



# Knook

## One of the Peaceful and Happy Nooks of our Island

A correspondent of the *Bath Journal*, in making some casual remarks during a country excursion, says –

“I write from the charming little village of Knook, in the county of Wilts, the centre of an extensive, rich, and highly cultivated agricultural district, within a mile of the seat of Lord Heytesbury, and the town of Heytesbury, so lately one of our snug English boroughs, where the election of Members of Parliament was conducted with the same farcical formalities as at Old Sarum, without any necessity of propitiating a drunken rabble, much less of appealing to the judgment of the English people. These happy days, at length, are passed; but I am happy to say that the people here are happy without them. His Lordship is surrounded by his tenantry, and by as wealthy a neighbourhood of agriculturalists as any in the kingdom – a body of intelligent yeomanry, who have no fear of foreign rivals in the art of producing corn either at to quantity or quality. And what is better still, he is surrounded by the respect of all. Amid the most gloomy reverses of the country, there is always a charm in this and neighbouring villages. The sufferings of the North are unfelt here, where, amidst abundance we are retired from political or party strife, feeling the misery of others only by sympathy. Nor is this pleasing state of things enjoyed only by the wealthy, but more or less – by all classes, even the laboring people – opening one extended view of the mutual usefulness of all towards promoting the welfare and happiness of each other. The labourers here are comparatively well off. Wages are 12s. a week in harvest; 9s. for ordinary work; and every one is enabled to cultivate his potatoes and vegetables, though not as I could wish from permanent allotments. Not only in agriculture are we prosperous here, but in manufactures as well, that is to say, the factories of Mr Everett, (a name long standing and high repute for excellence of fabric and liberality to the operatives,) are in full work, as they have seldom or never failed to be. Harvest is nearly terminated; and the numerous well made ricks surrounding the houses of every farmer, testify abundant crops. Such a season has not been known for many years – a better never. I think I have never seen such even and prolific crops of turnips, so large in the bulb, and so abundant in leaf. This is, more than usual, a general feature everywhere, as far as I have observed; but, here, all other parts are so surpassed that if it be not the result of a peculiar adaptation of soil, it shows that, amidst all our improvements, the farmers of other counties have to copy a leaf from those of Wilts. Some of the finest crops here show the advantage of the bone dust manure, which is as cheap as any that can be applied, and which, though more expressly adapted for the turnip crop, invigorates the land beyond what is necessary for its

produce, leaving some benefit to the crop which follows. The farmers seem to have a little fear of cattle imports. At a sale of Mr Sidford's stock, at Norton Farm, near Warminster, the pices realized were very high and a quick sale effected. Beat four tooth ewes fetched 36s. a head; wethers from 17s. to 21s.; at these prices the whole stock of 2,040 sheep was osold, not a single lot bought in; but it was a choice stock, and of high repute. We are here out of the way of any railroad line; the turnpike keeping full possession of its traffic between Bath and Salisbury, Southampton, &c.; and the spirit of road improvement therefore still goes on. An awkward ascent between Heytesbury and Codford is now being lowered by taking from the summit, and filling the valley. This work being rapidly executed under the superintendence of Mr T. Flower, of this place, the contractor, will, when finished see the labour and augment the speed of horses to a degree well worth its cost. Hence proceeds a road, which, all the way to Salisbury presents nature in its most lovely aspect. On one side, the wide spreading culture yielding all manner of grain; on the other, an abundant stream of pellucid waters, noted for its excellent trout, gently flows through verdant meadows and luxuriant groves an orchards, presenting one of the richest valleys in the kingdom. The traveller of many years may be struck with the enchanting spots this vale so frequently presents, inhabited, as it is, by gentlemen of wealth and refinement, some one or more shedding the lustre of their taste and judgment on every village, planting elegant villas on its many interesting sites, last of which has its church, hallowed by antiquity, and its thousand histories – Here every pastor has his fold around him by the still waters, under his instructive observance, free from the moral contamination of the great world in the congregated thousands of its extended towns.”

*(Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette – Thursday 22 September, 1842)*

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