

W Bull

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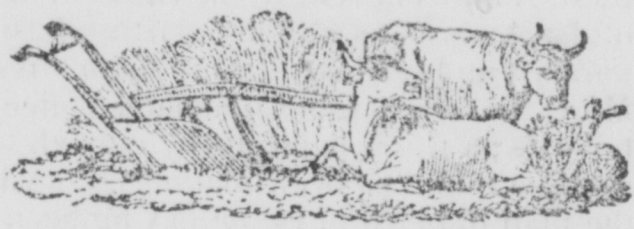
Devoted to Agriculture, Literature, and General Intelligence.--Neutral in Politics.

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

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VOLUME I.



AGRICULTURE.

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

The surface of Italy is irregular, broken by prominent hills, which pass through its whole length, forming numerous interior valleys of different dimensions, watered by lakes and rivers. The climate is dry, clear, regular, and of warm temperament. The soil is various; as yellow marley clay, blue clay, containing sulphur and alum, volcanic earth, rich black loam, deep, soft, moist earth, &c. The artificial appearance of Italy greatly resembles what it was in the time of the Romans. The cultivated lands and open enclosures, are to be seen only near the villas; and the landscape, (as Daniel Malthus observes,) which Pliny mentions, as seen from his villas two thousand years ago, does not appear to have been different from what it is at present. The Romans selected those spots for their farms which were remarkable for their geographical advantages; and employed themselves in the cultivation of them from their youth. They built the villa in proportion to the size of their farm. The villa was divided into three parts. The *urbana*, consisting of the apartments of the landlord. 2. The *rustica*, containing the kitchen, servants' houses, stables, piggeries, &c., adjoining to which was commonly the aviary or apiary, a place for dormice, a warren for hares and rabbits, a place for snails, and a large park for live deer, and beasts taken in the chase. 3. The *fructuaria*, containing oil and wine cellars; places for the oil and wine presses, barns, store-houses, repositories for fruit, corn-yards, granaries, &c. Particular directions have been given as to the relative situation and construction of these buildings, but nothing as to the materials of which they were composed. Pliny proportions the whole expence to the profits arising from the farm; so that if it were destroyed, one, or at most two years' rent, might be sufficient to rebuild it.

With respect to domestic management, a farmer fed and clothed his own servants; and bailiffs were appointed, whose office it was to see that they were fed on wholesome provisions, and made comfortable. The beasts employed were chiefly the ox, the ass and mule; the horse but seldom.—Oxen were most commonly employed in the field, and were worked in pairs, whether in the cart or plough. Asses were chiefly used for the burden, the mill, or for ploughing, where the land was light. Of mules, they had two descriptions; mules properly so called, and hinnis, the first being the offspring of a mare and an ass, and the second a horse and an ass. Both were commonly used for the road and the plough.

The implements used in Roman agriculture are very little known. Cato mentions two kind of ploughs, one for strong, the other for light soils. Varro mentions one with two mould boards, for the purpose, he observes, of ridging when they plough after sowing the seed. "They had ploughs," says the Rev. A. Dickson, with mould boards, and without mould boards, with, and without coulters, with and without wheels, with broad and narrow pointed shares, and with shares, not only with sharp sides and points, but with high raised cutting tops. Professor Martyn has given the figure of a modern Italian plough to illustrate Virgil's description. Rosier gives a figure of a Roman plough, which corresponds with those still used in the south of France. That used from time immemorial in Valencia, is supposed to come nearest to the common implement of the Romans, and consists of the following parts: 1. the buris, or head; 2. the temo, or beam; 3. the stiva, or handle; 4. the dentales, or share head; 5. the romer or share. The aura or mould board, and the culler or coulter, formed no part of the simple Roman plough. The plough staff, or paddle, was also a detached part. The manicular, which the ploughman took hold of, was a short bar fixed across; and to the draught pole the oxen were attached. The plough described by Virgil had a mould board, and was used for covering seed and ridging; but the common plough described above, instead of the mould board, required either a stick inserted in the share-head, or to be held obliquely. Circumvolving furrows, as employed by

us, were not practised among the Romans; but the cattle returned in the same furrow.

In the Greek monuments of antiquity are four or five examples of wheel ploughs. Lastevrie has given figures of these implements from Caylus's *Collection of Antiquities*, and from a Sicilian medal. He indeed imagines them to have been invented about the time of Pliny, and attributes the invention to the Cisalpine Gauls; but Virgil evidently refers to such ploughs in his *Georgics*. The *ligo* appears to have been a spade, and the *pala* a shovel; they were both made of oak, shod with iron. The *urpex* or *ripx*, was a plank with several teeth, used as our brake or cultivator, to break rough ground, tear up roots &c. The *crates* was a kind of harrow, the *rastum* a rake, *sarculum* a hand-hoe, the *marra* an inferior hoe, the *biden* a two pronged hoe, used in vineyards, with a hammer at the other end to break the clods. The *securis* was an axe, although the same term was applied to the crescent-like blade of the pruning knife. Besides reaping hooks which resembled modern ones, they had invented a reaping machine, which appears to have resembled that used in Suffolk, for cropping the heads of clover left for seeds. Their threshing implements and some for striking off the ears of corn, are imperfectly known.

The Romans did not bind their corn into sheaves, as was customary amongst the Jews, Egyptians, and Greeks. Threshing, for the most part performed in the open air, in a circular threshing-floor of forty or sixty feet in diameter; where the corn being spread to the depth of one or two feet, was either trod out by the hoofs of cattle, or by means of a dragging machine. That used in the Carthaginian territory, consisted of rollers, studded with iron knobs, and furnished with a seat for the driver. Rods, or flails were also occasionally employed. Corn was winnowed by throwing it from one side of the floor to the other, in the wind, by means of a shovel called *ventilarium*; but when the wind was inconsiderable, the fan was employed, (probably a kind of sieve.) After the corn was deposited, the straw when not laid aside for litter, was sprinkled with beme, then dried, and rolled up in bundles, as provision for the oxen. Pasturing and harrowing corn were practised, when two luxuriant, as soon as the blades equalled the furrow.—Fencing was carried only to a limited extent, and their other agricultural operations differ little from those of the ancients on the one hand, and the moderns on the other.

A great part of the Roman harvest appeared to depend upon fruits; figs, pears, &c. were grown in gardens and orchards, and the vine was supported by a row of elms or poplars, &c.

Of animals reared by the Romans, the most common sort were the quadrupeds now in use; besides these they reared snails, dormice, bees, and fish. To the farmer's or bailiff's wife was committed the care of the poultry; which besides those common amongst the moderns, included thrushes, larks, turtle doves, and peacocks; but it was chiefly Rome and Naples that were remarkable for rearing extensively, the more delicate birds. In the time of the Cæsars, when Rome was in the zenith of her splendour, fat birds, as thrushes, and blackbirds, sold at two shillings each, although 5000 of them were frequently sold in a year from one farm. Pea fowls were sold at £1. 13s. 4d.; an egg was sold at 3s. 4d. A pair of fine doves were commonly of the same price as a peacock; but if very handsome, often sold as high as £8. 6s. 8d. L. Anius, a Roman knight, refused to sell a pair under £13. 6s. 8d. Fishes of certain species in the time of Varro, were so valued by the Romans that his friend Hortensius would rather have parted with a pair of his best coach mules than with a bearded mullet. Herrius's fish-ponds, from the quantity they contained, were sold for £33,333. 6s. 8d., and those of Lucullus at the same price. One capital principle in all Roman agriculture was, to sow less and plough better, since there is more gained by cultivating a small spot well, than a larger one indifferently. This they illustrated by many short sayings and stories. Pliny mentions a freed man who made his vineyard produce crops so much larger than those of his neighbors, that they accused him of witchcraft and accordingly brought him to trial. When he appeared in the forum, he produced a stout daughter, and some excellent implements, as iron spades, shears, &c. and presenting these, together with his oxen to the Senate, said, "these, Romans, are my charms." He was acquitted with honor. The following fact was also frequently advanced in favour of the above maxim. "A vine dresser had two daughters, and a vineyard. When his eldest daughter was married, he gave one third of his vineyard for a portion; notwithstanding which, he had the same quantity of fruit as formerly. When his younger daughter was married, he gave her the half of what remained, and still the produce of his vineyard was not diminished."

PROTESTANT CORNER.

THE USES AND PROFITS OF NUN-MAKING.

In our columns of last week we placed upon record the event of another triumph for Romanism in the (superstitious seclusion of a poor female within the savage cloisters of a nunnery. Strange, indeed, does such an outlandish ceremony appear in the face of a Protestant nation; but stranger still when we remember that deluded people, like the poor victim in question, are led to the perpetration of such doings under a false interpretation of holy writ.—To overcome the world were assuredly the precept and example of Christ in His pilgrimage upon earth; and to strive against the spirit of the world would manifestly appear to be the solemn duty of every true believer; but to fly the presence of, and to shun the contest with the world must be such an act of cowardice—such evident folly—as could only be in some half witted anchorite of the dark ages. It was the spirit of Simon Stylites and his demented fraternity who first invented this perverted interpretation of the divine will, and which, had it been introduced generally and practised universally, would have turned the whole of Europe into a desert and the world into a mad-house.

There certainly will always be the disposition in some people, when suffering from severe disappointment or laboring under the conscientious pressure of some secret crime, to tear themselves away from the healthful circles of human society—from the no-longer loved hearth of home—and from the no-more delightful friendship of companions—and shut themselves up among beings as unsocial as themselves. The mourner naturally seeks the precincts of the church yard, as the light-hearted the company of the mirthful; but this natural disposition is a mere burst of feeling—a cloud which is destined momentarily to pass over the brightness of every man's happiness at some time or other. There are none free from depression of spirits melancholy, and sometimes a feeling of despair; but these are only for a short period; "heaviness cometh in the night, but joy is present in the morning." Under these circumstances, it becomes us ever to resort to the hopes, promises, and consolations of religion, in order to fortify the mind against its invisible and secret enemies.

Christ neither retired to a monastery nor shut Himself up as a religious recluse; neither did the apostles nor first martyrs of the Church: they fought the good fight—they finished their course and yet kept the faith. But Rome is no imitator of Christ and His apostles. Papists have learned to put on the garb and to call it religion—to wear the symbols and to call them the substance—to skulk away from the spiritual contest and to call it sacrifice, zeal, and love to Christ!

Alas!—that intelligent beings can read the holy Scriptures and yet interpret them to mean so vain a mockery and so impious an assumption! But we are beginning to suspect that Rome must have some deeper motive than pretended religious views in the prosecution of monastic victims. There is generally a sequel to the history of the victim which eye hath not seen nor ear heard. Gold is the grand object of conversion at Rome; and a wealthy heiress, belonging to her idolatrous Church, is soon beset by crafty and designing men for the purpose of poisoning her mind against everything social, and of crying up religious seclusion as the height of a heavenly ambition. This scheme of "L'atrappe" turns out to be a real trap; since, having advanced so far, the poor wretched female is goaded on, at the convent gate, to renounce her property in favour of the convent. "Zeal and sincerity would compel this step," says her father confessor: thus a shameful act of spoliation is added to a social murder; and the wretched nun is consigned to her inevitable destiny. Death is the only escape from the miseries of conventual life, and this is prayed for nightly, as release from severe corporeal and mental suffering. A few short years completely transform the human face and body: the want of repose by night, the cold damps of ill-ventilated, and unfurnished stone cells, the harassing toil and constant exertion to keep up with the inhuman discipline of the house, the iron-shod sandals, the circlet of nails, and the flagellations of the servitor, soon dispatch the saint, or rather "sape," out of her miseries, and her cell door closes upon the remnant of the carcass.

Few save the inhabitants of the building itself are made acquainted with the system; but this was, and is, the discipline of many convents at present in England and Ireland. Cruelty and extortion are the two principles acted upon, and whether we recall to the minds of our readers the atrocious doings of the Black Rock of St. Ursula, or the cruelties of Stonyhurst college, or the clever business-like pro-