

rent. This system of things is regarded by many as not only injurious, because it imposes grievous restraints upon alienation, but as unconstitutional, or contrary to the genius of their political institutions, and tending to create a sort of feudal perpetuity. Some of the leases have already been turned into fees, but many of the tenants were unable or unwilling to pay the prices asked for such conveyances, and declared that they had paid rent long enough, and that it was high time that they should be owners of the land.

A few years ago, when the estates descended from the late General Van Renssalaer to his sons, the attempt to enforce the landlord's rights met with open opposition. The courts of law gave judgment, and the sheriff of Albany having failed to execute his process, at length took military force in 1839, but with no better success. The governor of New York was then compelled to back him with the military array of the state, about 700 men, who began the campaign at a day's notice in a severe snow storm. The tenants are said to have mustered against them 1500 strong, and the rents were still unpaid, when in the following year, 1840, the governor, courting popularity, as it should seem, while condemning the recusants in his message, virtually encouraged them by recommending their case to the favourable consideration of the state, hinting at the same time at legislative remedies. The legislature, however, to their credit, refused to enact these, leaving the case to the ordinary courts of law.

The whole affair is curious, as demonstrating the impossibility of creating at present in this country a class of landed proprietors deriving their income from the letting of lands upon lease. Every man must oc-