

W. V. Ball

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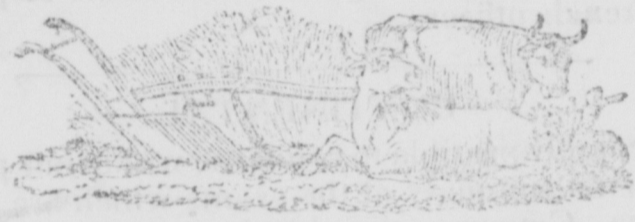
Devoted to Agriculture, Literature, and General Intelligence.--Neutral in Politics.

"Truth, Justice, Freedom, here shall find a home."

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AGRICULTURE.

From the London Encyclopædia.
HISTORY OF AGRICULTURE.
(Continued from our last.)

The condition of a yeoman, at that period, is also exemplified in the following case of bishop Latimer's father. "My father," says Hugh Latimer, "was a yeoman, and had no land of his own, only he had a farm of three or four pounds by the year at the utmost, and hereupon he tilled so much as kept half-a-dozen men. He had a walk for a hundred sheep, and my mother milked thirty kine, &c. He kept his son at school till he went to the university, and maintained him there: he married his daughters with five pounds or twenty nobles a piece; he kept hospitality with his neighbours; and some alms he gave to the poor; and all this he did out of the said farm."—*Gilpin's Latimer.* Cattle were not plentiful, as appears from the exordium of an act passed in 1563, enacting that no person should eat flesh on the Wednesday and Friday in every week, under pain of forfeiting three pounds, cases of sickness and special licence excepted, neither of which even then extended to beef or veal. Harrison complains of the number of parks kept in the kingdom, of which he says, "there are not less than one hundred in Essex alone, where almost nothing is kept but a sort of wild and savage beasts, cherished for pleasure and delight," and "that if the world last a while after this rate, wheat and rice will be no grain for poorer men to feed on."

Great attention was still devoted to the breed of horses. Henry VIII. from his predilection for splendid tournaments, at this time the passion of the age, had greatly encouraged the promotion of a particular species, of great strength and stature: which were indeed required to bear the weight of the complicated panoply, with which the knight and his courser were invested. Statutes were enacted for allotting to all parks a certain proportion of breeding mares and enjoining not only nobles and prelates, but all persons whose wives wore velvet bonnets, to have stallions of a certain size for their saddle. The legal standard was fifteen hands in horses, and thirteen for mares; but it now became necessary to lower this standard in the counties Huntingdon, Northampton, Cambridge, Lincoln, Suffolk, and Norfolk, to thirteen hands for stallions, and no stallion of less stature might be turned out on commons and forests, for fear of diminishing the breed. The English draught horses were also very powerful and of great size; five or six of them according to Harrison, being capable of drawing three thousand weight of the greatest tale for a long journey. Horses at that time, were so numerous in the kingdom, that Elizabeth, when she removed her residence, demanded a quota of 24,000 from the country, in the neighborhood of her palace.

In the meantime the civil dissensions of Scotland, which continued nearly the whole of the sixteenth century, had almost crushed agricultural improvement in the bud; when the ecclesiastical land-holders were totally expelled, the calamities of the farmers increased, and the nature of their misfortunes may be guessed at, from the statutes enacted in their favor. The first of these was to the purport, that all "slayers and houghers (houghers) of horses and other cattle," with their employers and maintainers, had "incurred the pains of death, and confiscation of all their goods movabill." A second act denounced the same penalty on all who maimed horses, oxen, or other cattle; also on those who cut or destroyed ploughs, or plough-geers, (in time of tilling) injured trees, corn, &c. Other acts were framed for the protection of the farmers against petulant and obnoxious tithe gatherers, &c. The Scots, like the English, used every effort to improve their breed of horses; but so great was the jealousy of the two kingdoms, that it was made felony to export horses thither from England, lest they should improve their breed by our stallions. The Scottish government, about this period, condescended to consider the proper period for horses to be turned out to grass, so as most effectually to prevent the waste of corn; and, were pleased to enact, that all horses should be put to grass from May 15th, till October

15th, on pain to the owner of forfeiting each horse or its value, to the king; gentlemen of 1000 marks yearly rent excepted.

In England, the vine which had been formerly cultivated for wine, declined with the suppression of the monasteries; and was superseded by the more general cultivation of barley. Potatoes were introduced in this reign from Santa Fé, by captain Hawkins, about the year 1565; although they did not come into general use for nearly two centuries afterwards. Several agricultural authors also flourished in this reign, particularly Thomas Tusser, born at Rivenhall, in Essex, in 1527, whose "Five Hundred Points of Husbandry," published in 1592, were recommended by lord Molesworth to be taught in schools. Barnaby Googe, a Lincolnshire gentleman, and Sir Hugh Platt; the Rev. W. Harrison, contemporary of Platt, and chaplain to Baron Cobham. This latter gentleman translated "Baethiu's History of Scotland," and wrote "A description of England," in which he asserts, that the Spanish and Merino sheep were derived originally from this country.

In the seventeenth century many important improvements were introduced, particularly the cultivation of clover and turnips; for the adoption of which, we are indebted to Sir Richard Weston, although the latter is commonly attributed to lord Viscount Townsend. The potato, Houghton describes "as a bacciferous herb, with esculent roots, bearing winged leaves and a bell flower." He observes, it was brought from Virginia, by sir Walter Raleigh, who planted some first in Ireland; afterwards they were introduced into Lancashire, whence they began to spread all over the kingdom. When boiled or roasted, and eaten with butter and sugar, they form, says this author, a pleasant food. A sort brought from Spain of a larger form, (*convolvulus batatas*), more luscious than ours, he adds, are much set by, and sold for sixpence or eightpence the pound. The chief writers of the seventeenth century were Weston, Harlib, Blythe, Evelyn, Norden, Gabriel Plantes, &c. The embankments, drainage of morasses, &c. the enclosures of land by act of parliament, and otherwise, together with the establishment of tolls in 1663, are to the honour of the period; and have tended greatly, to advance the agricultural interests of the kingdom.

The agriculture of Scotland, during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries considerably languished; the reformation of religion having taken the husbandry out of the hands of the monks, by whom alone it was practiced upon correct principles, and placed it in the hands of men unskilled in the art of cultivation. In the seventeenth century the grounds in the South-eastern countries were improved; but even then appeared in a wretched condition. Ray, who made a tour along the eastern coast in 1660, observed that fallow grounds were few; that the men were lazy, and frequently ploughed in their cloaks. The accession of James V. to the crown of England, was unfavorable to the agriculture of Scotland. The soldiers of Cromwell, who lay in Scotland for many years, and being mostly English yeomen, raised the low country districts into a higher state of improvement than had been known at any former period. The large fines exacted during the reign of Charles II. and his brother James, tended greatly to impoverish the proprietors and cultivators. Still, however, the laws passed in the seventeenth century, paved the way for the present improved system. A Persian wheel, made by Worlidge, author of *Systema Agriculturae*, capable of conveying water more than twenty feet high, for the watering of meadows, throws a light upon the advancement of irrigation. On the whole, from the imperfect glimmerings of the science, in this dark but interesting period, we may mark the dawn of those vast improvements which have since been effected upon our Island.

The general progress of agriculture, from the revolution to the middle of the eighteenth century, was not so considerable as might have been expected from the exportation of corn; but the increase of population, and the wealth derived from manufactures, has at length augmented capital, and called forth a race of ingenious and enterprising cultivators. The inventions that have been introduced for increasing produce, and economizing labour, the garden-like appearance of the country, together with the passing of more than three thousand bills of enclosure, during the late reign, more effectually illustrate the state of British agriculture, than any thing verbal that could be advanced on the subject.

The shock sustained by the agriculturists since the peace of 1815, by the fall of prices, originating in the diminished circulation of money, was so severe, that many farmers lost all their capital, whilst others retained just enough to enable them to emigrate to other countries.

PROTESTANT CORNER.

FRENCH INTERVENTION IN ITALY.

Of all the parties who are leagued together in the task of thrusting the Pope and a sacerdotal Government upon the unwilling Romans, France is the only one whose interference may be considered as utterly impolitic, unprincipled, and atrocious. Roman Catholic Austria acts on behalf of the Pope, for the strongest of all reasons, that of self-interest. It is not so much because the religion of Austria is papist, as because Lombardy is one of the fairest portions of her dominions, that she joins in the crusade against the liberty of the Romans. Italian independence is the knell of Austrian power. The Republic of Rome gives strength to the Republic of Venice, and keeps Lombardy in the disquietude of hope deferred. Austrian interference, therefore, is perfectly intelligible. The interference of the King of Naples is explicable on the same grounds, which are partly religious and partly political.—The Republic in Rome is a troublesome and unsafe neighbour for the Monarchy of Naples; and the religious motive for intervention but crowns and completes the political one. But neither France nor Spain has any such pretence to interfere in the affairs of Italy. Neither the one nor the other is threatened with the loss of power, territory, or influence, by the political independence of that country generally, or of the Roman States more particularly. Spain, as yet, has not stirred in the matter; but is understood, in the interest of Roman Catholic religion to wish well to the efforts of those who are now engaged in the task.

France stands alone, therefore, in the position of committing a gross outrage on the natural rights of a large portion of the Italian people, for the sake of the Chief Priest of Roman Catholic Europe. Religion and statesmanship pull together in the case of Austria and Naples; but irreligious France, for the sake of a priest, throws statesmanship to the winds, betrays her own traditions and principles, leagues herself with her enemies, acts with cruel treachery to her friends, dishonors the Republican form of Government, in the name of which she sends her legions to overawe, coerce, and oppress a Republic as legally constituted as herself, and renders the principles of her statesmen a by-word of contempt in Europe.—*Illustrated L. News.*

The following proclamation has been addressed to the French army by the Roman people:—

Frenchmen! the land you tread on still preserves the traces of your glorious ancestors; but these brought us liberty, and you bring us slavery. In destroying the Roman Republic you will destroy your own, and you will be fratricides, at the same time that you injure yourselves.—Oh, shame! you stood by and regarded with a laugh of mockery the misfortunes of Lombardy. You had not a single word of consolation for the fall of Piedmont. Your venal writers utter blasphemies and calumnies on the heroic efforts of Hungary. On this very day, with an impudent mockery you come to destroy Roman liberty. Frenchmen! your implacable Government subjects you to the greatest of all infamies, binds you to the train of despotism and of injustice, and obliges you to follow in the wake of the Croat and the Cossack. Are you, indeed, soldiers! If you are, choose a foe worthy of your courage. Do not come to defy the rising of a petty State. If you wish to combat against Republican arms, cease to be Republicans yourselves, or confess that you are satellites of tyranny and hypocrisy. French citizens; tear away the veil of policy, and answer, Whom do you wish to restore to power? Are they the priests, this headstrong race, who have caused so much blood to flow and occasioned so many woes to France herself. Study your own history, and you will see what a fatal present you are about to make to us. Know it, once for all—from our earliest infancy even to our old age we have cherished an implacable hatred of sacerdotal domination. You wish to re-impose it on us by force. You are about to place us on a level with the Chinese. You will force us to curse the soil which has given you birth. We are unfortunate, because we are despised and trampled under foot by the very nation which was always the illusion to our mind, and the source of our hopes. Frenchmen! before undertaking a detestable work, ask the blue heavens that is above you, and it will answer that it has been polluted by sacerdotal iniquities and by their horrors in all ages. Ask our youth and our women, and you will learn from them an uninterrupted tale of seductions, of debauchery, and of venality. Ask of our farmers for whom have they laboured? They will answer, for the priests! Ask to whom belongs the