is sent up half yearly in the mail coach to the Treasury, to receive the interest and to make further purchases. The same families have occupied these farms at a low rent for a series of years, and even at the last renewal their philanthropic landlord, pleased at their prosperity, to encourage and reward their industry, relet the farms to them at a rent not much exceeding one half the usual rate of the country.

Another farmer upon thirty acres merely, had purchased the fee of seventy acres. And a very small farmer in the same neighbourhood, supposed to be worth £300, had acquired it by his industry and economy, upon a farm of seven acres, which limit he has never exceeded. This man has been known to hold over his wheat (newly thatching it every season) for years. After a year of fair and remunerating prices, this cannot be defended on the score of good management, but is a decided proof of affluence. All the farmers of these baronies, great and small, have corn-stands of stone with sufficient caps to resist vermin, and their stacks are uniformly as carefully thatched as their houses.

The foregoing instances, it must be admitted, are prominent features of that prosperity which results from an uninterrupted course of industry. In many cases there must be a greater struggle, but indefatigable attention will always prevail. This is evinced in a particular manner in the barony of Bargo, where, under circumstances the most unfavourable, that anxious industry which characterises this district is exerted and succeeds. A bleak and barren moor is here to be seen, being in respect of soil a stiff white clay, from which any surface of vegetation that may happen to gather upon it is pared off for firing. Part of this moor having been protected as a hurling green, exhibits a proof piece of the original quality, which is a moory sod, of about eight inches in depth, including the loam, and well suited to cultivation.

The whole of this common, had it not been a *common*, might have been as productive as the adjoining farms, but it has been cut away for fuel, and even the hurling green is now, by joint consent, converted to the same purpose—the surface sod having been sold to aid in the erecting of a new chapel.

This last spoliation left the moor in a state of total barrenness, yet (paradoxical as it may seem) will eventually have been the means of its improvement.

The native industry of this district excited by the overflowing increase of a particular people, unwilling to migrate or to separate, is applied to exertions unheard of in other circumstances.

The most denuded parts of this miserable moor, no longer attractive as a common, either for pasturage or fuel, are now taken possession of by industrious occupants, who have built, and are building, on their several inclosures, neat and comfortable houses, and are forming their respective estates into small square fields, by well made ditches, enclosing an area of white and yellow clay, without a symptom of vegetation. If ground of this description is worthy of being taken in, and capable of being reclaimed, the mode of its improvement deserves notice. It is effected thus:—After the divisions have been formed, the occupiers make use of every exertion to scrape together any vegetable mould which they can discover. The low and hollow parts of the moor, where, from the lodgment of water, the surface is unadapted to fuel, give some as-