

broken breakfast, or as he took in to dinner some lady he did not care for, and as she at her end of the table talked French or Cochinchinese to some man who had brought letters of introduction.

She knew what her husband's business was, and who his friends were. But, for all intents and purposes, she had lost him forever.

As for the three step-sisters at Painted Post, they went to a Sunday-school picnic one day, and fell off a precipice and were killed.

GENTLEMAN FARMING.

WE have not yet drifted so far from the simple democratic ideas inherited from our ancestors, nor yet become so dazzled by the glittering superficialities of inherited rank, that we can pronounce such words as "gentleman farming" without inward protest, or, at least, a sense of incongruity. We have, indeed, in this country an ever-increasing number of gentlemen farmers ("sidewalk farmers" they are called by the grange), but even their flatterers would not dream of so designating them. We call every man a farmer who cultivates the soil, whether he does most of his farm labor himself or hires others to do it; and in both cases we pretend, at least, that they are gentlemen. In England no man is a gentleman, whatever may be his natural refinement or education, unless he is born to a certain rank or raised to it by act of Parliament. Mr. William Lawson, to whom we are indebted for an interesting account* of a co-operative farming scheme in Cumberland County, England, belongs to the class of Englishmen who by birth are entitled to the rank of gentleman. He conducted a farming experiment from 1862 to 1872, which for many reasons is one of the most marvelous on record: this was the Blennerhasset Co-operative Farm, at Bagston, in the aforesaid county. Mr. Lawson was born in the same county in 1836, and he says of himself: "My father (Sir Wilfrid Lawson, Baronet, of Brayton) had my education conducted—in a religious manner—at home, where I acquired a little Latin and Greek, and a few other things, and where, as is the case with many other youths, any thing in the shape of lessons was not attractive to me; and I learned as little as possible. I had, before I was eighteen, traveled several times on the continent of Europe, and visited Egypt and Palestine; but circumstances never brought me much in contact with rich or great people, and I had not much of what is called 'knowledge of the

world,' nor, as I always had the prospect of wealth enough to enable me to live without working, did I form what are called 'business habits.' Trained as a shooter of animals, a hunter of Cumberland beasts with hounds, and a trapper of vermin, I found myself in the spring of 1861 in my twenty-fifth year, without an occupation, without many acquaintances (except among the poor, whom I had not learned to despise because they spoke bad grammar, and took their coats off to work), and without the reputation of having been successful in any undertaking, except that of the mastership and huntsmanship of my brother's fox-hounds. But if I had ever been a sportsman at heart, I had then ceased to be one, and had begun to look upon hunting and shooting as barbarous cruelties." Such words must come from a gentle and good man. The inaccuracies of style in the English of those portions of *Ten Years of Gentleman Farming* which were contributed by Mr. Lawson may be attributable to the fact that he was, as he says, "unable to superintend their passage through the press;" but the habit of leaving every thing to be done by others, except one, seems to be chronic with Mr. Lawson. The one exception is furnishing capital. This he seems to have done most liberally in buying and stocking the farm, Blennerhasset, putting in miles of costly draining, grubbing out old hedges, building extensively, experimenting with steam machinery, establishing an immense manufactory of liquid and other manures, and at least a dozen other enterprises connected with the co-operative farm. The wonder is, not that his scheme of "gentleman farming" proved a losing investment, but that he could have invested so much and so variously, leaving every thing to the care of others while he studied co-operation and model farming pretty much all over the planet, and not have lost infinitely more. The balance-sheets of the transaction show the following:

Cost of land, buildings, and improvements.....	£45,410
These were sold after the ten years for.....	38,931
Loss on the investment.....	£6,479
Paid for farm and manufacturing work and machinery.....	£45,159
Receipts from the same.....	38,113
Loss.....	£7,046
Total losses.....	£13,525
or about \$67,000.	

Mr. Lawson's hobby was co-operation; and not believing that interest upon money is just in principle, he proposed to furnish the capital for high farming on a scale employing about one hundred people, pay liberal salaries to functionaries managing the different departments, and divide a certain percentage of the profits among his workmen. There were actual profits at times realized in some of the departments, and "bonuses" were distributed among the work-

* *Ten Years of Gentleman Farming at Blennerhasset with Co-operative Objects.* By WILLIAM LAWSON, CHARLES D. HUNTER, and others. London: 1874.

men; but these were exceptions to the rule, which was loss upon loss and failure upon failure. The Blennerhasset property embraced a gasometer, a smithy like a small foundry, steam-plows, a huge hydraulic engine for irrigation, a chemical laboratory, a manufactory of manures, a school, a library of 700 volumes, two steam-engines, a water-wheel under-ground for "driving, threshing, and chaff-cutting," washing-machines, a flour mill, lathes, tram-ways, turn-tables, and trucks for feeding the cattle, a lecture-hall, a music-hall, a banqueting hall, a starch manufactory, a flax-scutching mill, and several co-operative stores. Such varied and extensive operations, carried on almost wholly by proxy for ten years, and at a loss of only \$67,000, proves, one would think, that it is no easy task to make co-operative industry a failure—at least in England.

Mr. Lawson's first farm bailiff, Thomas Bell, who served four years, being afterward asked his candid opinion as to the causes of the failure of the Blennerhasset enterprise, returned a "summing up" which seems very able. Some of these causes are: irrigating from manure tanks; keeping valuable cattle "up" wholly and without bedding, when they were not inured from birth to that kind of life; too much costly machinery; getting the steam-plows too soon; the discontinuance of keeping cattle on the farm—in short, "too many irons in the fire" all at once spoiled the welding heat. But Mr. Bell's severest criticism is for the kind of co-operation attempted by Mr. Lawson. "I must confess," he says, "I could never understand how that could be called co-operation where all the capital was invested by the proprietor;" and as for the Blennerhasset "Parliament" (held daily for half an hour after dinner), he calls it a "motley mixture of boys, girls, women, and men of all trades and no trade or profession, indiscriminately drawn together into a council-chamber for the purpose of discussing and deciding upon the most important subjects regarding farming operations, though nineteen-twentieths of them were quite ignorant and inexperienced" in such matters. They have nothing to lose, and they vote "just as they are carried away by the prejudice or excitement of the moment." In this one fact alone the bailiff sees sufficient cause of failure. No doubt the loss to Mr. Lawson was a great gain to large numbers of working-people, who remember with gratitude and pride his generous efforts to improve their condition. That "Parliament," and the various meetings in surrounding villages for the discussion of the labor and kindred questions, must have been a culture to the people, aside from the free library he furnished them, and which appears to have been fully appreciated. The circulating library seems to have been nobly managed,

for the actual losses were less than one in 600, and occurring chiefly in the juvenile division.

The first steam-plow introduced into Cumberland County was at Blennerhasset. This was a No. 95 of Fowler's patent. It arrived during the first year of the enterprise. A man was sent from the steam-plow manufactory to give instruction in using it. As soon as it was unloaded from the cars the steam was raised, and, amidst the intense excitement of a large crowd, the engine, self-propelled, started for Blennerhasset Farm. The multitude opened their eyes wide when they saw it starting off without the aid of horses, and the prophets said, "She'll never git up Thompson's Brow;" but the engine triumphantly marched up that steep hill; and then the wise ones said, "She's gitten up, but she'll never plough!" When, however, the engine reached the "lea headland, too slippery from the wintry rains for the wheels to grip, she plunged and mired, and mired and plunged," and finally was left in an ignominious plight until the next morning. This was but the first of a long series of accidents and breakages of various kinds, which seemed to justify the verdict of the wiseacres on the day that first witnessed the actual work of the steam-plow. That verdict was, "She got up Thompson's Brow, and she's ploughing; but she'll *never pay*." When, after the first triumphant march of the engine across the field, they looked back for the furrows, there were none visible! Such a crowd was there of the prophets and others following after the plow that every furrow had been trodden level.

The history of the steam-plow at Blennerhasset is a very interesting and even an exciting one. Its *début* was even honored by a rustic poet, who, after making the plow go at "lightning speed," turning up the earth "full many a foot below," he sets forth that

"The porter lads with vigor ran;
The whistle shrieked aloud;
Sir Wilfrid was in ecstasies,
And so were all the crowd.

"And still we shrieked, and still we ran;
Throughout the livelong day;
Through loam and sand, through mire and mud,
Through stones and heavy clay."

The farmers in the vicinity of Blennerhasset watched the steam-plow with great interest, and many hired their plowing done by it. During the ten years of its operations it plowed 281 acres, grubbed 5173, harrowed 3751, and "stitched" 19, whatever that may be (I think it is making furrows for planting), besides doing considerable extraneous work, part of which was boiling the water for the tea at one of the annual Blennerhasset festivals. The total earnings were \$23,335; but the machine was very expensive, the breakages and various mishaps almost innumerable, and so the result was a

net loss of \$4251 during the ten years; \$7550 were actually paid for breakages and repairs. According to the testimony of the man who had charge of it, they had always to "find out what *would* answer by first finding out what *would not* answer. It is necessary that some people should buy and use the early defective systems, or how could inventors and manufacturers have continued until a degree of perfection was attained?"

The steam-plow did not fail at Blennerhasset for lack of capital or enterprise. In 1866 the single-engine system was exchanged for the double one. When the new fourteen-horse-power machines arrived, trucks were run alongside the platform, steam was raised, and "Cain" and "Abel" unloaded themselves. These were the names by which the new engines were christened. It was Cain that had the honor of serving as a tea-kettle at the festival of 1869, "standing, gorgeously decorated," at the end of the banquet hall. He boiled sixty quarts of water in three minutes. The narrator of the occasion says, "Though this work seemed beneath the dignity of majestic Cain, yet it proved very useful, as it obviated the great inconvenience of bearing hot water from the farmhouse, as was done last year in very bad weather." The "majestic Cain" even condescended also to grind up old bones for manure! But the really great never lose their dignity. I have known a great star of the Italian opera to perform his most difficult passages in a small drawing-room to please a few friends, playing his own accompaniment, and that on a very indifferent piano—a piano which, the day before, so tortured the exquisite nerves of a pretentious pianist that he flew away from it at the first touch, much to the mortification of his hostess. The vision of the steam giant Cain majestically marching over a huge field, turning up seven grand furrows at once, and the next day meekly serving as a tea-kettle for a company of vegetarian convivals, could but suggest the comparison.

Yes, the Blennerhasset co-operators were vegetarians, or tried to be, perhaps in order to please Mr. Lawson, who was a convert to the principles of that school of reformers—to the most rigid sect of that school, indeed, for he not only rejected milk and its products, but even eggs, sugar, pepper, and salt. Accordingly, and to show his neighbors "what a variety of excellent food could be provided at small cost," he got up a vegetarian dinner at Christmas of 1866. And such a dinner! It had the honor to be satirized by *Punch*. Oatmeal, barley, shelled oats, beans, flax-seed, turnips, and carrots were some of the articles of the *menu*. Mr. Lawson wanted to give a "truly national meal," in which every thing should be of

British growth, and the whole dinner to cost three-fourths of a penny or one penny a head. It would have been very fine, only every thing was spoiled by the cooking. The master of the ceremonies says, "The wheat and apples, a very nice dish when properly cooked, was that day simply disgusting, and the only presentable dishes were potatoes and pease pudding." Apparently he is not so good a vegetarian as Mr. Lawson, for he confesses to "saltless porridge proving quite irredeemable by any amount of apple seasoning." Boiled barley and apples, "after thirty hours' steeping" (*sic*), "potatoes boiled and mashed with meal, and vegetable soups thickened with flour," ought to have "thrilled on the nerves of taste;" but then modern tastes are so depraved that these things didn't thrill worth a cent, possibly because "the wheat and the barley, and perhaps the oats, were oversteeped, and had turned sour." At all events, the pigs the next day refused the remains of the Blennerhasset banquet. The army of visitors would have starved but for the neighbors, the hotels, and possibly the chicken coops! "For miles around, the farm and cotters' houses were cleared of every thing eatable."

The next year Blennerhasset attempted to profit by its former experience, and did somewhat better; but the people also profited by their experience. They laid in a day's stock of provisions before starting! What must have been peculiarly exasperating about these vegetarian banquets was that they were preceded by long disquisitions by learned professors of diet, setting forth the advantages of "simple food," "natural food," their palatableness and deliciousness to the undepraved taste. Of course every one wished to prove that his tastes were undepraved; but when he sat down to a cold, saltless, pepperless, sugarless "hygienic" meal, he thought of the flesh-pots of Egypt, and his devotion to "purity" and "principle" grew cold and savorless, like the food before him. The *Mark Lane Express* had in its columns about this time the following squib: "And there, too, lies Blennerhasset, the Sebastopol of the vegetarians, where the engines Cain and Abel groan on their miry way, where a professor is ever composing manures, and where Christmas is kept with apples and biscuits, potatoes and oil-cake sauce."

One would think that such festivals would not prove a very signal success, and yet thousands flocked to them from all parts of Cumberland County, and even from places much more distant. It seems that the co-operators of Blennerhasset were an attractive people, despite their "oversteeped" barley and potatoes. So great was the rush that in 1868 tickets were issued, and even then, as early as December 3, notices had to

be published that no more need apply for them, 2664 having already been applied for. Among the attractions were illustrated lectures upon gymnastics, phrenology, physiology; music, vocal and instrumental; also dancing, and the performances of Cain and Abel. The bill of fare this year had undergone decided changes. Besides the soup and rice pudding furnished free to all who desired them, bread, biscuits, buns, cheese, sandwiches, oranges, beef and ham, lemonade, ginger-beer, and soda-water were served at cost. The festivities closed with a brief lecture upon some moral subject, and then the lighting of the Bengal-light in the clock tower was the signal for dismissal.

A word more must be devoted to Cain and Abel. It was confidently hoped that the new engines would prove every way more satisfactory, and no doubt they did; but the chapter of accidents never closed. Cain's boiler soon began to leak so badly that operations were frequently stopped because the waterman could not supply him with water. It cost about \$350 to repair his interior. Most of the accidents happened to Cain. It seemed as if the mark of his namesake had fallen upon him. Soon after the advent of these monsters, while working at Flimby, twelve miles from home, Cain's "traveling clutch" broke, and he was unable to travel. Abel had to drag him home. Cain also "mired in a gutter," and was not extricated until after a struggle of four days. Still the engines were every where in demand, near and far, and they established such a good reputation from the fact that they behaved so much better away from home, that they had more work than they could do. The gangs of workmen that followed the steam-plow found great difficulty in getting lodgings; for when there was no house-room they had to sleep in barns, often with a swarm of rats for company. To meet this condition the engineer proposed building a traveling lodging-house, and the project was handed to the clerk of the Blennerhasset Parliament for discussion; but Mr. Lawson at the same meeting sent in the resolution "that we offer the steam-tackle for sale." This fairly eclipsed the interest in the lodging-house scheme. The people clung to their steam-plows, feeling that to part with these was to renounce their chief distinction as model farmers. When the resolution was put to vote, every hand was as silent as if of marble. The contrary mind being then asked, every hand leaped up like a jack-in-the-box, and the result being announced, there were loud cheers from the "enthusiastic multitude." The discussion seemed to have a good effect, for extraordinary effort was made to make the steam-plow pay, and the ensuing year its balance-sheet shows a clear gain of over \$1310. The lodging-house

was then built, and proved most excellent and useful; for no matter where the model farmers were benighted, they had their steam-plow home, and could sleep and rest in comfort and security. The people were justly proud of their steam-horses, Cain and Abel, and evidently talked of them as if sentient beings. They were very thirsty animals, and it was quite a task to supply their capacious maws with water; but they consumed only thirty-nine hundred-weight of coal in traveling all day, twenty-seven miles, over the worst roads; twelve and a half pounds converted a cubic foot of water into steam.

In 1872 the Blennerhasset model farming ended. It had proved a grand culture to the people; and though, as a whole, it was a pecuniary loss, Mr. Lawson made no complaints. He confesses to lack of knowledge for the purpose, and bad management. He does not allude to the *Familistère* at Guise, M. Godin's magnificent enterprise for improving the material and moral condition of his workmen. In all his travels he has probably never visited it. Had he done so, he could hardly have failed to have profited by it in his co-operative scheme at Blennerhasset. By studying M. Godin's *Solutions Sociales*, he would have obtained the key to the only method for organizing the domestic and industrial lives of the people; but he fell into the error of supposing that with a large quantity of land, a farm-house, and a lot of isolated cots, with plenty of money and improved machinery, a constant supply of work, the best teacher available for the education of the children, and with a free library and reading-room, success ought to be secured—that the co-operative machinery ought, in fact, to run itself, though the industrial head should most of the time disport itself at the antipodes. Once when Mr. Lawson happened to be at Blennerhasset during an afternoon, he says that he "called together a lot of laborers and read the whole of *Macbeth* to them at a sitting. They all went to sleep except one. I also read to them occasionally from *Talpa*, or *the Chronicles of a Clay Farm*, and sometimes from the *Co-operator*. My hearers listened as long as they could!" This one naively related incident speaks volumes for the incapacity of Mr. Lawson to understand the needs of hard-working, uncultured people, and the way to commence supplying those needs. However, Mr. Lawson is still a young man, and certainly a noble and good one; and the love of his fellow-men once lighted like a sacred fire upon the altars of his heart, no failure or disappointment will be likely to extinguish it. Through his faith he will profit by his losses, and a grander and more wisely organized enterprise for the people's good will yet rise out of the ruins of Blennerhasset.