

plify the subject, and thus make a little more plain the details of judicious cultivation.

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Farming in Flanders.

[The following account of Flemish farming is both suggestive and interesting, affording the reader a correct idea of the state of the Agricultural art in one of the most highly cultivated countries of Europe. It is a contribution from the pen of D. Emile de Laveleye to the French *Revue Deux des Mondes*, with a few concluding sentences by an English Agriculturist.]

We are in Waesland, in Eastern Flanders, on the north of the river Scheldt, between Antwerp and Ghent. The first appearance is of being in the midst of a forest; and the roads are planted, all the fields are surrounded, and all the ditches are bordered with trees, which, driving their roots into the one side, and the muddy water of the great drains on the other, display a most refreshing appearance of fresh growth. There are no hills to break the monotony of the flat, fertile, peaceful plain. At intervals along, and parallel to the road, the farm-houses rise from the midst of orchards of great apple-trees. Tacitus observed that "the Germans lived in detached dwellings, unlike the Latins, whose villages are formed of rows of houses," and his picture is here to this day. The farm house is now, of one story, built of bricks carefully painted white or of some bright color, with the shutters of a deep green. The roof is thatched. A path paved with bricks leads up to the door through a garden gay with dahlias and gillflowers, and through the white curtains of the window may be seen the bright colors of the pot flowers, which latest horticultural shows of Ghent have made the fashion. The cottage generally consists of four rooms, the largest being used as a living room; in the second butter is made and the food of the cattle cooked; the two others are bed chambers. Scrupulous cleanliness and neatness prevail not less in the hut of the poor laborer than in the house of the rich farmer. The ancient furniture—the oak-cased clock, the wardrobe, the white wood dresser—all show the care of the housewife. Plates gay with flower pictures adorn the mantelpiece of the grate of the huge fireplace and the shelf of the dresser. The iron hook of the churn and the copper vessels shine brightly in the sun. The walls are whitewashed

every year before the fair (*kermesse*.) In the farm-yard everything is equally neat; the dung-hill and liquid-manure pit are under the roof of the cow-house. There, too, five or six huge cows with swelling udders are sedulously attended on by the farmer's wife. In summer they get plenty of green fodder; in winter, straw, hay, and a sort of hot soup of turnips, carrots, beet roots, oilcake, bran, and rye flour or malt. The agricultural implements in use are a light swing-plow, drawn by one horse; harrows of a triangular, rectangular, and parallelogram form; barrels mounted on wheels for distributing liquid manure. But the special implement of the Flemish agriculturist—the implement with which he has fertilized sands, drained marshes and reclaimed thousands of acres from the sea—is the spade. They have a proverb which, as written is almost English—"De spa is de goudmyn der boeren" (the spade is the gold-mine of the boor or peasant.) The spade of the Waesland, intended to work in a light, well cultivated soil, is of wood, with an iron casing on the blade. Even on very small farms the plow is used as well as the spade; but the spade is employed to give the last finish to the preparation of the soil, to throw it into heaps for winter's frost to soften it, or into beds two or three yards wide divided by narrow channels. The fields are invariably of a regular shape, square or a right angled triangle, and seldom more than 2½ acres in extent. The arable land is thrown up in the centre, and slopes to the sides, so that water may flow from it evenly. On each side of the arable land, but a foot lower, is a border of turf ten or twelve feet wide; still lower is a plantation of underwood, which is cut every seven years. Lastly, the field is enclosed by a ditch, bordering with forest trees. The arable land is on an average seven feet higher than the ditch. This helps to make it perfectly dry. These ditches are indispensable, in a low flat damp country, to receive the rain-fall. In cutting them, the "spoel" is used to raise the level of the arable land. Thus each enclosure supplies annual crops, grass, which is watered by the overflow of liquid manure from the arable land—fire wood every seven years, and timber fit for building every thirty years. The arable land is usually worked with the plow; but every six or seven years it is dug over, the subsoil being carefully spread over the surface which has borne the last year's crop, the subsoil being supposed to have had the benefit of a fallow and a filtration of the manures applied to the surface. The consequence is, that arable land acquires a greater depth than even that of vegetable gardens. The chief produce is not grain, but flax and butter. The best farmers do not sell any corn—they give it all to their live stock.

Rye and potatoes are grown on the poorest land, and form the principal food of the agricultural classes of the greater portion of Flanders. The Germans are so fond of rye, that they cultivate it in preference to wheat, even on strong clay land. It also yields in Flanders, where the soil seems particularly favorable to it, upwards of ten per cent. more than wheat; it ripens earlier, and