AGRICULTURAL DEPRESSION.

THE LATEST RADICAL TRICK.

LETTER FROM MR. BALFOUR.

The Separatist Press are endeavouring to create the impression that the present Government deceived the farming interest when, on August 16 last, it refused to accept Mr. Price's motion in favour of an Autumn Session, so as to deal with the agricultural depression.

Now, as an agricultural paper, we protest against this attitude.

Let us explain. For three years the Separatists were in office without tackling the question. So late only as last year, Unionists made no less than two attempts to get them to deal with it; while early in the present year (February 8) Mr. Jeffreys moved an amendment to the Address with the same object in view. On each occasion the Unionists were out-voted.

Separatists, therefore, of all persons in the world, should be the last to complain, seeing that they themselves when in office absolutely refused to deal with the subject.

Directly, however, the Unionists get into power, Separatists turn right about face. A sudden proceeding of this sort is, to say the least, likely, in the minds of all thoughtful people, to raise a doubt as to the bona fides of the party adopting it. Accordingly, they put up Mr. Price—a carpet-bag member for an East Anglian agricultural constituency, and one who probably does not know mangolds from beetroot, or a swede from a turnip—to argue in favour of an Autumn Session.

Now, Separatists (again of all persons in the world) should know that their great leader, Mr. Gladstone, long ago laid down the doctrine that such leisure as a recess affords is not only desirable but really necessary to enable responsible Ministers to approach Parliament with such carefully-prepared measures as the times may require. And yet Mr. Price and his friends are unwilling to admit anything of this sort! They themselves had two or three long Recesses, during which they drew up not a single Bill to relieve the depression; but they expected the Unionists, before they had been in office a fortnight, to bring forward cut-and-dried proposals to solve the whole problem.

Of course all this is appreciated at its just value by the bulk of the agricultural interest; but the persistence with which the deception we speak of is being spread abroad in the rural parts needs constant checking by those (among whom we number ourselves) who desire that the rural electorate shall not again be led astray by the party of Newcastle, and such like programmes—the party which could always find time to do so much for Irish farmers, but none at all for British.

But there is another aspect of the case, which Mr. Balfour in a letter to us makes clear. If the Separatists had succeeded in carrying Mr. Price's motion, the Unionist Government would have had to resign, though the farming interest would have had no sure guarantee that in case of a Separatist Government returning to power the depression would then be dealt with. We say that the farming interest would have had no "sure guarantee," because, on more than one occasion, the Separatists have come into office on one policy, and when there have thrown that policy away immediately for some other policy.

That the rural electorate is, by political agents and in other ways, being sedulously deceived over this "Autumn Session" business, we have no doubt. Many persons in the rural districts have written us on the subject, and their communications show the fact clearly enough. This we informed the Leader of the House, who has very kindly sent the Editor the following reply:—

"Whittingehame, Prestonkirk, N.B.

"Dear Sir,—I am obliged to you for your letter on the subject of Mr. Price's motion on agricultural distress.

"Had the persons you refer to been more familiar with Parliamentary procedure they would have realised that if Mr. Price's motion had been carried, its only effect would have been to turn out the present Government—who are pledged to do all that is possible to relieve agricultural distress—and to replace them by the Party who, during three years of office, have, so far as I know, done nothing for agriculture, and whose leader in the House of Commons declared that he regarded with satisfaction the present low prices of agricultural produce.

I remain, yours faithfully,

"ARTHUR JAMES BALFOUR."

We hope Mr. Balfour's letter and our own observations may do something to show rural electors that while we had nothing from the Separatist Party we ought at least to be honest with the Unionist Party, and so give them time in which to consider carefully such proposals as may be calculated to lighten the well nigh intolerable burdens of both owner and cultivator of the soil.—"The Rural World."

BUDLEIGH SALTERTON URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Mr. W. Theobald presided at the monthly meeting. A letter was read from the Local Government Board relative to the alterations of the electoral divisions, and informing the Council that an inquiry on the subject would be held at Exmouth. A letter was also read from Mr. W. F. Sanders, of Salterton, stating that he had now fulfilled the wishes of the Council, and had provided an effective flushing apparatus, and that the same was in good working order. Upon Dr. Kempe being consulted on the question, he contended that the requirements of the Public Health Act had not, in his opinion, been complied with, and it was eventually decided that Dr. Kempe's suggestion to bring up a report for the opinion of the Local Government Board should be acted upon. The Clerk read a letter from Mr. W. Lawrence, of Sidwell Barton, who complained that the water in connexion with the Kersbrook reservoir was ponded back at the mill pond, and that the overflow caused damage to his meadows, for which, unless remedied, he must seek compensation. The Surveyor was instructed to see to the actual alteration of the level, and to report thereon to the Chairman. Dr. Kempe reported that the returns from the parochial Medical-officers were moderate during the month. He had inspected Jersey Cottages, and found at the back a bad smell, owing to a surface drain from the cottages discharging through the hedge. It would be necessary to continue the drain to the bottom of the gardens, and form a proper cesspit to receive the drainage. The Surveyor was instructed to serve notices on the owners of this property requiring them to carry out the necessary work and to abate the nuisance forthwith. The Finance Committee reported that the rate made in April last was now collected, the amount being £571 9s 7d district rate and £134 1s 7d water rate, which had been paid to the Treasurer. The list of irrecoverable arrears amounted to about £31. The Committee reported that bills amounting to £60 4s 8d had been examined and ordered to be paid, with salaries due Michaelmas amounting to £39. An order from the Public Works Loan Board for the repayment of loan and interest, amounting to £274 17s, being six months' principle and interest due October 11, was ordered to be paid. The seal of the Council was affixed to a general district rate at 1s 2d in the £ on houses and 3½d in the £ on land. Mr. Kempson moved that the time for holding the Council's meetings be at 2.30 p.m. during the months of October to May, inclusive. He explained that, in his opinion, it was most desirable, in the interest of the ratepayers, that their Medical-officer of Health should be present as often as possible at their meetings. The Council were a Board of Health, and responsible for the welfare of the town from a sanitary point of view. Questions were constantly arising answers to which could only be given in a satisfactory manner by Dr. Kempe, and they could hardly, in fairness, expect him to attend at the present hour, which meant returning to Exeter after 8 or 8.30 p.m. He had no personal views in the matter whatever, and his object in bringing the subject forward was to facilitate the Council's business. Mr. Burch seconded. An amendment was moved by Mr. Williams, who thought that the case might be met by power being given to the Sanitary Committee to receive Dr. Kempe's reports, instead of the whole Council, and he gave notice that at the next meeting he would bring forward a motion which, he hoped, would, in a measure, remedy the inconvenience complained of. The amendment was carried. The Chairman, Dr. Walker, Mr. Williams, and Mr. Kempson, who were deputed as a Sub-Committee to revise the standing orders, brought up their report, and, after each rule had been carefully read and discussed, the Chairman moved that the standing orders as revised be adopted and printed, which was agreed to.

Cadbury's Cocoa is absolutely pure. *The Medical Annual* **says the name "Cadbury" is a guarantee of purity.**

OPENING OF A DRILL HALL AT SIDMOUTH.

Mainly owing to the initiatory exertions of Captain Orchard, the members of the B Company (Sidmouth) 3rd V.B. Devon Regiment have been provided with an excellent Drill Hall, the building also comprising other accessories, such as an armoury, Committee-room, a spacious reading-room, and such-like. It has been erected by Messrs. Tucker and Sons, of Sidmouth, at the east end of the Esplanade, and Mr. James Jerman, of Exeter, very kindly gave his services as architect. The front of the new Hall is in the Italian Renaissance style. It is built of the best pressed bricks, and as a sample of good workmanship it has been admired by all experts in the trade. It has box ground Bath stone dressings, and has curved oriel and bay windows, glazed with plate glass. In a pedimented gable is placed a large clock, supplied by Mr. R. Passmore, of Sidmouth, and this will prove a very useful addition to those using the sea walk.

The opening ceremony took place on Tuesday. It rained nearly all the morning, but during the afternoon there were finer intervals. Outside the new Hall fir trees had been planted, flags suspended, and the Coastguards had gaily decked their flagstaff with bunting. Even the beach at the end of the Esplanade had been swept and garnished, and it is hoped this spot will no longer be a tipping place for a good deal of the refuse of the town.

The B Company paraded at 4 o'clock at the old Drill Hall under the command of Captain Orchard. There were also present on parade Lieutenant Vallance, Lieutenant Potbury, Sergt.-Instructor Doyle, Quartermaster-Sergeant Dare, Sergeants Purchase, Salter, Churchill, Stoneman, 2 buglers, 72 rank-and-file; total, 81. Headed by the band under Sergeant Purchase, the Company marched along the Esplanade and returned to the front of the new Drill Hall.

Captain Orchard said they were assembled to open and celebrate the opening of a beautiful and useful building, and to dedicate it to the service of their beloved Queen and country. Mrs. Kennet-Were, who had so often demonstrated her zeal for their cause, had been requested to perform the opening ceremony. In asking her to declare the Hall open he had much pleasure in requesting Mrs. Kennet-Were to accept from the Company a key of solid gold, as a memento of the auspicious occasion, and as a token of the Volunteers' appreciation of her unfailing kindness. They trusted Mrs. Kennet-Were and her husband would long be spared to appreciate the kind feelings of the Company towards them. (Applause.) The key bore the inscription: "Presented to Mrs. Kennet-Were by B Company 3rd V.B.D.R., on the opening by her of their new Drill Hall. October 15th, 1895." (Applause.)

Mrs. Kennet-Were then unlocked the main door of the building, and said: "I declare the Hall open, and I hope it will prove of great service to the Sidmouth Volunteers." (Applause.)

The Volunteers then fired a feu de joie, following this by giving a general salute, the band playing the National Anthem. Cheers having been given for the Queen, the men were then marched into the Drill Hall.

Captain Orchard wished, in the first words publicly spoken in that room, to thank those patrons and subscribers who had kindly come to his assistance and provided funds to the erection of the building. He called for cheers for the donors, which were heartily given, as were also cheers for Mr. Redford, Mrs. Kennet-Were, the architect, and the builders. Reference was also made to those who had assisted in raising funds for the Hall.

Colonel Sir John Kennaway, M.P., expressed his pleasure at being present that day to assist in the opening of so splendid a Hall. When he witnessed the foundation-stone laying he had no idea they contemplated erecting such an excellent building, and he was proud, as commanding the 3rd Devon Volunteer Battalion, that Sidmouth had set such a good example to the other Companies. The Hall must prove of the greatest benefit to the B Company, both from the point of view of drill as well as of discipline. He trusted the Company would soon reach its full strength, and that the advantages which they now enjoyed would be the means of benefitting not only the Volunteers, but also the town. The hon. Baronet then presented Mr. Jerman with a pair of silver candlesticks on behalf of the Company. He was sure Mr. Jerman would receive them in the spirit in which they were given. Mr. Jerman was deserving every thanks for his kindness. (Applause.) Lieutenant Vallance, on behalf of the Company, then presented Captain Orchard with a silver cup as an acknowledgment of the great services he had rendered the Volunteers, and especially B Company. The cup was won by the Company some years ago for efficiency at drill, and was presented by Colonel Troyte.

Captain Orchard said they were aware the building was to be used as a Drill Hall, and he was now going to ask Mrs. Kennet-Were to kindly take the first drill.

Mrs. Kennet-Were then called the Company to attention, numbered them off, told the men off into sections, followed by the commands fours—right, fours—left, front, stand at ease. Mrs. Kennet-Were gave the commands in good style. When she had concluded the task of "proving the Company" she was loudly cheered.

THE DINNER.

took place in the new Drill Hall, when about 180 persons sat down. Mr Skinner, of the Anchor Inn, catered in a highly satisfactory manner. Captain Orchard occupied the chair, and there were also present Lieutenant Vallance, Lieutenant Potbury, Messrs F H H Orchard, W Orchard, J Jerman, Passmore, J A Bellamy, Chief-officer Ridge, Messrs W Holden, L Lake, W Farrant, T Sisterton, J G Coulson, E E Tucker, J Hayes, J Russell, H Russell, W Baylis, J Opie, J Weeks, J Prince, F Gliddon, A J Slade, A Snell, F Williams, G Yelverton, S Daniels, &c.

Royalty having been honoured,

The toast of "The Navy, Army, and Reserve Forces" was given by the Chairman and received with musical honours.

Chief-officer Ridge, of the Coastguard Service, in response, said they might be all proud of the Navy, and, with Lord Salisbury at the head of the Government, there was no fear of the Navy deteriorating. The same remark applied to the Army with Lord Wolseley to the fore, and, with Colonel Sir John Kennaway and Captain Orchard connected with the Volunteers, there was no fear of a foreign foe coming to Sidmouth to spoil the front of their handsome Drill Hall. (Laughter and applause.)

Mr. F. H. H. Orchard submitted the toast of "Colonel Sir John Kennaway and the staff of the 3rd V.B.D.R." (Applause.) It had been a great pleasure to him to come there that day and see the Hall opened. The 3rd V.B.D.R. had been blest for a long time with good officers. One could not forget their recent Colonel—Colonel Troyte, one of the smartest Volunteer Commanders they had in England. (Applause.) He had no doubt the Yeomanry were proud to have him as their Commanding-officer. The gentleman they now had at the head of the Battalion—Colonel Sir John Kennaway—was, during the service of their late Colonel, a very active Major, and one whom they thoroughly respected. That respect, he had no doubt, they also entertained for the other staff officers of the Battalion. He should not be doing justice to the toast if he did not refer to their Sergeant-Instructor Doyle, whom they thoroughly appreciated for the services he rendered to the Company. (Applause.)

Quartermaster-Sergeant Dare briefly replied.

Lieutenant Vallance proposed "The Sister Battalions." All of them who had been in camp appreciated the way in which the sister Battalions treated them. Whether at Aldershot, Plymouth, or Dartmoor, it had always been "Hail, fellow, well met," from all the other Battalions they had come in contact with. (Applause.) He was pleased to see they had several members of the Yeomanry present, and hoped it would not be the last time they would dine together. (Applause.)

Sergeant Hayman, of the Royal 1st Devon, having responded to the toast,

Captain Orchard proposed "The healths of our donors and subscribers." (Applause.) He remarked that without their help the Company would not have been there that evening. Three years ago the Company was something like £130 in debt, and probably some of them knew there was a little upset, owing to their banking account being stopped. It was then thought B Company was going to the ground. The lord of the manor, who had kindly lent them the use of his room for many years, required it for other purposes, and they were practically houseless and homeless. When he saw the Company taking their things out of the old street and clearing off to Colour-Sergeant Skinner's, because they had no other place for the moment to put their goods in, he made the resolve that before he resigned from the Company there should be a Drill Hall. (Applause.) They were told that "Necessity is the mother of invention." He must say necessity was a very hard rider and wore very sharp spurs; but he was proud to know that that day they had reached the winning-post and had a home. (Hear, hear, and applause.) They could not have got this home without the help of their donors. To begin with, they had a debt of £120 to get rid of. He made an appeal to the public of Sidmouth, and that £120 was wiped off. (Applause.) They need not fear that the Company funds would be in any way involved by this new venture. He kept the accounts entirely separate. The funds of the Company, he was happy to say, at the present moment were entirely balanced, and they could pay every shilling they owed and still have a small amount in hand. (Applause.) He wished to explain that the present debt on the Hall rested on his shoulders, but he hoped in time the public of Sidmouth would relieve him of that responsibility. If not, he had every confidence the men of B Company would do their best to wipe it off. (Applause.) Something like £400 had been given by the inhabitants of the town, either by donations or subscriptions, or from the proceeds of that magnificent bazaar which was organised by Mrs. Kennet-Were. (Applause.) During the last three years the public of Sidmouth had contributed to that Company something like £600 or £700. That showed them there were hearts and purses open to an appeal from them. (Applause.) It behoved them to keep up the credit of the Company as some slight return for the great kindness which had been extended to them. (Applause.)

Mr. Jerman submitted the toast "Success to B Company." Inseparable from the toast was the name of Captain Orchard, whom they must admit was the life and soul of the Company. (Applause.) In Exeter they talked about a Drill Hall for years, but in Sidmouth Captain Orchard had, in a few months, got them that magnificent hall. The toast was most enthusiastically received.

In reply, Captain Orchard said in the whole course of his life he never remembered a day on which he felt happier.

Lieutenant Potbury proposed "The health of the Architect," and after Mr. Jerman had responded, Captain Orchard gave "The Builders," coupled with the name of Sergeant E. Tucker. Mr. Churchill and Sergeant Purchase also responded.

"The Non-commissioned Officers and Men of the B Company" was given by Lieutenant Vallance, Sergeant-Instructor Doyle replying.

Private Orman proposed "The health of Captain Orchard." (Applause.) They owed a deep debt of gratitude to their commanding officer, inasmuch as he was always to the fore, and they should now back him up to the utmost, so that the debt on the building might be soon cleared off. (Applause.) Captain Orchard replied, and gave "The Honorary Members," feelingly alluding to the serious illness of one of their best supporters—Mr. Chris. Coulson; and asked the company, in consequence, to drink the toast in silence.

The toast of "The Ladies" was given by Mr. J. P. Miller, and they found a champion in Corporal Lake. Lieutenant Potbury proposed "The Visitors," and Mr. W. Orchard replied. "The Press" was submitted by Captain Orchard, and acknowledged by Mr. W. G. W. Watson of "The Devon and Exeter Daily Gazette." "The health of the Caterer, Colour-Sergeant Skinner," concluded the toast list. During the evening several songs were sung, Miss Orchard, daughter of the commanding officer, kindly attending and contributing two items in a most pleasing manner. Mr. H. Russell presided at the pianoforte.

FORESTRY IN THE EXETER DISTRICT.

Bro. F. S. Crouch, D.C.R., presided at the 72nd half-yearly meeting of the delegates from Courts in the Exeter District (Ancient Order of Foresters), held at the London and South-Western Hotel, Exeter, on Wednesday, when there were present Bros. W Moore (Babbacombe), D.S.C.R.; W H Webber, Auditor; W S Ellis and C Edwards, Trustees; A Fraser, Scrutineer; J K Edwards, Treasurer; E Bartlett, D.S., and 32 delegates from the several Courts (two being unrepresented). The scrutineers presented a satisfactory report, stating that the Court returns had been correctly made out. During the half-year 130 members had been initiated, bringing the total number of members to 4,539. The Auditors reported the worth of the District Funds to be £3,406 8s 9d, and Court Funds £36,798 12s 9d, while the sum of £420 had been paid out in funeral benefits. The D.C.R. and Secretary presented an interesting report of the H.C.M. recently held at Brighton, which they attended as delegates. Special attention was drawn to alterations in the general laws of the Order, especially to the rule by which contributions of members initiated after December 31 next must be in accordance with the tables published in the General Laws. The Chief Ranger addressed the meeting on the several questions reported on, and the delegates were heartily thanked for their attendance at, and report of, the H.C.M. The levy to the Funeral Fund was fixed at 1s 6d per member. Sums of four guineas were voted from the Subsidiary Benefit Fund to the Devon and Exeter Hospital, and two guineas to the Exeter Eye Infirmary. On an appeal from Court "Exe Vale," Tiverton, £5 from the same Fund was granted to the widow of the late Bro. James Harris, a member of the Court. The meeting was made special for the purpose of altering the District rules respecting the entrance fees and levies of members of Female Courts, and a wish was expressed that more of the latter might be formed in the district. Messrs. Abbot Bros., of Sheffield, were appointed valuers for the quinquennial valuation of Courts in the District, to December next. Bro. Moore, the D.S.C.R., was unanimously elected to the District Chief Ranger's chair, and Bro. J. W. Holman (Lynton) to the Sub-Chief Ranger's chair, each being installed into their offices with applause, and they thanked the delegates for the confidence reposed in them. The retiring Chief Ranger was heartily thanked for his conduct in the chair, and was invested with the P.D.C.R. ribbon and certificate and other honours, for which he suitably responded. Bros. Webber and Cudmore (Auditors), and Fraser and Small (Scrutineers), together with the Arbitration Committee and Final Arbitrators, were re-elected. The delegates dined together on the premises, the catering of Mr. Roberts being all that could be desired.

TIVERTON BOROUGH QUARTER SESSIONS.

These Sessions were held on Wednesday before Mr. McKellar (Deputy Recorder), who was accompanied on the Bench by the Mayor (Mr. F. A. Payne), Messrs. E. M. Winton, G. Hall, R. F. Loosemore, J. F. Ellerton, and J. Barnes.

CHARGE OF STEALING BULLOCKS.

The Grand Jury returned a true bill in the case of Henry Doble, farm labourer, of Gold-street, Tiverton, who was charged with having, on the 9th September, stolen two bullocks, valued at £30, the property of Mr. William Glendinning, of Poolanthony Farm; also with receiving the same knowing them to have been stolen. Mr. Pridham Wippell prosecuted, and Mr. W. T. Watkins defended. Mr. Glendinning said on Sunday, the 8th September, he had nine bullocks in a field called Branscombe. On the Wednesday he found that two of them were missing. He found them at Burn Farm, Bickleigh, in the occupation of Mr. Bond, and had them taken home. George Garnsworthy, a lad in the employ of Mr. Glendinning, spoke to feeding the bullocks in the field on the morning of the 9th. Frank Coleman, labourer, of Butterleigh, spoke to seeing prisoner driving a couple of bullocks away from Tiverton, and in the direction of Burrough Corner, on the evening of September 9. He said he was going to Hayne-beer with them, but he did not turn down there. He afterwards said he was going to Mr. Bond's, at Burn Farm, with them. In reply to a remark from witness that the animals looked tired, prisoner said, "Yes, they ought to be tired; they have been walking ever since this morning." Mr. E. Bond, cattle dealer and farmer, of Burn Farm, Bickleigh, spoke to prisoner bringing two bullocks to his farm about 8 o'clock on the evening of September 9. He said Mr. Nicholls, of Way Farm, near Cadeleigh, sent him, and wanted £20 for them. Witness told the man to call in the morning, and in the meantime gave him a letter to take to Mrs. Nicholls, asking her if it was all right, and saying if so he would send on a cheque. The next day prisoner came again, and witness asked him why he had not brought anything from Mrs. Nicholls, and he said it was unnecessary, as he was a relative. The following day witness went to Mrs. Nicholls, and, in consequence of what she said, he gave information to the police. P.C. Richards, of Bickleigh, proved arresting prisoner, who confessed guilt. P.S. Perry, of Tiverton, said when he got the prisoner to the railway station he pointed over Exeter-hill, and said that was where he found the bullocks. Elizabeth Mary Nicholls, of Wear Farm, Cheriton Fitzpaine, said prisoner was no relation to her, and she had never commissioned him to do any business for her. This was the case for the prosecution, and Mr. Watkins addressed the jury at length for the defence. Mr. T. A. Beck, farmer, of Tiverton, for whom prisoner worked, gave him an excellent character. He was perfectly honest, but when he was in drink he was a fool. The Deputy Recorder having summed up, the jury found the prisoner guilty, and he was sentenced to three months' hard labour.

The Board of Trade journal states that in most of the important industries the state of the labour market has continued to improve during September, and the percentage of unemployed in Unions making returns is the lowest since 1891.

DEVON MICHAELMAS QUARTER SESSIONS.

The Devon Michaelmas Quarter Sessions were commenced on Tuesday, at the Castle of Exeter. Sir John B. Phear presided. There were also on the Bench Lord Clinton, the Earl of Drogheda, Sir R. Newman, Bart., Colonel Lucas, Colonel Arnold, Major Winterscale, Major Davie, Commander Doxat, the Rev. W. D. Pitman, the Rev. G. M. L. Reade, Messrs. J. C. Moore-Stevens, W. Halliday Halliday, R. H. Watson, J. Oag, R. Ley, J. Verney, J. H. Ley, M. Farrant, W. Snell, A. O. Sillifant, D. J. C. Bush, C. J. Webber, Captain G. M. Conran, and other Justices.

The Grand Jury having been sworn and briefly addressed, Lord Clinton and Mr. Halliday were elected Chairmen, and his Honour Judge Edge was elected a Chairman in the place of Sir John Phear, who wished to retire, and who was thanked for his past services.

The following were sworn in as new Justices for the county:—Colonel J. A. J. Briggs, Colonel B. W. Blake, Major S. Hannington Gardner, Messrs. C. R. Sydenham Carew, J. M. McWilliam, R. F. G. Johnson, W. S. Perry, T. Rew, W. F. Thompson, S. Hammick, and G. Lambert, M.P.

TRIALS OF PRISONERS.

ALLEGED THEFT OF A COAT AT AXMINSTER.

Samuel Leaman, 53, labourer, was indicted for feloniously stealing an overcoat, the property of Henry Rowden, at Axminster, on July 7, 1895. Mr. Slade prosecuted. Rowden is a porter at Axminster Railway Station. On the day named he left the overcoat hung up in the porters' room, which was left unlocked. The following day the coat was missing. The prisoner left the coat at the Red Lion Hotel, Axminster, on 7th July. He was arrested by P.S. Stentiford. Leaman admitted going to the porters' room and taking the coat. He did not intend to steal it. Before he had a chance to return the article the police arrested him. He was a stranger to the town. The jury were absent from Court 20 minutes. On returning the prisoner was found guilty. Leaman: I am astounded at the verdict. He admitted a previous conviction, but remarked that he then played the wrong card and pleaded guilty. He was as honest as gold purified. (Laughter.) He wanted his freedom, and should not wish to be kept any longer in the "county cage." Sentenced to one month's imprisonment.

ATTEMPTED SUICIDE OF AN ARMY PENSIONER.

Thomas Perkins Baker, 51, an Army pensioner, of Bratton Clovelly, was charged with attempting to commit suicide at Okehampton Workhouse on 11th July, 1895. He pleaded guilty. Mr. Phillpotts prosecuted. Prisoner was in a destitute condition, and went to the Okehampton Workhouse. He was placed in the receiving ward. The Workhouse porter took him some dinner and a knife and fork. At 3 o'clock in the afternoon prisoner was found in the receiving ward on the floor with his throat badly cut. Dr. Burd said he had no reason to doubt the man's sanity. He was in a most destitute condition when admitted to the Workhouse. The prisoner was ordered to be taken back to the Okehampton Workhouse.

ASSAULT AT LITTLEHAM.

Thomas Lean, 20, labourer, pleaded guilty to assaulting Elizabeth Pratt, a child, at Littleham, on 23rd August. Mr. Kekewich prosecuted. Prisoner said he had been drinking. Sentenced to three months' hard labour.

ATTEMPTED SUICIDE BY A ST. MARYCHURCH CLERK.

Frederick Harris, 30, clerk, pleaded guilty to attempted suicide at St. Marychurch on the 7th September. Mr. P. Clarke prosecuted, and stated that the accused was found in a public lavatory with a deep gash in his throat, which he had inflicted with a razor. Dr. Watson, of the Torbay Hospital, said when the accused was admitted to the institution he was under the influence of drink. Prisoner's mother said she lived at Plymouth. She would take her son under her care if that course recommended itself. The Chairman said prisoner should be released at the rising of the Court.

A TORRINGTON BAKER SENT TO PRISON.

Henry Toogood, 61, baker, pleaded guilty to maliciously damaging a plate-glass window to the amount of £8, the property of Philip Stapleton, at Great Torrington, on 29th August. Mr. Pridham Wippell, who prosecuted, said the prisoner was in the employ of Mr. Stapleton, who discharged him for neglecting his duty. Next day he called at the shop and saw Mrs. Stapleton, from whom he demanded money. She told him to wait for the return of her husband, whereupon he threatened, with an oath, to damage the premises. He afterwards went out and smashed a large plate-glass. Prisoner told the Court that his temper got the better of him because of prosecutor's treatment to him. As the accused had been in prison since August, he was now sentenced to only 14 days' hard labour.

ASSAULTING A BARNSTAPLE GIRL.

Charles Smith, labourer, pleaded guilty to assaulting Catherine Knott, aged nine, at Barnstaple, on 12th October. Mr. Pridham Wippell prosecuted. Prisoner said he was very sorry. It all occurred owing to his being in liquor. Sentenced to six calendar months' imprisonment with hard labour.

THE STABBING CASE AT ILFRACOMBE.

William John Rumson (on bail) was indicted for unlawfully and maliciously wounding Samuel Williams, at Ilfracombe, on 13th July. Mr. Ward Coldridge prosecuted, and Mr. Hawke defended. Mr. Coldridge said four wounds were inflicted upon the prosecutor, two near the region of the heart and two in the back. Had it not been for the fact that Williams had considerable clothing on at the time, the charge might have been even graver than the one now preferred. Williams, a boatman, said that on the day in question he was passing the Victoria Hotel, where he saw in the road prisoner, his brother, and a man named Jones. The latter and prisoner's brother were quarrelling, and went to the Arcadia-road to fight. He followed them. A minute or two after the fight had been in progress, prisoner interfered, and struck Jones a blow. Prosecutor caught hold of prisoner, and said "One dog one bone." John Rumson then turned upon witness and struck him in the chest and back, and then walked away, witness following. Prisoner said "You had better finish; you have had enough." Prosecutor struck Rumson in the face. Prisoner put his hand into his pocket and pulled out what he took to be a knife. Prosecutor, becoming frightened, ran away. He soon felt faint, and on putting his hands into his trousers pockets found that he was saturated with blood. A portion of his clothing (produced) had been cut through, and the garments were greatly stained with blood. It was dark at the time, being about 10 o'clock. George Pyne, plumber, of Ilfracombe, proved seeing the prisoner strike Williams during the quarrel. There were about 50 persons present. Benjamin Jones, sailor, of Ilfracombe, also gave evidence as to the prisoner striking prosecutor. Dr. I. F. Gardiner, of Ilfracombe, deposed to examining the prosecutor. He found two wounds on the chest and two other incised wounds near the back. By Mr. Hawke: The wounds were superficial ones. It was possible that prosecutor would not have felt the incision. P.C. Pike, of Ilfracombe, deposed to arresting the prisoner, who, in reply to the charge, said the prosecutor struck him first. Mr. Hawke, in defence, pointed out that when arrested no knife was found upon the prisoner, nor was he seen to commit the offence alleged, which might have been the act of any person in a crowd such as assembled on this occasion. The jury found the prisoner guilty. The Chairman said the prisoner was fortunate in that the injuries inflicted by the knife were slight, owing, not to his want of intention, but to the thickness of the prosecutor's clothes. The use of the knife was un-English and cowardly, and was often attended with such dreadful consequences that such acts could not be lightly passed over. He would be sentenced to three months' hard labour. The prisoner: It is a very one-sided affair.

HOUSEBREAKING AT BROADWOOD-WIDGER.

George Kellaway, 24, soldier, was charged with breaking into the house of John Thomas Shopland, at Broadwoodwidger, on the 15th September. He pleaded guilty. Mr. Foote, for the prosecution, said the prisoner was formerly in the employ of the prosecutor, who is a farmer, and he took advantage of the absence of the family from home on a Sunday evening to forcibly enter the house, from which he carried off two postal orders of the value of 10s and 4s respectively. Next day prisoner changed the orders at Okehampton. Prisoner said he had been on the drink for a few days, else it would never have happened. It was the first time there had been anything against his character. Prisoner was sentenced to nine months' imprisonment with hard labour.

ASSAULT AT DODDISCOMBSLEIGH.

George Baker, 52, labourer, was indicted for assaulting Elizabeth Densham, at Doddiscombsleigh, on 8th June, 1895. Mr. Kekewich, who prosecuted, applied that the case should be remitted to the Assizes, on the ground that the prosecutrix was too ill to attend. Dr. Fenwick said the girl was suffering from acute rheumatism, and could not attend the Court for some time. The Court decided to remit the case to the forthcoming Assizes.

ATTEMPTED SUICIDE BY AN ILFRACOMBE POLICEMAN.

James Henry Hill, a police-constable, was indicted for attempting to commit suicide at Ilfracombe, on 18th September, 1895. He pleaded guilty. Mr. Pridham Wippell, who prosecuted, said prisoner was very much in love with a young lady at the Clifton Boarding House, at Ilfracombe. He was a policeman at the time, and had been refused permission to marry the girl. This circumstance appeared to have affected his mind. Prisoner's conduct as a constable was not altogether satisfactory. On the 17th September prisoner went on duty at 9 o'clock in the evening and should have remained on duty until 6 o'clock the following morning. In the police station was a dormitory, where two constables slept by night. At 2.30 on the morning of the 18th the prisoner walked into the dormitory and said, "See what I have done." He held a razor in his hand, and there were marks of blood on his throat. Hill appeared to have gone off his head because he could not marry the girl, and said he would do away with himself if the girl did not marry him. The medical man who was called in found that the prisoner had made a small cut across his throat. Hill said he was sorry for what had happened. He was troubled a great deal about the young lady, and took to drinking spirits. He would never drink intoxicants again. His parents, and also the young lady, were present in Court, and he wished the Court to see his testimonials. The Chairman said prisoner had been guilty of a very foolish act. They trusted it would be a caution to him. He would be released at the rising of the Court.

NO BILLS.

The Grand Jury returned "No bills" in the case of William Ham, on bail, indicted for false pretences at Ivybridge; William Hooper, labourer, on bail, for a similar charge at Bridestowe, on 25th August; Henry Tancock, on bail, for a felony at East Worlington, on 28th July.

SECOND COURT.

The Magistrates at the Second Court were Mr. W. H. Halliday (in the chair), Major Davie, and Major Winterscale.

DEVONSHIRE LICENSING CASES.

Clarke and Burgess *v.* the Justices of the Braunton Division.—Mr. H. E. Duke, who appeared for the appellants, owners of the New Inn, Swymbridge, said objection was made before the Justices to the renewal of the license on purely personal grounds. A new tenant had now been found, satisfactory to the police. He hoped Mr. Foote, who, with Mr. Pridham Wippell, appeared for the Justices, would make no objection to the renewal of the license of the house, which was over a hundred years old, and on the main road from Barnstaple to Southmolton. Mr. Roberts, solicitor, of Barnstaple, had given an undertaking that a new tenant should be ready at a reasonable time, and that Mr. William Henry Harris should be presented as an applicant for the transfer of the license. Mr. Foote said he agreed to this course. The license was granted.

Emmanuel Weeks *v.* the Plymouth Justices.—This was an appeal from the Justices' decision as to the license of the Golden Lion, Plymouth. Mr. H. E. Duke and Mr. P. H. Pridham Wippell for the appellant, and Mr. J. A. Foote and Mr. F. H. Bodilly for the respondents. Mr. Foote said the license had been a continuous one since 1869, and had been refused on the ground that the appellant could not produce satisfactory evidence of good character, and that he had been convicted in April of this year of keeping his house as a disorderly one. Detective-Inspector Dart said he had known the house for 20 years. It was in a difficult position to keep properly. The house had improved since Weeks, who had been a member of the police force, had been there. Mr. Sowerby, Chief-Constable of Plymouth, said the license had been transferred 12 or 13 times since 1870. There were 17 licensed houses within 300 yards of this house. Mr. Duke, for the appellant, urged that one conviction, without warning, and which the Justices did not consider of sufficient importance to endorse the license, was not sufficient to warrant the refusal of a license. Several witnesses were called as to the conduct of the house. The appeal was dismissed, and the decision of the Justices upheld.

William Henry Thomas *v.* the Justices of Plymouth.—This was another appeal from the decision of the Plymouth Justices, the appellant being the landlord of the Printers' Arms Beerhouse. Inspector Dart proved a conviction against Thomas for drunkenness. Mr. Duke, who, with Mr. Pridham Wippell, appeared for the owners of the house, said as the objection was purely personal the owners would undertake to find a new tenant. Mr. Foote, with Mr. Bodilly, for the respondents, concurred, and the case concluded on this understanding.

Sarah Perkins *v.* the Justices of Plymouth.—This was an appeal in respect of the Cromwell Inn. Mrs. Perkins had been fined for allowing the house to be the habitual resort of people of bad character. Mr. Foote and Mr. Bodilly were for the Justices, and Mr. Duke and Mr. P. Clarke for the appellant. Evidence was called, and the Court dismissed the appeal.

CRIMINAL BUSINESS.

THEFT OF FOWLS BY A COLEBROOKE LABOURER.

William Foaden, labourer of Colebrooke, was indicted for stealing, on August 19 last, six fowls, the property of John Corrin. Mr. Ward Coldridge prosecuted, and Mr. Roberts defended. Prosecutor lives at Colebrooke, near Crediton, and kept fowls in a field near to his house. On Monday, August 19, there were 32 fowls in the field, and on the Wednesday following, between 7 and 8 o'clock, eight or nine of them were missing. Mr. Salter, a dealer in poultry, lived in the neighbourhood, and on Thursday morning Mr. and Mrs. Corrin went to his place. They there saw some dead fowls, five of which they recognised as their property. The birds were a cross-breed, and they were identified by their colour, their legs, and by some white under their feet. Prosecutor and his wife also identified a live fowl. Prisoner's son delivered four of the fowls at Salter's on the Wednesday and two on the Thursday. Prosecutor and his wife gave evidence, the latter stating that she had never sold any live fowls to anybody, and had never had dealings with Mr. Salter. She killed her own poultry, and took it to Exeter Market. Samuel Foaden, son of the prisoner, said his father gave him some fowls on August 21 to take to Mr. Salter's. They were handed to him in a bag, and he did not see them. They were all alive. He took two more fowls in a basket on the following morning. Cross-examined: His father kept a lot of fowls of all sorts. His father told him before he gave him the bag that he was going to catch some fowls to send to Salter. Frequently his father sold fowls to Salter, and he kept birds similar to those alleged to have been stolen. Samuel Salter deposed to purchasing the fowls. He had been a poultry dealer for nine years, and had during that time bought birds from Foaden. P.C. Ball said Mrs. Corrin identified the fowls at Salter's in his presence. Mrs. Powlesland, of Cheriton Bishop, and William Wood, labourer, of Colebrooke, proved selling fowls to prisoner similar to those described. Prisoner was found guilty. There were previous convictions against him, and he was sent to prison for six weeks with hard labour.

SECOND DAY.

Sir John Phear, who presided, was accompanied on the Bench by Major Davie, Mr. R. H. Watson, and Mr. Sanders Stephens.

A SEAMAN'S WIFE IN TROUBLE.

Sarah Ellen Edgeworth, 24, married, and a dressmaker, was indicted for stealing a silver watch and chain, value £2, the property of Emma Brown, of Lulworth Cottages, St. Marychurch. Mr. E. Percival Clarke prosecuted. The prisoner, who pleaded not guilty, was undefended. Prosecutrix stated that the prisoner, who lodged at her house from June 7 to August 2 of this year, was lent a silver watch that she might see when it was time to go to work. Towards the end of July the watch was on a mantelpiece, but after the prisoner's departure it was missed. Sarah Drew, assistant to Mr. Lemon, pawnbroker, Torquay, said Edgeworth pawned the watch for 6s 6d. Prisoner stated that she bought the watch while in service, and that she would redeem it when she received some pay from her husband, who was a sailor. P.C. Gregory proved the recovery of the watch. Prisoner offered no defence, but pleaded for lenient punishment. A question arose as to whether the accused, when she pawned the watch, intended to redeem it and restore it to the owner, and the jury found her not guilty of stealing.

Prisoner was further indicted for obtaining, by false pretences, a pair of sheets, value 11s 6d, from Thomas Joyce, at Torquay, on July 31. Mr. John Joyce said Edgeworth came to his father's shop and asked to look at some sheets for her mother, who was seriously ill. She wanted them hemmed and washed ready for use. Prisoner took a pair of sheets for her mother's approval, promising to return them, or bring the money when on her way to work the next morning. Nothing further being heard, witness went to Lulworth Cottages, Plainmoor, but failed to discover the prisoner's mother. Replying to the Chairman, witness said he supplied the goods knowing that the prisoner worked for a respectable firm. The Chairman: I am afraid I must rule that there is no case to go to the jury. It is a simple case of credit, in which the shopkeeper has been very imprudent, and has been misled. Perhaps, however, it may be well to leave the matter to the jury. William Madge said the prisoner pawned the sheets with Mr. Wills, of Torquay, for 2s 3d in the name of "Brown." Mrs. Brown, of Lulworth Cottages, said the prisoner's mother was not ill at her house. P.C. Gregory deposed to arresting the accused at Broadhempston, where her mother, named Horwell, lived. After the warrant had been read to her, the prisoner remarked, "I was going back to Torquay to pay Mr. Joyce for them to-day. I got them sheets for a lady." The accused, in defence, said she did not ask for the sheets for her mother, but for a sick person, and she obtained them in her own name. The jury returned a verdict of guilty. Prisoner's mother said her daughter's husband, a seaman, had been abroad nearly three years. Want of money induced the accused to obtain the sheets and pawn them. A sentence of one calendar month's imprisonment with hard labour was passed.

THEFT OF LEAD AT DAWLISH.

William Searle, hawker, a native of Bishopsteignton, was indicted for stealing a lead tank, 120lb in weight, and valued at 10s, the property of Mr. E. H. Bayldon, of Oaklands, Dawlish. Mr. Rooth prosecuted. During the night of October 11 the tank was removed from a yard and dragged to a plantation, where a watch was kept by P.C. Webber for several hours. At 2 p.m. on the following day prisoner arrived with a barrow for the purpose of taking the lead away, and the policeman arrested him. The accused pleaded guilty, and admitted that at the Devon Quarter Sessions in April, 1888, he was sentenced to three months' imprisonment for stealing lead the property of Sir Lydston Newman. The Court now imposed a sentence of six calendar months' imprisonment with hard labour. Prisoner asked if his wife and five children would be supported while he was in gaol. Major Davie said that would be a matter for the Board of Guardians. The Chairman: We have nothing to do with that here.

COMPLIMENTS AND THANKS.

This concluded the business of the Sessions, and Sir John Phear discharged the petty jurors with thanks for their services. As that was probably the last occasion on which he should appear there in the capacity of Chairman of the Sessions, he also thanked all the officers of the Court for the zeal and ability with which they had discharged their duties, and particularly for the very efficient aid which he had received from them. The Clerk of the Peace (Mr. Michelmore) acknowledged the kind observations of Sir John Phear, expressed the regret of the officers at Sir John's resignation of the post of Chairman, and trusted that he would long be spared to help them.

ALLEGED PERSONATION IN MID-DEVON.

A FARMER COMMITTED FOR TRIAL.

At Newton Abbot Petty Sessions on Tuesday, before Mr. H. St. Maur (Chairman), Admiral Cornish-Bowden, Messrs. F. H. Plumptre, W. Vicary, and H. E. Brown, Richard Johnson, farmer, of Bellamarsh, Kingsteignton, was summoned for unlawfully and feloniously committing the offence of personation within the meaning of the Corrupt Practices Act, 1854 to 1883, in respect of a Parliamentary election for the Division of Mid-Devon, "in that having voted once at the said election he applied at the same election for a ballot paper in his name on July 23rd." Mr. J. Hutchings (Teignmouth) prosecuted, and Mr. T. W. Windeatt (Totnes) defended.

Mr. Hutchings said the prosecution was undertaken by the Returning-officer (Sir John Shelley). He had nothing whatever to do with politics, either on one side or the other. Their Worships not being able to deal with the case, he should ask them to send it for trial. On the day of the Parliamentary election in Mid-Devon the defendant appeared to have been on the register for two parishes, or voting places, in the Division. When he went to Bovey Tracey to vote the personation agent (Mr. Baker), in the presence of the Presiding-officer, asked him, "Are you the person whose name appears on the list of voters now in force for the parish of Bovey Tracey?" to which he replied "Yes." The defendant was further asked, "Have you already voted, either here or elsewhere, at the present election for Mid-Devon?" and a negative reply was given. The defendant was, therefore, clearly warned that he was to vote once only. These questions having been put to him, the defendant was given a ballot paper, which he took to the secret compartment, and afterwards placed it in the ballot box. That was between 12 and 1 o'clock. Between 3 and 4 o'clock the same day the defendant appeared at the Kingsteignton polling-station and voted again.

Henry Baker, of Bovey, said he was a personation agent at that place. On the date of the election the defendant appeared at the polling booth and applied for a voting paper. The usual questions were put to him, and in his replies he stated that he had not voted elsewhere. Defendant was then given a ballot paper, which he took to one of the desks and afterwards placed it in the box.

Mr. H. G. Michelmore, solicitor, stated that he was the Presiding-officer at Bovey. When the defendant presented himself at the Bovey polling-station he asked him if he had already voted elsewhere in the Division, and he replied "No." A ballot paper was then handed to the defendant, who, after visiting one of the booths, placed the paper in the ballot box. By Mr. Windeatt: Witness could not recollect if there was a star opposite the defendant's name in the list. Defendant was simply asked if he had voted elsewhere; he was not warned by anyone that he could not vote elsewhere. It was not a part of witness's duty to administer a caution.

John H. B. Rendle, baker, Kingsteignton, said he was a personation agent for Mr. Seale-Hayne at the polling-station in that village. About 3 o'clock in the afternoon the defendant visited the National Schoolroom. The Presiding-officer asked him his name and number and handed him a ballot paper, which the defendant subsequently placed in the ballot box.

That was the case for the prosecution.

Mr. Windeatt, for the defence, submitted that there was no case proved, and commented strongly upon the absence of the Presiding-officer at Kingsteignton, where the offence was alleged to have been committed, and also the absence of written proof of Mr. Michelmore's appointment as Presiding-officer at Bovey Tracey. Continuing, he asked who had moved the Sheriff. It was idle to talk of the Sheriff. He was moved by others. And he (Mr. Windeatt) regretted it, because it might lead to reprisals. He was afraid that this was not the first, second, or third case that would have to be brought in the same way. The defendant was a most respectable farmer, and not an active politician. He was sure any jury would say that if the defendant did vote more than once he did so perfectly innocently. The defendant had two voting cards sent by Mr. Seale-Hayne's own party saying that his polling-station was at the two places in question; therefore, it was idle to prosecute him. The different elections nowadays caused a great deal of confusion, and he contended very strongly that there was no evidence of wilful intent against the defendant.

The defendant pleaded not guilty, and he was committed to take his trial at the next Assizes. Mr. Hutchings did not oppose bail, which was granted, the defendant in £50 and one surety of £25.

ADVICE TO MOTHERS.—MRS. WINSLOW'S SOOTHING SYRUP FOR CHILDREN should always be used when children are cutting teeth; it relieves the little sufferer at once; it produces quiet, natural sleep by relieving the child from pain, and the little cherub awakes "as bright as a button." It is perfectly harmless and very pleasant to taste. It soothes the child, softens the gums, allays all pain, relieves wind, regulates the bowels, and is the best-known remedy for dysentery and diarrhœa whether arising from teething or other causes. Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup is sold by thousands of Chemists in all parts of the world at 1s 1½d per bottle, and millions of **mothers can testify to its virtue.**

THE WEATHER AND THE CROP OUTLOOK.

Cold and wet weather has been quite general over the country, rain storms being frequent, although at the time of writing there are indications of more settled conditions. Little progress has been made with sowing, the land being in a far from fit condition for any quantity of work to be done upon it. Threshing has commenced in most districts, but up to the present little corn has been dealt with. The pastures and the roots look much better since the rains, and have freshened up considerably, and now promise well. Weeds among the latter crop are abundant; stubbles, too, in many places do not look promising. Little time now will be to spare for land cleaning operations, as wheat sowing will have to be got on with as quickly as possible as soon as an opportunity offers. It should not be forgotten that a change of seed is a necessary factor in the raising of a good crop, and although prices are now exceedingly low, the best qualities still pay the best. New English wheat still continues to come to market in very small quantities, and prices in the earlier part of the week showed a tendency to further hardening. The average price for wheat is 6s 8d per quarter more than it was in the corresponding week of last year. Barley is also worth 4s 9d more per quarter, while oats are a penny down when contrasted with the values of last year. The best qualities of stock are in quite as good demand as they were, the wheat and stock market appearing to be in a somewhat similar position as last week.

A MOORLAND FAIR.

Brent station, on the Great Western Railway, lies in a deep hollow, cut through rich pasture fields, which run up to the edge of Dartmoor. Alighting here, there is nothing to tell that anything unusual is astir, but once clear of the railway, the whole scene changes. Over the bridge there is passing a whirling cloud of dust, flecked with black spots, and in a state of high commotion; out of it proceeds the sound of tiny hoofs clattering on the hard roadway, and the indistinct calls of the drovers. The dust cloud soon resolves itself—says the "Globe"—into a huddled group of thirty or forty Dartmoor ponies, which are being driven into Brent for the Michaelmas Fair—the largest of the two fairs which are held each year. To the left lies the town, a little unfrequented place well-known to trout fishermen, who fish the rapid moorland streams, formed of two main streets meeting at right angles, but now crowded with a seething mass of humanity afoot and on horseback. At the angle the press is thickest, and at first sight it seems almost impossible for the pedestrian to get through. But backwards and forwards through the press the stout Devon farmers ride their horses, forcing a way where it is not given, with no further remonstrance offered than a cry of "Where be goin'," and by keeping close to the heels of one of the sober steeds you find yourself at length in the middle of the fair.

Here hundreds of Dartmoor ponies are collected, in groups of from half-a-dozen to twenty, huddled together at the wall on one side of the street, and reaching far down the lane. Few of them have ever seen such a crowd of people before, and their first inclination is to press to the centre of the group and hide their heads, those on the outskirts staring with blinking, affrighted eyes at the unusual spectacle. They have been brought in straight from the moors, and are in a perfectly wild state, knowing nothing of either bridle or saddle, and as yet strangers to the blacksmith's forge—some of them tiny little creatures no larger than a big Newfoundland dog, with shaggy manes and long unkempt tails, sweeping the ground. Of discipline they have none, but relying upon their natural instinct to herd together, the drovers confine their attention to keeping the different flocks from mingling—not always an easy task in a stampede. It is a good-humoured crowd which monopolises all the room which the ponies do not themselves occupy, mostly stalwart farmers dressed in all sorts of large check tweeds, with here and there the unmistakable face and costume of the professional horse-dealer. Dotted among the crowd are many ladies, brightening the scene with summer costumes—daughters of the squires and the richer farmers, from the surrounding country, who have driven to Brent to make purchases for the pony carts which are so much affected in the district. Overhead the sun shines fiercely through a cloudless sky.

How strong these sinewy little ponies are one does not realise until a purchase has been made, and the pony has to be caught. For, though brought in from the moors, the pony cannot yet be considered as a captive. Some particular animal having been selected, the first difficulty to be overcome is to get a noose round its neck, for which purpose a drover seizes it by the nose, while a second takes early opportunity to clutch firmly to the tail. When touched, the pony starts, rears, and plunges, and the captive and its captors stagger about the roadway, it being some moments before the combined efforts of the two men succeed, usually with the assistance of a friendly wall. Sometimes this performance will set off all the other ponies in the group, who rush madly into the crowd in the road, but are quickly brought up, and are driven, pushed, whacked, and persuaded back into their place. With an instinct of contrariness, the pony, when held by the rope round its neck—the first restraint it has ever known—takes to backing in the opposite direction to that desired, but making little progress, it starts off ahead, and with a wild hullabaloo from those behind, divides the crowd unceremoniously. So dense is the throng of people through which ponies and horses are constantly plunging, that it seems incredible that there are no accidents. On the law of averages, there ought to be one or two fatalities and several broken limbs, but though hats fly off in all directions and people are pushed aside and twirled round in the road, at the end of the fair nobody is a bit the worse.

The good people of Brent have devoted themselves heart and soul to providing for the influx of visitors which the fair brings. In cottages and houses which open upon the roadway the front rooms have been cleared of all furniture, and long boards laid on trestles give support to steaming joints and bowls of vegetables, at which, in the course of the day, hundreds of hungry appetites are satisfied. At the Anchor, the principal hotel in the town, it is almost impossible to get in at the front door, owing to the proximity of the horses, but windows have been thrown open and mussel stalls, but windows have been open to serve as additional entrances, and the bar is packed. Here the talk is mostly about the fair, and in a broad, but not unpleasant, dialect. The perennial farmers' grievance is ventilated. Those who have ponies to sell declare that the trade has been in horses. Horse-dealers tell a different tale. A voluble old dame who presides over a stall of "fairing" outside—"fairing" is a mixture of cheap sweets of various sorts kept in tall glass cylinders ranged in a single row, and is an institution at all Devonshire fairs—has also a grievance. "For forty years," she tells you, "I have attended this fair, and never known it so bad." Then, confidentially, "the fact is, they've come to do business, and take no note of the fair." The general depression does not seem to be shared by a lady cheap jack—a novelty which excites attention—whose strident voice is heard recommending her gold watches, with which she parts at a price which gives a flat denial to the bimetallic theory of the appreciation of the yellow metal.

Late in the afternoon the auctioneer, who has cleared a ring for himself in the road and sold ponies and horses from all-comers, closes his book and expresses his pleasure to see his clients and their money at his inn. Prices have varied considerably. For as little as £4 or £5 you might have bought very young ponies, while £15 or £18 would purchase a couple of as dashing young ponies for a cart as could be wished. One poor old black horse brought into the ring, long past work, induced no higher offer than 12s 6d, though the harness was put on him to show that he was quiet—quite a needless formality. The purchaser could only have wanted him for a curiosity. The drovers collect their ponies together, and many of those sold are driven to the railway station. Those unsold go back to the moors to run wild again, with no other precautions than the branded mark by which each owner identifies his property, and the little care which a moorman—paid a trifling sum, about half-a-crown a year—is able to give them. There they will crop the wild herbage for another six months, and then come back to Brent, grown a little larger, but with their wild spirits still unchecked. As the Fair draws to its close, the note grows louder of the shrill steam whistle, inviting the sportive to the "galloping horses" in a neighbouring field, and the sellers of "fairing" raise their cries, "The right sort to buy!" with increased emphasis, though the mixture does not tempt the appetite, though the motto, "You are lovely," you raise to your mouth bears the motto, "You are lovely." These amorous mottoes are much in favour with the youth of both sexes. The sun goes down in the dip behind Ugborough Beacon, from which the black rocks crowning its summit stand out boldly against a flaring yellow sky, and Brent returns to its slumbers until the next Fair comes round to bring the farmers together, or the monthly market affords a mild sensation.

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