

**A STUDY OF SMALL
HOLDINGS, WRITTEN
FOR THE GOLDEN CLUB**

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A Study of Small Holdings, Written for the Golden Club by William E. Bear

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WILLIAM E. BEAR

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A STUDY OF SMALL HOLDINGS.

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Written for the Cobden Club

BY

WILLIAM E. BEAR.

ROYAL ECONOMIC SOCIETY



40699

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INTRODUCTION.

THE statements made and the opinions expressed in this essay are almost entirely based upon the inspection of small holdings in England and the Channel Islands, information obtained directly from the occupiers and other persons well acquainted with their circumstances, and a careful investigation of the conditions which accompanied success in some cases and the lack of it in others. During portions of the years 1892 and 1893, while conducting an inquiry on behalf of the Royal Commission on Labour, I have enjoyed exceptional facilities of studying my subject in six counties, and I have also made visits to other parts of the country, with the special object of obtaining information to embody in this essay, while for many years past I have taken every opportunity of inquiring into the conditions and results of farming on a small scale.

In accordance with the definition adopted in the returns of the Board of Agriculture and the Small Holdings Act, a small holding is regarded as a piece of land over one acre, and not exceeding* 50 acres in extent, except when otherwise stated; and, without any exception, a piece of land of one acre or less is considered to be an allotment. Except incidentally, or connected with small holdings, allotments are not dealt with on the present occasion; for,

* In this Act a holding of over 50 acres, but of an annual value not exceeding £50, is also regarded as a small holding; but, as this admits a few farms of 100 to 150 acres, it has appeared to me desirable to keep to the size limit.

tempting as the subject is, in view of the great variety of conditions under which allotments are supplied in different parts of the country, its adequate treatment would extend the length of this essay beyond moderate bounds.

In concluding these introductory remarks, I must express my gratitude to the owners of estates visited, to the agents of some of them, and to other gentlemen who put me in the way of acquiring information, as well as to the small holders themselves.