

We shall not be astonished to have this proposal met with a general expression of surprise, but let the parties reflect. If the present system does not work well, what change or modification would any one suggest as an improvement. In England it is believed that the engagement during pleasure is almost universal. In towns with factory servants it is so, and how does it answer? We have before us a statement of the period of service in one factory, which shews that short engagements do not necessarily occasion short periods of service, for it appears that in this manufactory there are 115 persons employed, and of these—

6	have continued upwards of.....	30	years.
13	... upwards of.....	20	„
9	... upwards of.....	15	„
25	... upwards of.....	8	„
22	... upwards of.....	4	„

And 40 have continued for different periods varying from one to four years.

It may be said, that factories are different from farms—that wet day and dry the machinery is always in motion—that there are interruptions to farm labour when ordinary service may be dispensed with, but this is a mistake. The farmer can no more dispense with the continuous labours of his ordinary servant than the manufacturer can with the regular and constant service of his. Can the cattle remain even for a day unfed—the cows unmilked—the horses unwatered? No: the business of the farm, though various and fluctuating, has certain stated occupations which require constant and regular fulfilment, and though there may be more busy seasons than others, the constant and regular attendance of a certain number of ordinary farm servants is indispensable.

But the half-yearly engagement has many and palpable disadvantages, which could not attach to the plan proposed. Let it be supposed that the parties are unsuitable—that the master dislikes the servant, and the servant has no good will to the master. Both resolve that the engagement shall not be renewed, but the difficulty is to make out the term without an absolute rupture. The servant knows that any act of positive disobedience would place him in the power of the master, who might summarily dismiss him without payment of wages, and therefore he complies, or seems to comply with every order; but his service is mere seeming. Nothing is done as it ought to be done, and yet no work is unperformed, the non-performance of which would imply culpable dereliction of duty. On the other hand, servants may be engaged to a thankless and exacting employer. They may strain every nerve to satisfy and please—they may overtask themselves in time and quantity—they may rise early and go to bed late, and devote every hour solely to his work; but their zeal may elicit no grateful acknowledgement. Their willingness may only bring upon them fresh demands for additional service, and his orders may be given with cold haughtiness, and the slightest fault or omission may be reprehended in the coarsest and most irritating language. They may then spend the greater part of the engagement in incessant toil, exposed to the winter's cold or the summer's heat, and within a few weeks or days of its termination, they may be caught in a fault, or provoked to one by forethought irritation, and for the offence dismissed without payment of wages. Do not the records of the Sheriff Courts testify, that such cases are by no means rare? There are at least ten times more disputes between farm servants and their employers, than between all the other relative classes of society put together. One set of them is at the instance of farmers for desertion within a week or two after the servants enter the service; another set at the instance of servants for having been dismissed within a short time of the termination of their engagement; and in the great proportion of the cases it may justly be said there have been faults on both sides, and from the strangely conflict-