

of preparing it. The farmer, his master, in too many instances takes no further care of him after his labours for the day are over. He represents merely a certain quantum of power purchased at a certain price, and applied to a certain purpose; and as it is, unluckily, power purchased by the half-year, and abundant in the market, there is no necessity that it should be husbanded from motives of economy, like that of the farmer's horses or of his steam-engine; and therefore little heed is taken though it should thus run to waste. The consequences are in most cases deplorable. It used to be a common remark of Burns,—no inadequate judge, surely,—that the more highly cultivated he found an agricultural district, the more ignorant and degraded he almost always found the people. Man was discovered to have deteriorated at least as much as the corn and cattle had improved. Now, in Scotland there has been a very obvious reason for this. The altered circumstances of the country rendered inevitable the introduction of the large-farm system, and broke down our rural population, composed almost exclusively of what we still term the small tenantry,—a moral and religious race,—into two extreme classes,—gentlemen-farmers and farm-servants. The farmers composed, of course, but a comparatively small portion of the whole; nor, though furnishing many high examples of intelligence and worth, can we equal them as a body with the class which they supplanted. Hitherto they have lived less in the “eye” of the great “Taskmaster.” They took their place, not in the front of the common people, but in the rear of the aristocracy: they passed, to employ the favourite proverb of the poet whose remark we are attempting to illustrate, from the “*head of the commonalty to the tail of the gentry.*” The other and greatly more numerous class proved much more decidedly inferior. The tenant of from fifteen to fifty pounds per annum necessarily occupied a place in which, in accordance with the distinguishing characteristic