



## AGRICULTURAL EXCURSION

TO THE FARMS OF MR. H. DAVIS AND MR. MECHI.

*Report of the Deputation from the Maidstone Farmers' Club, to inspect the farms of Mr. Hewitt Davis, near Croydon, Surrey; and Mr. Mechi, at Tiptree-Hall, Essex.*

Mr. Davis and Mr. Mechi having invited the members of the Maidstone Farmers' Club to inspect their farms, a deputation was appointed for that purpose at the meeting of the club in July. This deputation consisted of Messrs. G. Whiting (Hon. Sec.), W. F. Shirley, W. Fisher, E. R. Hall, Maidstone; H. Hayes, Mardon; E. Board and T. Hayes, Boughton; G. Powell, Lenham; G. Viney and T. Knight, Headcorn; J. Hatch, Ulcomb; E. Day, East Farleigh; W. S. Avery, Boxley; J. Day, Barming; A. Stone, Linton; and — Young, West Peckham. The invitation having been subsequently extended to the members of the Weald of Kent Farmers' Club, the following gentlemen, members of that club, also accompanied the above deputation, and will make a separate report for themselves, viz.:—Messrs. G. Buckland (Hon. Sec.), Benenden; J. Hague, and J. Hague Jr., W. T. Neve, and — Collens, of Cranbrook; H. Wickham, Goudhurst; J. Large, of Staplehurst; and G. Hammond, of Horsmonden.

The following report of the deputation of the Maidstone Farmers' Club, is founded on the opinions of those members who are immediately engaged in agriculture.

### REPORT ON THE FARM OF MR. DAVIS.

The deputation joined Mr. Davis on Spring Park Farm, on the morning of the 17th July, who evinced the most courteous attention—inviting and answering every inquiry.

For the use of those members who may not recollect the particulars of Mr. Davis's rotation and general system, it is here repeated from the report of the deputation who visited his farms last year:—

1st year—Rye and tares, for green-meat and feeding off with sheep, in April, May, June and July; and followed by—

Mangold-würzel }  
Swedes } With a liberal dressing of farm-yard  
Cabbages } dung.  
Turnips }

2nd year—Oats or barley sown with clover.

3rd year—Clover, twice mown for hay.

4th year—Beans or pease }  
The beans have turnips drilled between the rows, and which come into seed, in Sept'r and Oct'r.

5th year—Wheat.

The quantities, and periods at which he sows, are the following:—

Rye—1½ bushels—in August and September.

Tares—1½ bushels—in three sowings, in August, September, and October.

Mangold-würzel—6 lbs.—in April.

Swedes—1 quart—in May.

Turnips—1 quart—in July.

Cabbages—1 every 3 feet—in June.

Oats—7 pecks—in January, February, and March.

Barley—6 pecks—in January, February, March, and April.

Wheat—3 pecks—in September and October.

Pease—8 pecks—in December, January, and February.

Beans—8 pecks—in September and October.

Mr. Davis's rye and tares for green-feeding are sown in rows at nine inches apart; all his white crops at 12 inches; his pulso at 27 inches, as are also his root-crops and cabbages on the ridge.

The principles on which Mr. Davis professes to farm are the following:—

1. Never to be contented until all your land has been trenched and turned over by the plough a foot in depth, nor until—

2. The wet land be made dry by deep draining, and consider no land effectually drained unless the drains be four feet in depth; that is to say, unless the water-level be so far below the surface, that corn shall have at least a foot of dry earth to root in, unaffected by capillary attraction of moisture from below, and the chill that water nearer to the surface causes; this can be done only by having the drains four feet from the surface, and within forty feet of each other.

3. For sowing of spring corn, consider the season commences with the new year, and have no other fear than that of being too late. When the ground is dry enough and fine enough, the sooner it is in the better; it will yield more, and the liability to blight, or to be beaten down, will be less.

4. In sowing, drill or dibble all; and have the rows not higher than a foot between them; so as to admit of hoeing either by horse or hand, and hand-weeding at late periods.

5. Hoe and hand-weed all corn; let not a weed in flower be seen amongst it; ever recollect that weeds occupy space and consume nutriment, displacing corn, and robbing the land.

6. Never sow two crops of one genus in succession: legumes or pulso may fol-

low cereal grain, and cereal grain may follow legumes or pulso; but never cereal after cereal, or pulso after pulso. Recollect, rye grass is a cereal plant, and unsuits the land for white-straw corn.

7. In apportioning the rate of seed per acre, do not lose sight of the bad consequences that must ensue if too much be sown. Bear in mind that if so much be sown as to produce more plants at first than the space will afterwards allow to attain maturity, the latter growth of the whole will be impeded, and a diseased stage will commence as soon as the plants cover the ground, and remain till harvest.

8. Manure should be applied only to green or cattle crops, and never to corn; by giving it to the former, the earth derives the advantage of the extra dressing that the extra growth returns; but when applied to corn, the earth is so much the more exhausted by the extra growth of straw, and frequently, too, the grain is thereby positively injured by being beat down and blighted in the straw, that it is always made more hazardous by dressing.

9. Were farmers to buy all their manures, they would find that the cost of maintaining their land in a fair heart would be about one pound per acre per annum. This quantity of dressing, every farm in fair productive cultivation would supply of itself, if a proper use and economy be made of its material to form manure, and a due care taken of it afterwards; but from misapplication and waste of the straw and fodder, and from negligence in the preservation of the dung and urine, at least half is usually lost, and the arable land of England may thus be said to be prejudiced to at least 10s. per acre.

10. Were no other injury done to the crops by trees and hedges in small enclosures, than that which arises from their mischievous shade and shelter, it would be equivalent to the gradual rent of such fields; but the farmers, sustain a further loss in the additional time occupied in its tillage by the more frequent stoppages and turns they cause, and by the encouragement to idleness in the men that they cover affords. I believe arable fields with large hedges and hedge-row timber round them, whose dimensions are under eight inches, are seldom or ever worth a farmer's cultivation. I see much poor open down land in profitable cultivation, and large districts of enclosed land of far better quality, ruinous to the occupiers, and I have not a doubt that to the difference in the size of the fields thus may be principally, if not entirely, traced. The deputation visited every field on