

only partially check the inroads of the Picts and Scots. The Britons of that remote period were evidently agriculturists, having herds and flocks; and also, in Southern districts, growing corn, the roofs of their wooden houses being thatched with straw. They also made hay, for the wheels of their war-chariots had scythes blades attached to them; and having chariots, they must have understood making wheels. Although we have no authentic records before the time of the Romans there is sufficient evidence to show that Britain had for many centuries carried on a trade with the Phœnicians, who coveted the produce of her mines; and, in fact, the Belgians had partially colonised the South-eastern coast. No doubt the agriculturists of that day had their Webbs, Bakewells, and Collings; but they had no oilcake, turnips, or clover, to carry them through the winter. Having no Manchester manufacturers as their customers or suppliers, the ancient Britons depended principally upon nature for their clothing, in the shape of furs and skins obtained by their skill as hunters in the extensive forests and copices, or from the skins of their sheep and goats. Probably their nobles or Druids in the Southern Districts were clad with felted cloth. They grew woad, and used it for staining their bodies. The Britons appear to have been a noble and finely developed race, as might naturally be expected from their happy climate and fertile soil; and it can be no flattery to our British women to say that their personal charms and virtues have, from the earliest recorded period, exercised a most salutary influence on our race and welfare, for we find every powerful nation, from the Romans to the Normans, intermarrying with our British women; and we have no record of the introduction of foreign women into this happy country. Strangely enough I might quote my own case in proof of my argument, for my father was a Roman, and my grandfather a Saxon—my mother and grandmother being both English. One thousand five hundred years ago, Britain had possessed for more than three centuries nearly the whole of the Roman civilization, such as personal security—and, after payment of Roman taxes, security of property—arts and letters, elegant and commodious buildings, and roads to which no roads they have had since can bear comparison, except our present railways. It is easy to imagine that under such circumstances, and with the instruction and encouragement imparted by Roman civilization, British Agriculture improved and flourished, and not only supplied its own inhabitants, but exported corn to Rome. The Romans were compelled by their domestic troubles finally to abandon Britain, A.D. 449.

449 to 1066.—Now commenced the Dark or Middle Age. The Picts and Scots ravaged the South country, and the divided Britons, unable to cope with their fierce and barbarous enemies,

called to their aid the Saxons. These wild, warlike, and pagan people liked the country so well that they speedily sent for their countrymen, and eventually became masters of Britain; having, however, to sustain frequent and bloody wars with the piratical Danes, who occasionally overran portions of the country. Agriculture thus fared badly for several centuries, and we can easily believe Adam Smith, who says, "When the German and Scythian nations overran the Western provinces of the Roman empire, the confusions which followed so great a revolution lasted for several centuries. The rapine and violence which the barbarians exercised against the ancient inhabitants interrupted the commerce between the towns and the country. The towns were deserted, and the country left uncultivated; and the western provinces of Europe, which had enjoyed a considerable degree of opulence under the Roman empire, sank into the lowest state of poverty and barbarism. During the continuance of those confusions, the chiefs and principal leaders of those nations acquired or usurped to themselves the greater part of the lands of those countries. A great part of them was uncultivated; but no part of them, whether cultivated or uncultivated, was left without a proprietor. All of them were engrossed, and the greater part by a few great proprietors. This original engrossing of uncultivated lands, though a great, might have been but a transitory evil. They might soon have been divided again and broke into small parcels, either by succession or by alienation. The law of primogeniture hindered them from being divided by succession; the introduction of entails prevented their being broken into small parcels by alienation. But when land was considered as the means, not of subsistence merely, but of power and protection, it was thought better that it should descend undivided to one. In those disorderly times, every great landlord was a sort of petty prince. His tenants were his subjects. He was their judge; and in some respects their legislator in peace, and their leader in war. He made war according to his own discretion—frequently against his neighbors, and sometimes against his sovereign." When, however, they became, by admixture of race, Anglo-Saxons and christianized, a great improvement gradually took place. They no longer sold their wives and daughters as slaves, and they appear to have been possessed of the most of the usual live stock and implements of ancient agriculture. Murrain and famine alternately diminished their live stock and population, much as it does now in ignorant and pagan nations; and one-fifth of their herds perished every winter from exposure and want of food. The wool of the sheep was valued at two-fifths of the price of the whole sheep.

A.D. 866.—In King Ethelred's time the following prices were fixed by law: A man or