

ESSAY

ON

“THE CONDITION OF THE AGRICULTURAL POPULATION, AND THE
“BEST MEANS OF AMELIORATING THEIR STATE,
“MORALLY AND SOCIALLY.”

By the terms “Agricultural Population,” it is apprehended, is meant that class which is directly employed in the culture of the soil, the labouring agricultural population; or perhaps more definitely still, ordinary farm-servants. That there is something radically wrong with this class is manifest, from the fact that the subject of this Essay was, amongst the number of topics bearing upon its interests, presented to Lord Haddo by the Subcommittee of the Royal Northern Agricultural Society, for which he might offer a prize—from the fact that his Lordship made selection of this particular subject—and still further, it is painfully evident to all those who are most conversant with the state of farm-servants generally.

It is a subject which not only involves the welfare of agricultural servants themselves, but which, as these constitute the very bones and sinews of agriculture, strikes at the root of human life itself. Men, in agriculture, constitute the motive power, nearly as exclusively as steam does to the railway locomotive; and whatever affects the moral and social position of these sons of toil will reverberate through the length and breadth of the land—for “the king himself is served by the field.” It is true, those more immediately connected with farm-servants will, next to themselves, experience the evil effects of their condition being wrong; but it is no less true, that all will to some extent taste of