

over the three open fields; and that the husbandry was controlled by those rules as to rotation of crops and fallow in three seasons which marked the three-field system, and secured uniformity of tillage throughout each field. Lastly, whilst fallow after the crop was gathered, the open fields were probably everywhere subject to the common rights of pasture. The sheep of the whole township wandered and pastured all over the strips and balks of its fields, while the cows of the township were daily driven by a common herdsman to the green commons, or, after Lammas Day, when the hay crop of the owners was secured, to the lammas meadows.

IV. THE WIDE PREVALENCE OF THE SYSTEM THROUGH  
GREAT BRITAIN.

But before the attempt is made to trace back the system, it may be well to ask what evidence there is as to its wide prevalence in England, and with what reason the particular example of the Hitchin township may be taken as generally typical.

In the first place, an examination into the details of an Enclosure Act will make clear the point that the system as above described is the system which it was the object of the Enclosure Acts to remove. They were generally drawn in the same form, commencing with the recital that the open and common fields lie dispersed in small pieces intermixed with each other and inconveniently situated, that divers persons own parts of them, and are entitled to rights of common on them, so that in their present state they are incapable of improvement, and that it is

Enclosure  
of open  
fields.