


AGRICULTURAL REVIEW.

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CONTENTS:—Agricultural Review—Editorial Department.—Mechi and the cause of his success—Winter evenings on the farm—How is a man to learn farming—Catechism of Agricultural Chemistry and Geology—A Brazilian forest.—**Farm Operations**—Farm work for December—Ventilation, Sheep, Colts, and young Horses—Good water manure—Feeding racks—Salt troughs—Ranning out of fodder—Manuring wheat—General suggestions—Properties of horse dust—Straw for fodder—Barn yard manure.—**Breeders Department.**—Poultry in frosty weather—Stock keeping—Sheep as fertilisers—Feeding oats to horses—Cooked and uncooked food—On the breeding of horses—Treatment of colts.—Grooming and feeding horses—Shelter for cattle—The flocks in winter—Fall and early winter care of sheep—How change of sex is accomplished in the beehive—Removing honey from hives—Coloring cheese—Dairy Produce and Management.—**Enginering Department.**—Steam cultivation—Put up the farming tools.—**Horticultural Department.**—Packing vegetables for winter—Cultivation of fruit trees—Rules for tree planters—Culture and varieties of the Raspberry—New method of mauling small fruit.—The Eastern apple crop—**Domestic Economy.**—Value of Indian corn—Hygienic pies and pie crusts—Cream pie crust—Pumpkin pie—Sour apple pie.—Powder of milk—**Commercial Review.**—The crops of the year—Prices current of home markets.

MECHI, AND THE CAUSE OF HIS SUCCESS.

LL our readers have heard of J. J. Mechi, or as he is now called "Mr. Alderman Mechi." He is, in many respects, a remarkable man. He made money by selling razors and razor strops in Leadenhill street, London. He still, we believe, carries on the business; but if this were all, he would have remained, like thousands of successful merchants, unknown beyond the narrow circle of his commercial and social acquaintances. But he turned farmer, and soon found himself famous. This did not annoy him—he rather courted notoriety. He endeavoured to show that farmers could make more money if they would adopt a better system of agriculture. He contended that his farming was highly profitable. Now, it is easy to understand why farmers who live on rented land should not like to have it shown how they could make more money and pay higher rent. James Caird, a Scotch farmer, obtained celebrity in the same way. He wrote a pamphlet entitled, *High Farming an Antidote to Free Trade*, and got soundly abused for his pains. The late Sir Robert Peel, who wished to repeal the duties on foreign grain, took him up. The London *Times* employed him to visit the different counties of England as "The *Times* Commissioner," and he wrote a series of letters to that paper—some of which were not flattering to the farmers. Some of them were very indignant. The *Times* defended its correspondent, and in the end he was elected to Parliament—and all owing to his taking up of an unpopular cause. So with Mechi. He boasted long and loud as his

profits as a farmer. Many of his statements were open to criticism, and he did not escape. He soon became the butt of ridicule. Paper bullets flew around his head like hail. The agricultural press joined in the crusade against him. His ideas were ridiculous, his facts were considered doubtful, and his conclusions certainly erroneous. Still, Mechi lived and thrived—nothing ruffled his temper. He invited his opponents and his friends alike to visit his farm and see for themselves what he was doing. They came. Some criticised, some praised; but all were treated with courtesy. His "Annual Gatherings" soon became what we should call an "institution." Landlord and tenant, the practical farmer and the man of science, met at Tiptree once a year to examine, to discuss, and to criticise his operations.

The recent English papers are full of accounts of the last gathering at Tiptree. A correspondent of the *Mark Lane Express*, while still disposed to criticise, writes on the whole favourably, as follows:

"Any one was free to go where he liked—to make his own observations, and draw his own conclusions. Here is the farm; here round about it is the heath, out of which it was snatched some 22 years since. One, at the present day, is growing furze, the other is growing immense crops of grass, clover, wheat, beans, oats, mangolds and turnips, and produces annually 200 pounds of meat per acre. The one by the investment of nothing is worth nothing: the other, owing to the judicious investment of a large capital, is commercially speaking worth 50s. an acre. There are certainly no cereal or root