

APPENDIX.

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IN 1846 there appeared an elaborate treatise*, by two authors, MM. Mounier and Rubichon, the latter of whom was by his own statement a public functionary for ten years preceding the French Revolution, and both appear to take their ideas of a wholesome state of society from the institutions and practices of the middle ages. In this book it is maintained, that while French writers and administrators are in a conspiracy to represent their country as making rapid strides in prosperity, the progress of the *morcellement* is in fact reducing it to beggary. An imposing array of official details, adduced in apparent support of this assertion, gave a degree of weight to it which it could not claim from any correctness of information or capacity of judgment shown by its authors. Their work was cried up as a book of authority by the *Quarterly Review*†, in an article which excited some notice by proclaiming, on the evidence produced by these writers, that "in a few years the Code Napoleon will be employed in dividing fractions of square inches of land, and deciding by logarithms infinitesimal inheritances." As such representations ought not to be without a permanent answer, I think it worth while to subjoin the substance of three articles in the *Morning Chronicle*, containing as complete a refutation of these writers and of their reviewer, partly from their own materials, as appears to be either merited or required.

* De l'Agriculture en France, d'après les Documents officiels. Par M. L. Mounier, avec des Remarques par M. Rubichon. Paris, 1846.

† For December, 1846.

Substance (with omissions and corrections) of three articles in the *Morning Chronicle* of 11th, 13th, and 16th January 1847, in reply to MM. Mounier and Rubichon and to the *Quarterly Review*, on the Subdivision of Landed Property in France.

I.

THE reviewer makes an extraordinary slip at the threshold of his subject, in estimating the extent to which the *morcellement* has actually proceeded. He finds it stated, that among nearly five millions and a half of landed proprietors, there are 2,600,000 the revenue of whose land, as rated to the land-tax, does not exceed forty shillings, which sum, he very candidly says, should rather be sixty, as the rated value is very much lower than the real value. On this he exclaims, "There already exist in France millions of examples that a *propriétaire* may be poorer than a peasant. . . . 2,600,000 families, comprising 13,000,000 persons, of each of which families the rated income does not exceed forty shillings, but say sixty shillings sterling, for the maintenance of five persons—and these are proprietors! The poorest day labourer would earn four times as much." He seems actually to suppose that these small proprietors, like great landlords, live only upon the *rent* of their land, forgetting that they have its *whole produce*. He might have known from the very documents he has quoted, and might have guessed if he had not known, that the forty shillings at which the land is rated in the collector's books are not the gross produce of the little estate, but its *net produce*; the surplus beyond the expenses of cultivation; which expenses include the subsistence of the cultivators, together with interest on the capital. The reviewer himself shows that the rated *revenue* of all the landed property of France is about 4 per cent of its rated *value*, and does not therefore much exceed a reasonable rent. A writer who can mistake this for the whole income of a peasant cultivating his own land, gives the measure of his competency for the subject, and of the degree of attention he has paid to it.

We will now attempt to discover, from the reviewer's data and those of his authors, what may really be the condition of these 2,600,000 proprietors. As the French Government estimates the

land-tax at one tenth of the revenue of the land, families rated at £2 (or 50 francs) pay, it is to be presumed, five francs. The average of the *contribution foncière* for all France is $2\frac{1}{2}$ francs per hectare, and in the southern half of the kingdom, which is the most divided, two francs. A hectare being about $2\frac{1}{2}$ English acres, this gives from five to between six and seven acres as the portion of land which falls to the lot of each of the reviewer's forty-shilling or sixty-shilling freeholders. But, it may be said, this is not the *average* but the *maximum* of their possessions. We will therefore take another estimate, grounded on official documents, from the reviewer's authorities, MM. Mounier and Rubichon. "It is hardly credible," they say, "that there are in France more than four millions of proprietors so poor, that they pay no more than 5f. 95c." (say 6f.) "to the *contribution foncière*." In this case the 5f. 95c. are certainly the average. Six francs of land-tax corresponds to six acres per family on the average of all France, and to seven and a-half on that of the southern division, which contains the greatest proportion of small proprietors. A still more favourable result is given by the calculations of M. Lullin de Châteauevieux, a much better authority than these authors, who estimates the average holdings of the 3,900,000 poorest proprietors at eight acres and a half. Now, take any one of these computations in a fertile country like France, suppose as bad an agriculture as exists anywhere in Western Europe, and then judge whether a single family, industrious and economical as the French of the poorer classes are, and enjoying the entire produce of from five to eight and a half acres, subject to a payment of only tenpence an acre to the Government, can be otherwise than in a very desirable condition? We do not forget that the land is sometimes mortgaged for part of the purchase money, and the reviewer makes a great cry about the tremendous incumbrances by which the land of France is weighed down; not amounting, however, on his own showing, to forty per cent on the rental, which we should think is as favourable a return as could be made by any landed aristocracy in Europe. The interest on the mortgages of all France is estimated at twenty-four millions sterling for one hundred and fourteen millions of acres—less than five shillings per acre. The owner of from five to eight acres could afford to pay double this amount, and be very well off.

We are aware that this is an average, and that four millions

of properties averaging, according to M. de Châteauvieux, eight acres and a-half, imply a great number of proprietors who have less. But there must be a proportional (though not an equal) number who have more; and it must not be supposed that this statement includes the large properties, one of which would be enough to keep up the average against a hundred extremely small ones. No properties are included which pay so much as twenty francs land-tax, corresponding on the average of France to twenty acres—on that of the south to twenty-five. When it is considered that of the whole soil of France much less than half is in the hands of peasant proprietors, and that this half is not more subdivided than we now see, it will probably be thought that hitherto at least the mischiefs of subdivision have not reached a very formidable height.

But it is not what France now is, so much as what she is becoming, that is the material point. Is the *morcellement* increasing, or likely to increase? The apologists of the French system have never denied that the land in many parts of France is too minutely divided. What they deny is, that it is a growing evil. They assert that the subdivision has reached its height, and that the reunions, by purchase, marriage, and inheritance, now balance the subdivisions. How stands the fact in this respect? Are the small properties tending to become still smaller, or not? The reader will be surprised when he finds that, with all their straining, M. Rubichon and his reviewer have failed of proving that the *morcellement*, in this sense of the term, is making any progress at all.

The reviewer has a curious theory on the subject. He thinks that "on the calculated average of three children to each inheritance," the piece of land now held by one proprietor must necessarily be divided among three in the next generation, and among nine in that which follows. Under what system of landed property could a population increase at this rate, and not be reduced to starvation? But is it a fact that population is *anywhere* trebled in the space of a generation? We have here blunder within blunder of a very complicated description. In the first place, he should not have said three children to *one* inheritance, but to *two* inheritances; for as the French law in questions of property observes that impartial justice between the two sexes in which other laws are so often deficient, the mother's patrimony is on an average equal to that of the father. In the next place, could not the reviewer have taken the

trouble to ascertain at what rate the French population is *actually* increasing? If he had, he would have found that in the 27 years from 1815 to 1842 it only increased 18 per cent, and during that period with progressively increasing slowness, namely—in the first eleven years 9 per cent, in the next nine years less than 6 per cent, and in the seven years from 1835 to 1842, 3 1-10th per cent only*. This retardation we must take the liberty of attributing mainly to the prudence and forethought generated in the poorest class by this very subdivision of property.

Instead, therefore, of trebling in a generation, the population increases in that period about 20 per cent†; and if the growth of towns, and of employments not agricultural, in the same space of time, is sufficient to absorb this increase, there needs not be, and will not be, even if the law does its worst, any increase of subdivision. Now, the towns of France have increased, and are increasing, at a rate far exceeding the general increase of the population. We read only the other day in the *Siccle*, as the result of the census just concluded, that Paris, which in 1832 had only 930,000 inhabitants, has now more than 1,350,000, an increase of nearly fifty per cent in fourteen years. There is every reason then to infer, from these general data, that the *morcellement* is making no progress.

What facts have M. Rubichon and the *Quarterly* reviewer to oppose to these? One fact; which at first sight appears a very strong one. Between 1826 and 1835, the number of properties rated to the land-tax exhibited an increase of more than 600,000; being about six per cent in ten years. Let us first remark, that 600,000 separate assessments are equivalent only to about 300,000 proprietors; it being the common estimate of French writers, that on the average about two *côtes foncières*, or separate accounts with the land-tax, correspond only to a single proprietor. But if the reviewer had consulted his author just ten pages further on‡, he

* These facts are taken from M. Passy. In page 340 of the present work, from a more complete comparison, which includes the results of the last census, the increase of population has been shown to be even slower than is here represented.

† Even this is a considerable overstatement. The census of 1806 showed a population of 29,107,425. In 1846, according to the census of that year, it had only increased to 35,409,486, being an increase of little more than 21½ per cent in forty years. The longest term ever assigned to a generation is thirty years.

‡ Mounier and Rubichon, vol. i. p. 110.

would have found a cause sufficient to account for a considerable portion of this increase. There were sold between 1826 and 1835 domains of the State, to the value of nearly 134 millions of francs, or five and a-half millions sterling. The very nature of such a sale implies division. And we are the more inclined to ascribe much of the apparent increase of division to this circumstance, because in the ten years preceding those in question, the *côtes foncières* increased in number by little more than 200,000; an alarming proof, according to the reviewer, of the progressive advance of the evil; but, as we suspect, arising partly from the fact, that during the earlier decennial period a smaller, though still a considerable, amount of public domains were alienated.

In addition to the State lands, a great extent of Communal lands were likewise alienated during the same period: and it is further necessary to subtract all the additions made to the number of *côtes foncières* by the extension of building, and by the natural subdivision of town property, during ten years. All these items must be accurately estimated and deducted, before it can be affirmed with certainty that in the rural districts there was during those years any increased division of landed property at all. And even if there was, increased *division* does not necessarily imply increased *subdivision*. Large estates may have been, and we believe were, in many instances, divided, but the division may have stopped there. We know of no reason for supposing that small properties were divided into others still smaller, or that the average size of the possessions of peasant families was at all diminished.

It so happens that facts exist, more specific and more expressly to the point than any of M. Rubichon's. A new *cadastre*, or survey and valuation of lands, has been in progress for some years past. In thirty-seven cantons, taken indiscriminately through France, the operation has been completed; in twenty-one it is nearly complete. In the thirty-seven, the *côtes foncières*, which were 154,266 at the last *cadastre* (in 1809 and 1810), have only increased by 9,011, being less than 18 per cent in considerably more than thirty years, while in many of the cantons they have considerably diminished. From this increase is to be subtracted all which is due to the progress of building during the period, as well as to the sale of public and communal lands. In the other twenty-one cantons the number of *côtes foncières* is not yet pub-

lished, but the number of *parcelles*, or separate bits of land, has *diminished* in the same period; and among these districts is included the greater part of the *banlieue* of Paris, one of the most minutely divided districts in France, in which the *morcellement* has actually diminished by no less than 16 per cent. The details may be found in M. Passy's little work, "Des Systèmes de Culture." So much for the terrible progress of subdivision.

We cannot leave this part of the subject without noticing one of the most signal instances which the reviewer has exhibited of his incompetency for the subject he treats of. He laments over the extraordinary number of sales of landed property which he says the law of inheritance constantly occasions; and indeed the sales of land are shown to have amounted in ten years to no less than one-fourth part of the whole territorial property of France. Now, whatever else this extraordinary amount of sale and purchase may prove, the whole of it is one gigantic argument *against* the reviewer's case; for every sale of land which is caused by the law of inheritance must be a sale for the express purpose of preventing subdivision. If land, sold in consequence of an inheritance, is nevertheless subdivided, this cannot be an effect of the law of inheritance; it would only prove that land sells for a higher price when sold in small portions: that is, in other words, that the poor, and even, as the reviewer would have us believe, the very poor, are able to outbid the rich in the land market. This certainly does not prove that the very poor of France are *so* very poor as these writers try to make out, while it does prove that, if so, they must be by far the most industrious and economical people on the face of the earth, for which some credit ought surely to be given to the system of peasant properties.

II.

WE have shown that the four millions of landowners in France who can be reckoned among peasant-proprietors, those whose holdings fall short of twenty acres, are computed by one of the best living authorities to possess on the average eight and a-half English acres each, and that from no authentic documents can the average be brought much below that amount; a fact wholly incompatible with their being in the state approaching to starvation in which M. Rubichon and his reviewer would represent them. It is equally

certain that if there is bad agriculture on these small estates, it is from some other cause than their smallness. Farms of this size are consistent with agriculture equal to any on the face of the earth.

We shall now, however, touch upon another kind of *morcellement*, which does amount to a serious inconvenience, and wherever it exists must have a strong tendency to keep agriculture in a low state. This is, the subdivision, not of the land of the country among many proprietors, but of the land of each proprietor into many detached pieces, or *parcelles*, as they are technically designated. This inconvenience has been experienced in other countries besides France, as in the canton of Zurich, in the Palatinate, and (as respects holdings, though not properties) in Ireland. In France it is carried to so great an excess, that the number of *parcelles* is ten times the number of *côtes foncières*; and as there are supposed to be twice as many *côtes foncières* as proprietors, the curious fact is disclosed, that on the average of France the estate of every land-owner consists of twenty fragments in twenty different places. The consequences are a subject of general and increasing complaint. Great loss of time and labour; waste of cultivable soil in boundaries and paths; the inaccessibility of many *parcelles* without trespassing on other properties; endless disputes and frequent litigation—are enumerated among the evils; and it is evident what obstacles the small size and dispersed position of the *parcelles*, and their intermixture with those of other proprietors, must oppose to many kinds of agricultural improvement.

For a considerable portion of this evil the French law of inheritance may fairly be held responsible. A certain amount of it is inevitable wherever landed properties are undergoing a double process of division and recomposition: marriages, for example, must in general bring together portions of land not adjacent. But if parents had the power of bequest, the owner of twenty *parcelles*, even if he adhered to the spirit of the law of equal division, would give some of the portions entire to one child, and others to another. The law, on the contrary, must divide with *exact* equality; and as it is generally impossible to adjust the value of patches of unequal fertility, vineyards, meadows, arable, &c., so as to satisfy everybody, it continually happens, especially in the more backward parts of France, that when the settlement is made by division instead of sale, each co-heir insists on taking a share of every *parcelle*,

instead of the whole of some *parcelles*; from whence, no doubt, the amazing multiplication of these little patches in many parts of France.

This evil, while it would not exist to any very material extent except under the peculiar French law of inheritance, is not inevitable even under that law. The enormous extent of sales of land, amounting in ten years to a fourth part of the landed property of France, are a clear proof that in general the adjustment of inheritances is not effected by a subdivision of the land, but by sale: which, it needs scarcely be remarked, does not necessarily imply parting with the land, there being nothing to hinder the heirs themselves from becoming the purchasers. We have no doubt it would be found that this rational mode of executing the law is tending more and more to become universal. To hasten the undoing of the mischief which has been already done, the Government has been often urged (in some instances by Councils-General of Departments) to propose a law authorising the consolidation of landed properties by a general valuation and exchange of allotments, in every commune in which the majority of the proprietors may apply for it; and unless the evil is seen to be correcting itself by a spontaneous process, nothing, we should think, can long prevent the adoption of so salutary an expedient.

That French agriculture, and the condition of the peasant population, are injuriously affected by this sort of *morcellement*, is so far true, that it must considerably retard the improvement which might otherwise be expected, and which, in spite of all hindrances, does even now, to a great extent, take place. More than this we cannot admit. There are conclusive proofs of great and rapid improvement in some parts of France, and M. Rubichon and his reviewer have no evidence whatever of retrogression in any.

They produce tables of the average amount of different kinds of food consumed by the population; also tables of the number of cattle, the amount of produce per hectare of the different kinds of cultivation, &c., calculated from the official documents. These estimates, assuming their correctness (which, so far as that quality is attainable, we generally see no reason to discredit), are indicative, doubtless, of a low and backward state. But statistics are only evidence of the present. Where are the statistics of the past? That the agriculture of a great part of France is rude and imperfect is known to all Europe; but that it ever was better, is an assertion

opposed to all evidence, and we shall not take M. Rubichon's word for it, no more than for the notion that the food and general condition of the mass of the people has been deteriorating from the time of Louis XIV.*, if not earlier. At this last proposition we cannot repress our wonder. In the reign of Louis XIV., Marshal Vauban, a great authority with all who are themselves authorities, and even with M. Rubichon, estimated that one-tenth of the population of France were beggars, and five of the remaining nine-tenths little above beggary. In the same reign, Labruyère claimed credit for apprising the *salons* of Paris that a strange nondescript sort of animals, who might be seen in the fields, and were much addicted to grubbing in the earth, were, though nobody would suppose it, a kind of men. Some readers may remember the picture drawn by the old Marquis Mirabeau of the rural population in the middle of the eighteenth century; nor was Arthur Young's, at the opening of the Revolution, much more favourable. Compare this with any authentic account, or with the testimony of any observant resident or traveller, respecting their condition now. M. Rubichon's statistics comprise no returns of the rate of wages. We are quite willing that our case should rest upon the result of an inquiry into that one point.

As for agriculture, when it is recollected that, at the beginning of this century, in the greater part of France the culture of artificial grasses might be said to be unknown, and that the course of cultivation consisted solely of grain crops and fallows, it will be difficult to make us believe that, even in the most backward parts of the country, there has not been a considerable improvement from so miserable a level.

* It did deteriorate in the early part of the reign of Louis XIV, not because the peasants *bought* land, but because they were compelled to *sell* it. "Au moment" says Michelet (*Le Peuple*, ch. 1), "où nos ministres Italiens, un Mazarin, un Emeri, doubaient les taxes, les nobles qui remplissaient la cour obtinrent aisément d'être exemptés, de sorte que le fardeau double tomba d'aplomb sur les épaules des faibles et des pauvres, qui furent bien obligés de vendre ou donner cette terre à peine acquise, et de redevenir des mercenaires, fermiers, métayers, journaliers.... Je prie et je supplie ceux qui nous font des lois ou les appliquent, de lire le détail de la funeste réaction de Mazarin et de Louis XIV dans les pages pleines d'indignation et de douleur où l'a consigné un grand citoyen, Pesant de Boisguillebert, réimprimé récemment dans la Collection des Economistes. Puisse cette histoire les avertir dans un moment où diverses influences travaillent à l'envi pour arrêter l'œuvre capitale de la France, l'acquisition de la terre par le travailleur."

The blind zeal with which M. Rubichon presses everything into the service of his theory, in which he is faithfully echoed by his reviewer, makes them lay great stress upon the increase of roots, and other inferior kinds of culture, as a proof that the population is sinking to an inferior kind of nutriment; as if the same thing was not happening in England; as if it was not a necessary condition of an improved rotation of crops, that other cultures should increase in a greater proportion than grain culture, and even at the expense, in some degree, of the inferior kinds of grain.

We have admitted, and again admit, the unsatisfactory state of cultivation on a very great portion of the soil of France; but would it be any better if the estates were large? Is it any better now on the large estates? When M. Rubichon and his reviewer talk of the small properties as "creating a new Ireland in France," his own pages make it known that the large properties, in the backward parts of France, are already an Ireland, in the very worst feature of Irish landed mismanagement, the system of middlemen. It is a general practice, according to M. de Châteauevieux, with the great proprietors of the central departments, to let their land *en bloc* to a middleman, usually an attorney or a notary, who sublets it in small portions on the *métayer* system, and is not only, as in Ireland, the hardest and most grasping of landlords, but having only a temporary tenure, and being no agriculturist, of course expends nothing in improvements. Of fifty-seven millions of acres cultivated by tenants, twenty-one millions only are held by farmers at fixed rents, and thirty-six millions on the *métayer* tenure; which in France implies all the defects with very few of the advantages of proprietary cultivation; the only exceptions being La Vendée and a few of the adjoining departments, where the large proprietors are resident, a primitive relationship subsists between them and their tenants, and the *métayers* have in general, as in Tuscany, a virtual fixity of tenure. We do not believe it will be found in any part of France that the small properties are under a bad agriculture, and the large properties under a good one. They are both bad, or both good. Where large farms exist and are well cultivated, the small properties also are well managed and prosperous.

And this brings us to the principal cause, both now and formerly, of the unimproved agriculture and scanty application of

capital to the soil of France. This is, the exclusive taste of the wealthy and middle classes for town life and town pursuits, combined with the general want of enterprise of the French nation with respect to industrial improvements. It is truly, though epigrammatically, said by M. Rubichon, that the Frenchman, generally, knows but one way of getting rich; namely, thrift. He does not understand sowing money freely to reap it largely. This is the true cause why, when large properties are sold, they bring the greatest price by being much subdivided. The peasants, thanks to the Revolution, to the small properties, and to their own unparalleled prudence, are able to purchase land, and their savings are the only part of the wealth of the country which takes that direction. We are often told, that it does not answer to capitalists to buy land at the extravagant price which the passion of the peasantry for land induces *them* to give, amounting often to forty years' purchase. It does not answer to pay that price in order to live idly on the rent in Paris, or the large provincial towns. But if there was one particle of the spirit of agricultural improvement in the owners of the monied wealth which is so largely increasing in the manufacturing and commercial districts, few speculations would be more profitable than to buy land in many fertile and ill-cultivated parts of France, at even more than forty years' purchase of its wretchedly low rental, which would soon be doubled or trebled by the application of capital, with ordinary agricultural knowledge and enterprise. If the *petite culture* is half as wasteful and unprofitable as is pretended, the profit would be proportional of substituting *la grande culture* for it. The thing would soon be done if the love of industrial progress should ever supplant in the French mind the love of national glory, or if the desire of national glorification should take that direction. But with a people who dislike rural pursuits, and in the pursuit of money-getting prefer the beaten ways, there can be no other farming than peasant farming.

III.

THE *cheval de bataille* of M. Rubichon and his English followers against the *petite propriété*, is the cattle question; not without cause, since on this subject they have an indisputable basis of fact, however inadequate to sustain the superstructure they have raised

upon it. The supply of butcher's-meat to some of the principal towns, especially Paris, is less copious than formerly. It has increased greatly, but in a less ratio than the population. Of the fact there is no doubt, since on this point there are trustworthy statistics of the past as well as of the present. In 1789 the consumption of meat in Paris averaged 68 kilogrammes (150 lbs.) for each person; in 1841 it was but 55 (121 lbs.), and there are also complaints of a falling off in the quality.

The *Quarterly* reviewer treats very cavalierly the explanation given of this fact by M. Cunin-Gridaine, Minister of Commerce and Agriculture. "This is to be accounted for by the revolution which has taken place in the working-classes; Paris having become the *most manufacturing town* in Europe." *Industrielle* is not exactly synonymous with manufacturing, but let that pass. On this the reviewer:—"This seems a strange explanation. The new population of Paris is to starve on an ounce" (five ounces) "of meat per diem. How is that? Pooh! says the Liberal Minister, they are only manufacturers. This solution will not be very agreeable to those theorists amongst us who confound the extension of manufactures with the welfare and comfort of the working people. The more candid Minister of Louis-Philippe *assumes* that a manufacturing population must of necessity be worse fed than other classes." The reviewer is evidently no *Œdipus*. But he might have found in another page of M. Rubichon's treatise, what the Minister meant. In a town such as Paris before the Revolution, in which there was, comparatively speaking, no production at all, but only distribution—the population consisting of the great landlords, the Court and higher functionaries paid by the State, the bankers, financiers, government contractors, and other monied classes, with the great and small dealers and tradesmen needful for supplying these opulent consumers, and few labourers beyond those who cannot be wanting in so large a town—all will see that the richer must bear an unusually high numerical proportion to the poorer consumers in such a city. Suppose now that a Manchester or a Glasgow grows up in the place. It is pretty evident that while this would add a little to the richer class, it would add twenty times as much to the poorer. Considering now that the upper and middle classes in France are great consumers of animal food, while the poor consume very little, the ration of each poor

person might in these circumstances increase very much, while yet the average consumption per head of the whole city, owing to the diminished proportional numbers of the richer class, might be considerably diminished. We have little doubt that this is the fact, and that the great increase in the inferior kinds of animal food introduced into Paris would prove to be for the use, not of those who formerly used the superior kinds, but in a great measure for those who seldom obtained animal food at all.

This, however, does not explain the whole of the change which has taken place; for the *price* of butcher's meat has also risen in the Paris markets so materially as to be a source of great privation and complaint. The rise may be ascribed to various causes. In the first place, "France has till lately always been a large importer of cattle; and down to 1814 they were exempted from all duty. In that year, however, a duty of three francs was laid on each head of cattle imported;" and in 1822 the duty "was suddenly raised to 55 francs, an increase which has well nigh put a stop to the importation*." Secondly, the *octroi*, or town custom duty, now so burthensome, did not exist at all in 1789, and has been largely increased at various periods, both in Paris and most other towns, since its first establishment. These causes are enough of themselves to account for a considerable part of the enhancement complained of.

But if there were not these causes, there is cause almost sufficient in the very fact of an increased and rapidly increasing population. Paris has added, in fourteen years, between four and five hundred thousand to its inhabitants, an increase of nearly one-half. The agriculture of a country must be rapidly improving indeed, if an increase like this can take place in a single market without compelling it to draw its supplies from a larger surface and a greater distance, and therefore at an increased expense. Where would London have been by this time, for the supply of its markets, were it not for our great coasting trade, and the invention of steam navigation, which conveys not only cattle but carcasses from the extremity of Scotland as cheaply as they can be brought from Buckinghamshire? The cattle for the supply of Paris must travel

* Macculloch's Geographical Dictionary, art. France.

by land, from distances varying from 50 to 150 leagues (this rests on the authority of a Committee of the Municipal Council of Paris, in 1841), and after so long a journey have either to be brought to market out of condition, or to be fattened in the immediate neighbourhood. Can any one, then, be surprised that a doubled population cannot be so well or so cheaply supplied as one of half the number?

To these three causes of the diminished supply of butcher's meat in the towns, we are not afraid to add a fourth, which, though resting mainly on general considerations, we should not be wholly unable to support by positive evidence. This is, the increased consumption by the country people. They have less animal food in proportion, to spare for the towns, because they retain more of it for their own use.

On what evidence is it asserted that small properties imply deficiency of cattle, and consequent deficiency of manure? That they are not favourable to sheep farming seems to be admitted; but the breeding and fattening of horned cattle seems to be so perfectly compatible with small capital, that in the opinion of many Continental authorities, small farms have the advantage in this respect, and so great an advantage as to be more than a compensation for their inferiority in sheep*. It is argued that the *petite propriété* must diminish the number of cattle, because it leads to the breaking up of natural pasture. But when natural pasture is fit for the plough, a greater number of cattle than were supported on the whole, may be supported on a part, by laying it out in roots and artificial grasses; and it is well known that on the stall-feeding system there is much greater preservation of manure. The question of *petite culture*, in relation to cattle, is, in fact, one and the same with the question of stall-feeding. The two things must stand or fall together. Stall-feeding produces, *ceteris paribus*, a greater quantity of provisions, but in the opinion of most judges a lower quality. Experience must decide.

This brings us back to the causes assigned by the committee of the Paris town-council, for the falling off in the quality of the beef consumed at Paris. One is, the extraordinary increase in the

* See this question discussed in Book I. chap. 9 of the present work, pp. 176-8.

consumption of dairy produce. Milk is now brought from distances of thirty leagues, and within six or eight leagues of Paris no calves are now bred up, all being sold at the earliest moment possible. In consequence, a great part of the beef sold at Paris is the flesh of cows too old to be fit for producing milk. A second cause assigned is, the increase of stall-feeding. But the committee make an instructive distinction. In Normandy, which affords the greatest portion of the supply, the quality, they say, has deteriorated; but in La Vendée, and the central provinces, the Limousin, Nivernais, Bourbonnais, and La Marche, "there is improvement in weight, in fatness, and from some districts in number," although these countries have also adopted stall-feeding; and in this, say the committee, there is no contradiction, since "what is a deterioration in the rich pasturages of Calvados, is improvement in the *petites herbes* of the Allier and the Nièvre."

It may now be left to the reader to judge if the case of our adversaries has not broken down as completely on this, their strongest point, as it has done on every other point of any importance.

We cannot close this long controversy without producing evidence of the extraordinary improvement, extraordinary both in amount and in rapidity, which is taking place in the productiveness of the agriculture of some parts of France. We quote from another work by an authority already cited, M. Hippolite Passy, several times a minister of Louis-Philippe, and well-known as one of the first politicians and publicists of France. This tract, published in 1841, is an examination of "the changes in the agricultural condition of the Department of the Eure since 1800." The Eure is one of the five departments of Normandy, and belongs to the region of which M. Rubichon admits the agriculture to be the best in France; but only (as he contends) because the *morcellement* has not had time to produce its effects, having commenced in that region only from the Revolution, and he assigns to it accordingly no privilege but that of Outis in the Odyssey, to be devoured the last. Let us now see the facts. This department fortunately possesses an accurate agricultural *statistique* for the year 1800, drawn up by a *préfet* who took great pains to be correct in his information. M. Passy's pamphlet is a comparison of these returns with those collected by the present French Government in 1837.

In this interval of thirty-seven years, scarcely any new land was taken into cultivation, nearly all fit for culture having been already occupied. But fallows have diminished from 172,000 hectares to a little more than 80,000. The cultures which supply cattle have increased in a much greater proportion than any others: instead of 17 per cent of the cultivated area, they now occupy 37 per cent. Horses have multiplied from 29,500 to 51,000, horned cattle from 51,000 to 106,000, sheep from 205,000 to 511,000, and as their food has increased in a still greater ratio, and there is importation besides, all kinds of live stock are better fed, and have gained in size, weight, and value. The produce per hectare of all kinds of grain, and of most other kinds of produce, has considerably increased, of some kinds nearly doubled. These changes have chiefly been effected during the second half of the period, so that the improvement is as progressive as on M. Rubichon's theory should have been the deterioration. There has been no perceptible variation in the proportion between the *grande* and the *petite culture*; nor has the division of properties at all promoted the division of farms. On the soils where small farms are most profitable, large properties are rented to small tenants; where the reverse is the case, a single farmer often rents the lands of several proprietors, and this arrangement extends itself more as the subdivision of property advances. The consumption of food per head of the population has largely increased—in the ratio, according to M. Passy, of about 37 per cent; and while the agricultural wealth of the department has increased, according to his estimate, by 54 per cent, the population has only increased 5 per cent*.

Though the Eure belongs to the most productive and thriving region of France, it is not the most productive or the most thriving department. The Nord, which comprises the greater part of French Flanders, and is a country of small farms, maintains, according to M. Passy, proportionally to its extent, a third more cattle than the Eure; and the average produce of wheat per hectare, instead of seventeen, is twenty hectolitres, about twenty-two English bushels per acre.

* During the last quinquennial period, the population of this department, on the shewing both of the census and of the register of births and deaths, has actually diminished.

Results almost as satisfactory may be deduced from a statistical account of a much less improved district than the Eure, the most eastern district of Brittany, the arrondissement of Fougères, published in 1846, by the *Sous-préfet*, M. Bertin. "It is only since the peace," says this intelligent functionary, "that the agriculture of the arrondissement has made much progress; but from 1815 it has improved with increasing rapidity. If from 1815 to 1825 the improvement was as one, it was as three between 1825 and 1835, and as six since that period." At the beginning of the century little wheat was cultivated, and that little so ill, that in 1809 the produce per hectare was estimated only at 9 hectolitres. At present M. Bertin estimates it at 16. The cattle, being better fed, and crossed with more vigorous breeds, have increased in size and strength; while in number, horned cattle, between 1813 and 1844, multiplied from 33,000 to 52,000, sheep from 6,300 to 11,000, swine from 9,300 to 26,100, and horses from 7,400 to 11,600. New and valuable manures have been introduced, and have come largely into use. The extent of meadow land has increased and is increasing, and great attention has of late been paid to its improvement. This testimony comes from an enemy of the *morcellement*, who, however, states that it is advancing very slowly, and is not likely to advance much further, the coheirs not dividing each *parcelle*, but either distributing the *parcelles* among them, or disposing of them by private or public sale. Some farmers, he says, who are also proprietors, have the good sense to sell the few fields which belong to them, in order to increase their farming capital. M. Bertin is an enemy to stall-feeding, which, he says, is not practised in his arrondissement. The increase of live stock is therefore the more remarkable. It may not be useless to mention an assertion of this writer, that the official publication from which M. Rubichon's data are taken greatly understates the number of horned cattle in France, by the accidental omission of a column in summing up, by which the number is brought below ten millions, when it ought, according to M. Bertin, to be thirteen.

Of the food of the inhabitants he says, that not long ago it was composed almost exclusively of milk, buckwheat cakes, and rye bread, but has greatly improved in quantity, quality, and variety, especially in the last ten years, and now consists of wheaten bread, or bread of two-thirds wheat and one-third rye, with butter, vege-

tables, and "in good farms" about a kilogramme (or $2\frac{1}{4}$ lbs.) of pork per week for each person. There is also some consumption of other flesh-meats among the labouring people, and the arrondissement contains 63 butchers' shops, where fifteen years ago there were not 30; the increase not being in the towns (or rather town), but in the villages. The clothing of the rural population is substantial, "and different for every season, which is always a sign of general comfort," and "persons in rags are very rare in the arrondissement."

We cannot further extend this long discussion; but enough has been said, to enable our readers adequately to appreciate the terrible predictions of alarmist writers respecting the consequences of the Division of Landed Property in France.

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