

depredations. The aphid or "fly is the most common and destructive form of blight.

"We cannot (says Howitt) boast of our vineyards; but we question whether Italy itself can show a more beautiful and picturesque scene than an English hop-garden in picking-time. The hops, which have luxuriantly climbed to the very tops of the poles, having on all sides their heavy heads of scaly flowers in festoons and garlands, and the groups of pickers, seated in the open air beneath the clear lustre of an autumnal sky,—age in its contentment, and youth in its joy,—and the boys and girls, which carry to them the poles, covered with all their nodding honours, may match, for objects of interest, the light forms and dark eyes of Italy." Tusser, who wrote in 1557, gives, in his *Five Hundreth Poyntes of Good Husbandrie*, the following rules for the choice of a

HOP GROUND.

"When fansie persuadeth, among other crops,
To have for his spending sufficient of hops,
Most willingly follow of choices to choose,
Such lessons approved as skilful do use.

"Ground gravellic, sandie, and mix'd with claie,
Is naughtie for hops, and maner of waie;
Or if it be mingled with rubbish and stone,
For drieness and barrenness let it alone.

"Choose soile for the hop of the rottenest mould,
Well donged and wrought as a garden-plot should;
Not far from the water, but not overflown;
This lesson well noted is meete to be known.

"The sun in the south, or else southlie and west,
Is well to the hop, as a welcomed guest;
But wind in the north, or else northerlie east,
To the hop is as ill as a fraie in a feast.

"Meet plot for a hop-ground, once formed as is told,
Make thereof account as of jewel of gold;
Now dig it and leave it, the sunne for to burn,
And afterwards fence it to serve for that turne.

"The hop, for his profit, I thus do exalt,
It strengtheneth drink, and it favoureth malt;
And being well brewed, long kept it will last,
And drawing abide, if ye drawe not too fast.

B.

Communications.

BRANCH SOCIETIES.

[To William McDougall, Esq.]

SIR,—I perceive in the last number of the *Agriculturist*, a letter to you from the Ingersoll Branch Society together with your answer; and as I do not wish, as a Director of the County of Oxford Agricultural Society, to let the management of that So-

ciety be under the cloud that letter casts upon it, will trouble you with a few lines to put the matter in its right shape.

That letter was written to ask your advice on a particular point of law, and all collateral circumstances were laid aside, together with some necessary parts, in coming to the point, a circumstance which I am sure the writer of it will, in a cooler moment, himself regret. The new act having been passed late in 1852, it could only come into operation after the annual meetings of 1853. (1.) In the year 1854, our Secretary refused to take the affidavit at the end of the act, as far as it concerned the Ingersoll Society, as it was not a township Society, nor one formed from a combination of townships, but took members from every part of the county, [2.] Now, the affidavit only provides for country and township societies; and if any one having read the affidavit, inspects the act, he will see that the Branch societies are invariably so mentioned in conjunction with the township societies that one is irresistibly led to conclude that the township societies, or those composed of a combination of townships, are the only legal branches [3.] This matter was brought up and fully canvassed at the annual meeting of 1854, and the Ingersoll Society were requested to change their name, so that our Secretary might be able conscientiously to include that Society in his affidavit. Whether at the time they refused to do it, or neglected to answer the letter, I forget; I believe it was the latter. A resolution, however, was passed, that the report of that society should be forwarded to the Board of Agriculture, together with the others, stating the peculiar nature of the case. This was done and *their money paid over to them*, but they promised to forward to the Board the names of the townships of which their society was composed. This they now say, was done without the authority of the Board, and they refuse to recognize it, though it does seem singular that any member of the Direction should have taken such a step without the orders of his fellow officers. This year they repeated the proceedings of the previous one, and *again their report was forwarded, as before, to the Board*; (you will recollect that it was stated we refused to receive their reports, so as to keep them out of their share of the public grant;) and the answer of the Board was, that unless they changed their name, so as to bring themselves within the bounds of the statute, their portion of the public money would be withheld. (4.) You will perceive that it was the Board of Agriculture that in the first year requested them to change their name, and in the second threatened to withhold the grant in case of a refusal to do so. The matter of a name may seem trifling enough, as indeed it did to all of us; but as we have to act under the leading