

slave 20s., horse 30s., mare or colt 20s., ass or mule 12s., cow 5s., ox 6s., swine 1s. 3d., sheep 1s., goat 2d. The lands belonging to the Church were, generally, the best cultivated. The monks themselves engaged in the labours of the field as a means of support. Then, as now, the superior education, and consequent intelligence, of our clergy enabled them to improve agriculture.

1066 to 1400.—In the eleventh century William the Norman conquered England, and the foreign knights and others who accompanied him, or who afterwards settled here, made many improvements in horticulture and agriculture. They were, however, great game preservers, and their forest laws for its preservation were severe in the extreme. They delighted in the chase, planted the New Forest, and converted many extensive tracts of country into woodland as shelter for their game. Their ruined castles abound in Essex and Suffolk. Within three miles of Tiptree Hall is a fine specimen of their architecture, called Layer Marney tower—the adjoining church containing effigies of the Layer Marney family. As a rule they selected good land. The population was now estimated at about two millions. The drainage of the fens of Cambridge and Lincolnshire were commenced at this period, A.D. 1220. Our Scotch friends were considered behind us in farming. Essex was one vast forest, and stood foremost in Domesday Book for its number of pigs, which there found their food under oak and beech trees—the number was 92,991—Hertfordshire having only 30,705. A great many goats were kept as stock; and, even now, very old men tell me of the fierce she-goats which rushed out upon them, some eighty years since, when Tiptree Heath was a wild and wooded waste. Lords of the manor had considerable privileges. They monopolized all the water mills; their tenants were compelled to send their corn to be ground. The Lord of the manor monopolized also the privileges of baking his tenant's bread at the common "furne." Windmills were not known in England until about 1150. The shoeing of horses with iron is not supposed to have been used before the Conquest. Horses were rarely used in agriculture. As there is much discussion now about wearing beards, it may be interesting to know that our laity all wore beards until the Norman Conquest; so I suppose the Normans cropped as well as conquered us. They were, themselves, close shaved or croppen, for the spies reported to King Harold that they had whole regiments of priests, inferring from the practice of our then clergy that close cropping and priestcraft were synonymous; our agriculturists will, therefore, be justified by precedent in discarding their razors. Landowners were not without their troubles; for in the reign of Edward II. (1307,) the estate of the elder Spenser, in Suffolk, was ravaged by his enemies, who carried off 28,000

sheep, 1,000 oxen and heifers, 1,200 cows and their calves for two years, 500 cart horses, and 3,000 hogs. In 1317 harvest was all gathered by the 1st September, and wheat fell to one-twelfth of the price at which it had been sold a few weeks previously. The fluctuations in the price of corn seem to have been much greater formerly than of late years. In 1202 and 1223 it was 12s. per quarter, 1237 3s. 4d., 1243 and 1244 2s., 1246 16s., 1257 21s., 1258 20s., 1270 9s., and also £6 8s., 1286 2s. 8d. and also 16s. Considering the high value of money at those periods, it is easy to imagine what suffering, starvation and disease must have followed the years of scarcity. Such enormous fluctuations could only arise from a concurrence of other evils with an unpropitious season, such as invasion, civil war and rebellion, from which, thank God, we are now exempt; and we ought highly to prize the blessings of good government and good laws, well administered, which we now enjoy. Much of our progress is founded on a conviction that life, and property, and liberty, are secure in this happy country. Farmers are no longer called villains and churls, subject at any moment to do military or other service, at the command of their lords; nor have they to guard their flocks and property against the thousands of robbers and murderers who formerly infested this country. The proportion of pasture land to arable gradually decreased, but was still as twenty to one. The steward of the manor (Hawsted, in Suffolk) kept the manorial and farm stock accounts in *Latin*. This would now puzzle some of our modern stewards.

A.D. 1100 to 1480.—During this period our flock-masters must have improved the quality of their wool, "the cheap and principal commodity of the realm," for it was highly esteemed abroad, and the demand exceeded the supply. I presume the mutton was also improved, so that the animals were better fed, for in former times sheep were kept for their wool only. "Villains" were gradually emancipated, and became free labourers, and a new class of cultivators arose, paying money rents. At the Hawstead Manor Farm, Suffolk (Sir T. Culham) the produce of sixty-one acres of wheat for three years was two hundred and ten quarters, above nine bushels per acre, and, as the price was low, this was no doubt a good crop, and certainly the farming would be quite equal to or above the average. The quantity of seed sown was two and a-half bushels, so that the return was barely four to one. The produce of the different grains at that period, on that farm, was—wheat 8 bushels, barley 12, peas 12, and oats 6—a very small return for the quantity of seed sown, and something like what is now grown in many foreign countries that supply our market. In the thirteenth century much arable land was laid down to pasture, on account of the high price of wool, and also because of the scarcity of labour. The