ON LARGE AND SMALL FARMS, AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON THE SOCIAL ECONOMY; INCLUDING A VIEW OF THE PROGRESS OF THE DIVISION OF THE SOIL IN FRANCE SINCE 1815

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BY

H. PASSY,

PEER OF FRANCE, MEMBER OF THE INSTITUTE, EX-MINISTER OF COMMERCE, OF FINANCE, &c. &c.

WITH NOTES.

Les Economistes Anglais ont l'esprit faussé en matière de propriété et de culture.

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THE

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BY

THE TRANSLATOR.

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

As the work, of which an English version is now offered to the public, is in some measure the sequel of another by the same Author, a few words from the Translator, in regard to the latter, may not seem out of place.

In 1826, the Government of the Restoration, in carrying out, under the Vilelle Ministry, its retrograde policy, brought forward a measure for changing the law of succession as fixed at the Revolution, and for partially re-establishing the ancient laws of Primogeniture and Entail. This project, which excited great dissatisfaction, was started in the Chamber of Peers, and rejected by a great majority. Among the publications which the agitation of this great question gave rise to, was one from the pen of M. Passy, entitled, "Aristocracy Considered in its Relations with the Progress of Civilisation;" in which, after exposing at length the many social and political evils which result to a country from the existence of an aristocracy of the soil, factitiously supported by Primogeni-

ture and Entails, he showed the immense advantages that had accrued to France from the abolition of these laws of privilege, and the action of her existing law of succession, establishing a rule of equal division. In his preface to this treatise (a translation of which is now being prepared for separate publication), the author states:—

"It may be a matter of surprise to some not to find in this treatise a special examination of the so much agitated question of small and large properties, and farming on a small and great scale. If I have omitted this question, it is because there seemed to me to be no proper connexion between the size of estates and that of farms. Like all other industries, agriculture depends for its modes and forms, and for its advancement, on a number of causes, among which the state of the sciences and the manufacturing arts, the abundance and circulation of capital, and the amount of the population, hold the most important rank. Like all other industries, if it prospers under laws favourable to the protection of property and persons, to the free use of capital, lands, and individual enterprise, it declines under unjust and restrictive laws, which tend to keep the inferior classes in ignorance and poverty. Like all other industries, it seeks out and takes for itself the modes and forms at once the most advantageous for those who are engaged in it and for society at large.

"It would certainly not have been difficult to support here the above views by unquestionable proofs,

but that would not have been sufficient. So numerous are the debateable points embraced in this single question of rural economy, that I would have been forced to enter into a labyrinth of discussions and controversies almost without end; and it would have been necessary to refute, in a hasty manner, doctrines, opinions, and intricate objections, the errors of which, having their origin in principles of political economy, partially elucidated or imperfectly understood, could only have been clearly exposed by a very extensive investigation of these principles themselves. Such a labour required a separate work, an entire treatise; and how could I enter upon it here, without distracting the attention of the reader, and withdrawing it from considerations of a higher and more urgent kind? Other times will leave me, I hope, the leisure necessary for availing myself of the materials which I have collected for elucidating this question."

After a lapse of nearly twenty years, the Author proceeded to realise the hope which he had expressed, by laying before the Section of the Institute, of which he is a member, the present work in the form of a Memoir, and soon after publishing it, with a Supplement, in the "Journal des Economistes" (Nos. 34, 38, 40, 57), a periodical of which he is one of the editors, and from whose pages this translation has been made.

The deep importance of the economical question discussed in the present treatise is too generally recognised to need being pointed out. The