

distributing some of the imported Haricots, with directions for cooking them.—*Agricultural Gazette.*

THE HISTORY OF AGRICULTURE.—The first of a course of three lectures on this subject was delivered at the Royal Institution, on Monday afternoon last, by Chandos Wren Hoskyns, Esq., B.A. F.S.A.: its subject was the ancient period of agricultural history.—Dr. Fleming, in introducing Mr. Hoskyns, remarked upon the desire which was felt by the council of the institution to supply lectures which should form a curriculum of education. In such a series they must, of course, include agriculture; but a difficulty here presented itself in the fact that so few distinguished men had devoted themselves to the study of this science. This was overcome by a gentleman of the highest possible authority naming to the council Mr. Hoskyns, and at the same time intimating his opinion that no other gentleman equally competent could be found in this country. Mr. Hoskyns was communicated with, and he at once proposed gratuitously to give a course of lectures upon the history of agriculture. He (Dr. Fleming) conceived, therefore, that Mr. Hoskyns was eminently entitled to their gratitude.—(Applause.)

The lecturer said that, surrounded as we were by the arts which accompanied the growth of civilization, there was none to which our attention might more naturally turn than that whose subject was the supply of our first physical want. The history of the productions of the soil was interwoven with man's progress in every other art, and was fundamentally connected with his well-being in every respect. While we were familiar with the manœuvring of the Greek phalanx, and of the Roman legion, we were in the dark as to their simplest art; while the sword and the shield had descended to us in minute descriptions, the form of the plough, the spade, and the loom, might be looked for almost in vain; and we should possess no idea of them but for some accidental phrase in a writer, some half-effaced sculpture, or the impression on a coin. Nothing marked more strongly an epoch in any art, than the awakening of an interest as to the particulars which might be gathered of its early history. There was no human pursuit which could be said to have reached a later state of development, without having been assisted by the helping hand of science, than agriculture. The great improvement in the art of late years suggested the inquiry why it was so long stationary; and some answer to this question might perhaps be found in the very importance of the subject itself; for all natural laws seemed to testify to the slow growth of whatever was most truly and permanently valuable. The history of agriculture was in some sort the history of civilization; and in the labours of husbandry we recognized the humble but persevering antagonist of those elements which had ever presented man to the student and the philosopher as the one great disturbing agent in otherwise tranquil nature. At the very outset, therefore, of a history like this, we must cast off all expectation of meeting with much of distinct or purposed narrative, and from a wide and varied field of research, we must be content to gather such indications as we could. The task we had to perform was to convert scattered links in a chain, as well as the scanty materials would allow, and to throw upon the series such connection as may be derived from the great privilege we possessed of viewing the subject from the vantage ground of after knowledge. We had an illustration of the kind of evidence to which he referred, in the history of our race given in the Bible, where we were told that Abel was a keeper of sheep and that Cain tilled the ground. Here were the two great branches of agricultural science as they existed at the present day—agriculture proper, or the cultivation of the soil, and the secondary branch of the feeding of cattle. Mr. Hoskyns

then read the description of the Egyptian agriculture given by the younger Pliny; and said we could not too much admire the arrangement by which the simple overflow of the Nile became an inducement to a regular system of husbandry and planting, bringing with it the necessity for a fresh division of land after each inundation; and as the study of geometry arose from the desire of each to possess his own land, Egypt was thus rendered the parent of agricultural, geometrical, and, ultimately, of astronomical science. After referring to the frequent scarcities recorded as having taken place in the east, and also to the condition of the nomade and of the pastoral life, the lecturer said that wherever the cultivation of the soil was little practised, the mechanical arts were but little understood. Flocks of sheep afforded the means of supplying the wants of men, for this animal easily adapted itself to different climates, and thrived upon the shortest and most scanty pasture. The practice of agriculture in earlier times, by supplying nations with a greater amount of wealth than their own wants required, rendered them not only permanent but powerful also. Peculiar interest had always been attached to the most ancient modes of constructing the plough. Mr. Hoskyns then referred to the representations of the plough, which were found in the Egyptian hieroglyphica, and said that the instrument there pictured was no doubt a substitute for a more simple one which had preceded it. Inquiry seemed to prove that the spade, as an instrument of hand labour, must yield in antiquity to the hoe. Mr. Hoskyns explained the three gradations of hieroglyphic writing,—the pictorial, the symbolic, and the phonetic—and pointed out, that the first letter of the word used by the Egyptians to signify plough had become the first letter of modern alphabets. The next agricultural nation of antiquity was Greece. Overflowing as the history of this country was with records of arts which delighted the fancy of men, Greece was almost silent about agriculture; and we looked in vain for the scanty notices that would have afforded some clue to their progress in an art which to the Grecian mind must have appeared so necessary. Mr. Hoskyns referred to the testimony of Herodotus and Thucydides as to the soil and capabilities of Greece; and afterwards pointed out the change which had taken place in the climate of Sparta, owing to the neglect of the extensive system of draining at one time pursued there. Traces of ancient cities were to be found in the valleys now rendered uninhabitable by the neglect of drainage; and instead of nurturing the vigorous and healthy race of whom we read, one sickly race succeeded another. The agriculture of Rome occupied a much wider field in history. From the very foundation of the state, amidst much that was fabulous, we learned one fact, which left its traces for many centuries afterwards,—that the assignment of a certain portion of land to every citizen was the first work of the state. Agriculture was peculiarly suited to the Roman character, because its requirements and its philosophy were of all callings the most practical. Nothing more clearly proved the high estimation in which agriculture was held among Romans, than the fact, that from its terms many of the greatest men derived their names; and the practical work of cultivating the soil appeared to have been as naturally the resource of Roman senators, when relieved from their legislative duties, as were the moors of Scotland to the members of a more modern assembly. The Romans were characterised by the great exactness of their modes of cultivation, and all the ordinary details were carried out with great nicety. In their ploughing, the Romans made their furrows straight to perfection; in making their roads in conquered lands, they allowed them to be turned neither by mountain nor swamp; and this straight progress was the secret of their success in agriculture and in war. There was