

AGRICULTURAL SOCIETIES.

I happened not long ago to read a claim for preëminence between Flanders and England on their respective superiority in Agriculture. I must confess that had I to decide the question, I should adjudge the palm to the former of the two. My opinion from personal knowledge has always been, that no country that I had seen could boast of a luxuriance equal to that displayed over her immense fields, which have so often been embued with human blood and enriched with the victims of national contention. However as my residence in Flanders had been only transient and chiefly in towns, and my view of the country only that of a traveller, I never dared to set my opinion in opposition to that, which seemed to be generally and loudly pronounced in favor of British Agricultural superiority. If the statement to which I have referred be correct, it appears that far from being the case the return and produce of Crops is more frequent and more abundant in that part of the Low Countries than in any other Country perhaps in the World. The soil is never suffered to remain idle and is compelled to yield its utmost without being impoverished.

Nevertheless I never heard of Agricultural Societies, of Boards of Agriculture, of scientific, elaborate and voluminous Agricultural works, or of encouraging prizes in that Country. None of the Flemish have ever heard of those systems which succeed rapidly to each other: they have no meetings wherein they may sit successively at the council and at the convivial Board, and familiarly converse and freely oppose their plain practical knowledge to that derived from books, or from the partial experiments of their noble and rich associates and Patrons. Whence do they then derive their sure means of Success? From their reading in a book constantly open to every body, but which seems for that very reason to be overlooked as too vulgar for refined taste; in that book the only one that cannot lead into error; in that book which has for its Title, *long tried and never failing experience*. Indeed we see every where around us those small spots of ground which by assiduous labour and careful cultivation yield for our table two and three crops every year. Is the soil of our gardens of another nature than that of our fields? Are the Sun that warms and the rain that refreshes our gardens, exclusively their benefit? Is that Providence that rules all, more partial towards those little spots dedicated to luxury, than towards those extensive plains from which animal life expects its support? Certainly not; and the good farmers of Flanders have been led by their plain common sense to conclude, that by following as much as possible the means used to insure constant and abundant fertility of Gardens the result would be the same to their fields; their success has hitherto proved the justness of their conclusion.

