

THE PROGRESS OF AGRICULTURE IN GREAT BRITAIN.

Mr. Philp's history of Progress in Great Britain, is a most interesting work, abounding in curious research and important suggestions. The following is an extract from the Agricultural section :—

Commencing at the earliest period of British history, we are carried through the different ages of alternate advance and retrogression, thus rendered by the existence of peace or war. The most baneful periods to agriculture were those of the civil wars, which appear to have paralysed every effort for advancement in any art or science. The aggressive wars, too, of Edward III. and Henry V. were highly injurious to the progress of agriculture, by the constant draining off the rural population to supply the ranks of the armies in France. It was not, however, till the beginning of the sixteenth century that agriculture received any attention beyond that of the yeomen themselves,—the pursuit being held as almost contemptible. But about this time several books appeared on the subject, the earliest of which of any importance was "The Booke of Husbandrie," by Sir A. Fitzherbert, published 1534. In 1562 a very curious work by Martin Tusser, entitled "Five hundred points of Husbandry," appeared :—It was printed in black letter, and from this we will give the same extract as Mr. Philp quotes, it proving that a succession of white crops was even then considered injurious to the land :—

"Otes, rie, or else barlie, and wheat that is gray,
brings land out of comfort, and some to decay :
One after another, no comfort betweene,
is crop upon crop as will quickly be sene.
Still crop upon crop many farmers do take,
and reape little profit for greedinesse sake."

In this way, with much quaintness, the rules of husbandry were given, and few then known omitted. Mr. Philp remarks that "Great stress was laid by the olden writers upon the effects of the moon and wind. In Goodge's 'Booke of Husbandrie,' 1577, farmers are told to 'look that the wind be westerly, and the moon in the wayne;'—and another work, 'The perfect husbandman,' published 1657, says, That the observation of the moon and the wind helpeth greatly to the bettering of the ground.' The aid of chemistry in those days was never thought of : to charms, witchcrafts, and sorcery, either good or ill success was attributed." After taking us through the history of agriculture up to the end of the seventeenth century, the author concludes this interesting work with some excellent observations on the advancement made during the last half century, and deducing therefrom valuable statistical information. The work is well printed, and abounds with richly-executed illustrations of plants, animals, and machinery.

In Young's time, farmer's very rarely ventured beyond the boundaries of their own locality ; the market or the fair were their chief opportunities of intercourse, and there was too much eagerness to sell or buy, too much excitement from beer, to enable them to discuss anything of an improving tendency. Besides, the farmer was a man of prejudices ; he would scarcely look over a hedge to watch the progress of an experiment. When the father of Mr. George Turner, of Barton, Devon, the well-known breeder of Devon catile and Leicester sheep, who had learned something in his visits with stock to Holkham, began to drill turnips. a well-to-do neighbor looked down from the dividing bank, and said to his son, "I suppose your father will be sowing pepper out of a cruet next!" Jethro Tull said, that the sowing of artificial grasses was so long