

Dinton - Dalwood Letters

'Sutton'. 18th January 1845.

Dear George,

Wheat is looking well, and promises another good crop; if equal to last year, I think they may do without Continental corn yet a bit. By the way, this reminds me of the extremely radical notions expressed in your last letter. I must say I differ from you in toto, and cannot for the life of me conceive what can be the use of cheap bread to the labourer if he has not the means of purchasing it. It reminds me of the story of the Irishman and the eggs, who, having six eggs tendered to him for 6d., remarked that he could get as many again in Ireland. Why did you not stay there then/ 'Faith', replied Pat, 'because I could not get the 6d.' Now take the protection off corn, and you will throw half the labouring population out of employ, and more mouths than they can fill already. No, depend upon it, Lord Melbourne was right when he said ' he thought the repeal of the Corn Laws the wildest scheme that ever entered the brain of man. 'Still, however, I think it is very possible in the course of a few years the Corn Laws will fall to the ground, but not in the way you anticipate; the improvements that are taking place in Agriculture within the last 15 years, make it, I think, extremely probable that we shall become an exporting instead of an importing nation. The quantity of land that has been broken up, and brought into cultivation, is quite surprising; you would hardly recognise your native County were you to return to it. Nearly all of Teffont Down is now in wheat and turnips, and a great part of Salisbury Plain too. Now take protection, and think you, the farmer would be fool enough to expend his capital in such a speculation? Not a bit of it; asses as they may be, they are clear-sighted enough where their own interest is concerned.

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I am your affectionate brother,

JOHN WYNDHAM