

stand to Great Britain, it would seem that the modern system of improved British husbandry may be very safely accepted by Canadians as a standard by which to measure our agricultural prosperity, and to which we may look up as worthy of our imitation. This much by way of explanation for the frequent reference to British husbandry rather than Canadian, which may occur in my remarks.

Up to the beginning of last century the agriculture of Britain remained in a most deplorable condition. Very little wheat was grown in Scotland at all before the beginning of this century, while it is recorded that in the year 1723 the average return of all grains in the District of East Lothian, now one of the best cultivated and productive portions of the Kingdom, did not exceed three bushels for one sown!

The first systematic attempt at improvement in Scotland appears to have been made by an association of land-holders, who, in 1723, formed themselves into a society under the title of "The Society of Improvers in the knowledge of Agriculture in Scotland." It was under the patronage of the Earl of Stair, who is said to have been the first to introduce the culture of turnips into Scotland. This Society was, however short-lived; it failed to attract the attention of the tenant-farmers, for whose benefit it had been established, and who were doomed to another half-century's servitude to ante-diluvian prejudices. Upheld for twenty years, with considerable spirit by the nobility and landed gentry, it was at the end of that time abandoned as a fruitless attempt.

The husbandry of England had never degenerated to so low a point as that of Scotland. This was attributable (at least so say Scotchmen) not to the superior intelligence or enterprise of the English farmer, but to the acknowledged superiority of the soil and climate of England as an agricultural country. Be that as it may, we know that the distinguished Agriculturist, Robert Bakewell, who was born in Leicestershire in 1725, and who died there in 1795, did much for the agriculture of England by his persevering efforts to improve the various breeds of live stock. To him we are indebted for bringing to perfection the well-known Leicester sheep, in which he was so successful that some of his rams were let for the season for the extraordinary sum of four hundred guineas.

The Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland was instituted in 1784, and immediately began a career of usefulness. It proved, indeed, to be literally a model institution, for very soon after its establishment, numerous county societies sprang up all over the country. To this and kindred societies is due the credit of having led the way to the present improved system of agriculture; and therefore notice of agricultural societies as the first of those agencies to which reference has been made.

The Highland Society has, by giving its attention to a course of improvement, maintained that place in the public estimation which, from the first, it had secured. Its growth has been, if not rapid, at least steady and uninterrupted. At the present time we find the names of nearly four thousand members on its roll, and its exchequer sustained by an annual income of £4000 sterling from its subscribers, in addition to the interest of its capital, which represents a sum of £47,000 sterling.

For somewhat more than half a century after the establishment of this Scottish Society, the great body of the farmers of England remained fast asleep, but when John Bull did awake, it was as the awaking of a giant from his slumbers. "The Royal Agricultural Society of England," sprang into existence in 1838, was incorporated by Royal charter, and took its place at once as the champion and exponent of improvement in England. Its membership includes the most influential men in the Kingdom. Its annual revenues have already reached £10,000 sterling. The most noticeable feature in its character is, that, within its pale, peer and peasant, landlord and tenant, meet together on terms of perfect equality, whilst its operations are conducted on a scale of magnificence, befitting its high position and its ample funds. That great and good man, whose untimely death has cast a gloom of sorrow over the whole British Empire, the late Prince Consort, was President of this Society at the time of his death. He had long been a useful member of it,—a frequent and successful competitor at its annual exhibitions.

The aims and guiding principles of these two great kindred societies are identical. Though each has regulations peculiar to itself, the revenues of both are chiefly expended in premiums. These are divided into two classes: First, for excellence and improvement in the various breeds of live stock, agricultural productions and implements, and secondly, for written reports upon subjects connected with the practice of agriculture.

That a higher motive than the annual distribution of a certain amount of money actuates the Directors of the Highland Society, may be inferred from the rules published for the guidance of competitors. Thus we find that "no money premiums will be paid unless at least three lots are exhibited in that class, and not more than one-half of the advertised premium, unless there are six lots at least, in competition." "An animal which has gained a first prize at any previous show is inadmissible in the same class except for a medal," and "any animal that has gained a second money prize can only compete thereafter in that class, for the first prize." Such regulations are evidently calculated to call forth competition, to do away with monopolies, to provoke improvement, and are therefore worthy of our imitation.

With respect to the prizes for reports referred to, for the present year the Highland Society