

THE PROGRESS OF ENGLISH AGRICULTURE.

[The subjoined article from the current number of the *Quarterly Review*, we are tempted, from its great intrinsic value and practical applications, to give entire. It scarcely admits of abridgment, and it will no doubt be read with both profit and pleasure by many of our readers. To trace the various stages of the advancement of agriculture in England, will afford a generally correct indication of the way which we must pursue in Canada, in order to secure similar results. We should be happy to see a similarly able pen employed on the history and progress of Scottish and Irish Agriculture, thereby covering the entire area of the British Islands.]

In the year 1856 a few Englishmen accepted the invitation of the French Government, crossed the Channel with their best live-stock and implements, entered into competition with the picked agricultural and mechanical skill of continental Europe, and found themselves by a long interval first in the arts and sciences required for producing meat and corn in the most economical manner, under a climate not eminently favourable, and on land which has long lost its virgin fertility. This is the problem which modern cultivators have to solve.

The live-stock of the British Islands are distinguished for three merits—the early period at which they become ripe for the butcher, the great amount of food they produce in return for the food they consume, and the large proportion of prime meat which they yield.

The agricultural implements of England are distinguished for solidity of construction, simplicity of details, and economy in price, as well as for the rapidity and completeness with which they execute their work—especially that class of work which in other countries is more imperfectly and expensively performed by the labour of men or cattle.

The best evidence of the superiority of British live-stock and agricultural machinery will be found, not in the premiums and medals awarded to them in Vienna or Paris, but in the constantly increasing exportation of both to every part of the world where scientific cultivation has superseded the rude expedients of earlier times. As to implements, said the Earl of Carlisle, in addressing an agricultural gathering of Yorkshiremen, “I saw on the plains of Troy the clod-crusher of Crosskill, the drills, the horse-hoes of Garrett, and the ploughs of Howard and Ransome.” On the banks of the Danube, Scheldt, and the Po, of the Mississippi and the Amazon, on the shores of the Baltic and the Black Sea, in the new continent of Australia, or in Flanders, the cradle of modern agriculture, English implements have the same preference as on the plains of Troy.

Farmers are prosperous, landlords are intent on improving their estates, labourers have ceased to hate the drill and the threshing machine; during the past harvest the reaping machine has come into working use; and competent judges are of opinion that an economical steam-cultivator has been almost perfected. The time seems propitious for reviewing the series of events which during the last hundred years have combined to place English agriculture in the position which it now by universal consent enjoys. Different men and different means have, in important particulars, founded the agricultural prosperity of Scotland, although the two kingdoms have more than once exchanged improvements. A Scotchman only can do justice to the unwritten history of Scotch agriculture.

There is rarely a great invention received by the world of which the germ is not to be found in some preceding age. This is the case with the system of