

Charlotte Powell Powell's letters - 2

Quex Park
Nov. 30th 1830
& Dec. 1st

My dear Sir

Your letter this moment received, am anxious to answer, but really the Times are such that it petrifies the senses. Thank God since the destruction of Mr Hanssam's large Sangsforce¹ Stack have had no fires in this Island. Have seen the appalling sights of several in Canterbury last week from the top of his house. Can see as far as Sheerness, the top of Boughton Hill, and consequently all round Canterbury - also one of the turrets of Dover Castle. When and where will it all end? The consequences are - and will be - serious as Corn and grain of all sorts will be scarce, and then Bread must rise - and Heaven knows how the Poor will subsist.

Potatoes are, I rejoice to say, well got in and plentiful. As to the Irish labourers, they have, in past, caused Pauperism in England, they working half the price of ours. I wish they would send the Irish all to Ireland. You would not believe the audacity of the Paupers now - they will soon be our Masters. Within the last two days Ledbeater has taken up [arrested] near a dozen of machine Breakers, sorry as I am to say, several of this Parish, two in good work as Waggoners on with Mr Busell (Bushell?) and the other with Mr Tomlin at Dandelion - apropos, I cannot prevail on Lady Staines to let us her House, if only for a year, as it would give us time to build a Farm House here which Mr Heckford says we must do, but in these frightful times, we shall be obliged to make heavy sacrifices I fear - and would most willingly postpone the Heavy Expense of building a House at present. Lady Staines will, I think, eventually regret not accepting our offer, as 'tis a large, expensive, comfortless House - and not fit for her small income - and have even offered the East End to retain her property and - till she sees her plans - as Tomlin says half is sufficient for his use - and the contiguity to the Farm Yard most convenient. But if People will not listen to Advice and continue obstinate - cannot help it - it would be a mutual advantage to us and to Lady Staines - as the House is in dreadful repair. We must patch up the old House and see what can be done.

The Farmers have given notice to the Chapter of Canterbury, that they cannot pay all their Tythes this Christmas or at mid-summer only half. Must reduce in luxuries and will also be compelled to augment the wretched stipend of their Curates. Reforms are dangerous but in many instances this country requires them. Mr Blackburn's lease is [run] out at Reading Street, but at these times hardly dare raise it - his rent has (14)? transport. He wants to continue the farm and others have applied for it. I feel rather anxious to let our new purchase to Mr Dancer, as we do not require more Garden and Pasture. We have abundance of meadow for which we have ordered manure - and have reserved a large heap for it - to throw on when the cows have gone away. If we have to prune all the trees around the walls of the Plaws late land, and attend to the standards also, we must keep three or four labourers - and what can we do with the produce if we market it? 'Twill be a losing Game and we c'd not consume it, Except a square Piece at the back of our sheds manely for a Drying ground, Pig Sty and is all we really want.

¹ Almost certainly a sainfoin stack. (See reference in Letter 3) This is a crop which was used for cattle feed. See copy of 1809 reference to the crop on a separate sheet.

Now if the rent was ever so small from one of the tenants it would save us expense and anxiety, and still kept us a Garden Ground and not on Lease. It would, I think, in these times be most advisable to Dancer and would be particularly valuable as he may break a door out from his own garden - at once thru' the wall. Even if we laid it down in Pasture I could never walk with any pleasure at the back of those horrid odious Irish houses, who will steal all the fruit as it ripens, if we keep the land, but the market Gardeners' men must be workers, there early and late.

I'm sorry to tell you our friend Richmond has had a fracas with Captain Piggott, on whose Black List, he writes me, he is now, on which prevents him dining with us tomorrow, when we have a large Dinner Party. The Slaters, Cottons etc. - Richmond says he thinks he himself so ill-used by Capt Piggott that he is going to resign his command of the Blockade (ship) - and so on. We shall regret losing him very much. These Incendiaries are now extending their truly Diabolical Burnings all over England - I fear 'twill cause scarcity.

We had a special session called last week at Canterbury and if Sir G. Knatchbull would have done at first what he is now doing, we should not have had the alarming and serious mischief done in this County. We hear a judge sat on the Canterbury Bench and tried men under the Riot Act etc.

With kind regards, am dear sir, yours sincerely

SIGNED: *C. Powell*

(Charlotte, wife of John Powell Powell)

Why is not the Aliens' Act put in force? We have all nations daily landing now at Dover - already we are overpopulated and still not steps are taken to export some of the paupers. It was reported the convicts from all the dockyards were to be transported immediately, thus enabling our poor to do their work.