

beautiful condition—as plump as partridges, without being so fat as to destroy what little symmetry the somewhat vulgar-looking *contour* of the sheep presents. When you pressed their fat flanks with the hand, the sensation was as though you were squeezing a spring cushion. The fleeces of many of the long-woolled kind were literally as white as snow, and the breadth of back which the Leicesters exhibited, as they rolled luxuriously upon their straw bedding, was somewhat remarkable. The high condition both in fleece and flesh of the “woolly people” could not but be apparent even to the most superficial observer.

It is due to the society, to the judges, and to the agriculturists of the eastern counties, to state, that at this exhibition the rage for stock, fattened till they were fit only for the tallow chandlers’ melting tubs, has been entirely extinguished. Over-feeding, with all its painful and disgusting consequences, does not, at least as far as cattle are concerned, exist in this district. The stock exhibited is in excellent condition, and nothing more, and it would really appear as if there was some prospect that the encouragement of the society would now be permanently given to the production of the best breeds. The eastern counties have in times past been principally a feeding rather than a breeding district, and therefore the exemption of this from the great blemish of former exhibitions is the more creditable to them. To this district, tempted by the vast supplies of turnip and other artificial food, vast quantities of the lean stock of Scotland and England have been drawn; and from this, when in good condition, they are transported in extraordinary quantities, by the railway to London and the other great markets of the kingdom. Latterly, considerable efforts have been made to introduce throughout the eastern counties the purest breeds both of sheep and cattle, and a glance at the names of the most successful candidates in the list of prizes, will satisfactorily show that the matter is in good hands.

The display is upon the whole equal, if not superior, to that of any former meeting. There never has been an exhibition of the society in which all the classes of stock have come out so strongly, although there may have been occasions on which particular classes have shown greater excellence and been present in larger numbers. In no department was the show of a decidedly inferior character, and in nearly every one the animals were of extraordinary beauty, size, and purity of breed.

Both the council and pavillion dinners were as usual numerously attended. The Earl of Chester, the president of the society, occupied the chair. We notice, among the numerous visitors and distinguished personages, the names of the Duke of Cambridge, and that zealous patron of agriculture the Duke of Richmond, the Bishop of Norwich and a number of the clergy, including those two eminent geologists, the Dean of Westminster, Dr. Buckland, and Professor Sedgwick

of Cambridge, whose eloquent and instructive speech we could like, had we room, to transfer to our pages. It must have been a truly gratifying spectacle to every real lover of his country, to witness, as on this great occasion, so large an amount of rank and talent arrayed in the noble cause of agriculture.

We are indebted to the *Norfolk News* for the following report of the Rev. E. Sidney’s lecture to the members of the Royal English Agricultural Society, at their recent annual meeting at Norwich.

REV. E. SIDNEY’S LECTURE ON THE PARASITIC FUNGI OF THE BRITISH FARM.

This lecture was delivered on Wednesday afternoon, to a numerous and attentive audience. From the far too-extensive field selected by the lecturer for the subject of a single lecture, it, of necessity, was sketchy in its nature and rapid in its transitions. Some of our readers, not intimately acquainted with this class of the diseases of corn crops, and as little aware of the ravages they commit, will very naturally ask what are fungi? This very question Mr. Sidney undertook, some years since, to answer in a little work “On the Blights of Wheat and their Remedies,” published by the Religious Tract Society. “Fungi,” he said, “belong, botanically speaking, to the class of *thallogens*, of which there are three alliances well described in Lindley’s Vegetable Kingdom. These alliances are *algæ*, *fungi*, and *lichens*. The first live in water, or very moist places; the last two live in air. Between fungi and lichens the chief distinction is, that fungi are never accompanied by any of those curious green *gonidia*, or separated cellules of the medullary layer of the thallus, which, as well as their spores or seeds, form reproductive matter in lichens. Suppose then, the question asked, What is a fungus? The answer is, it is a cellular, flowerless plant, deriving its nutriment by means of a *thallus*, to which the name has been given of *mycelium*, or *spawn*; it lives in air, and is propagated by *spores*, which are naked, or by *sporidia*, so called when enclosed in *asci*, or little vesicles. The way in which these spores germinate, generally speaking, is by a protrusion of the inner membrane, or an elongation of the outer, thus lengthening out its spawn. This is the usual or normal mode; but, as will be hereafter seen, apparently not the only one, for we shall have to describe another method of germination in the case of certain parasitic fungi belonging to our subject. The term *sporule* will also occur, by which we mean the fine contents of the seeds of the fungi. We shall see, in the course of the work, that these fine contents appear to circulate in plants and grow. Fungi may be said to consist of a mass of little cells, or little threads, or of both combined in various ways. They have no fructification except their spores, or sporidia, of which the methods of attachment are singularly curious and beautiful. In their respiratory functions they approach to the peculiarity of animal rather than vegetable life, for they absorb oxygen and exhale carbonic acid gas. Like flesh, they contain a great quantity of nitrogen; and the substance called *fungine*, extracted from them by the chemist, bears a near resemblance to animal matter. They derive their nourishment from the substances on which they grow, and not, as is the case with the lichens and algae, from the media in which they exist. The juices impregnated with the peculiar principles of the matter to which any particular fungus is attached, form its appropriate food.”