

*A Sketch of Belgian Husbandry.*

The farms in Flanders are small, the average size being not over fifty imperial acres. Some are held on lease, others are not. The terms vary from three to fifteen years, some multiple of three as far as fifteen being the duration of a lease. In some the tenants have it in their power to quit at the end of every third year, while the landlord cannot put him away till his lease be out. It is impossible to say what the average rent of the farms is; but so far as I could ascertain, it may be stated at 30s. the acre, for the best soils, exclusive of burdens, which are generally one-fifth of the rent.

The farmers of Belgium are a hard-working class of men—in the habit of laboring their farms, and generally ignorant of every other subject but their profession. But in it truly they show rare sagacity and experience; and though unaided by, and almost despising, the light of science, they discover in some parts of their system of Agriculture perfection to which science has never yet guided the farmers of this or any other country. When we look back to the ancient grandeur of Belgium, when its cities were the marts and factories of Europe, and consider the consequent increase of population in a country naturally unproductive, we will discover a sufficient stimulus to excite the energies of a people gifted by Nature with an indomitable perseverance and unwearying industry. This disposition, as well as its effects—their Agriculture—has been handed down to the present generation of farmers, and still manifests itself in many operations which the negligent farmer would consider unprofitable, or at least superfluous; and it is from this praiseworthy industry that Belgium, comparatively a poor country, is considered by strangers as unrivalled in the salubrity of its climate and the fertility of its soil, and that the great part of the kingdom is prevented from returning to its original barrenness.

The number of servants who live on the farm throughout the year may be stated at six to the fifty acres, and these are paid as follows:—The men who perform the work of plowmen and laborers, receive 10s. a month, with their meat which the farmers value at 6d. a day, thus making the full wages of a man equal to 25s. a month or £15 a year. Their food consists of boiled milk and bread for breakfast, soup or butter-milk and bread and butter for dinner, with potatoes and pork five times a week, and bread and milk for

supper. The soup used is composed, according to Mr. Radcliff, of butter milk boiled and thickened with flour or rye-bread, potatoes, salt fish, various vegetables, and eggs. They work from daylight till it is nearly dark at this season of the year, which, after deducting the hours of rest, will be about ten hours a day. In summer it is longer. The women who are hired to live on the farm, receive about 4s. 6d. of wages less in the year than the men. It may be observed that almost all the farmers take the same food as their servants. The day laborers, who are only employed at certain seasons, such as weeding the crops and engaging in the operations peculiar to flax culture, receive 7d. and 8d. a day, with their meat; and boys and girls have 5d. with their meat. An ordinary working-man will live very comfortably in a town in the south of Belgium, paying £15 for victuals and £2 for the rent of one room for the whole year.

The farm buildings are generally built in the form of a square, and consist of a dwelling-house, byre, barn, stable, servants' sleeping room, and cart-shed. The middle of the area included in the square is several feet below the level of the houses, and is admirably adapted for saving manure. The greatest cleanliness prevails in every department of the standing.

The strength of horses kept on a farm is at the rate of a pair of horses to the fifty acres. And the number of animals supported altogether far exceeds any thing we are accustomed to in this country. This indeed, is one of the secrets of their farming; and we have no hesitation in saying that, in this particular, they excel the farming of any country with which we are acquainted. The keep of a horse is estimated at 20d. a day. It is generally fed during the winter on oats, straw, beans and hay; and in summer on cut grass. The horses are small, but compact, handsome, with beautiful action, and high-spirited. As no attention has been paid to the improving of the breed of cows, they are not distinguished for excellencies. They answer the purpose of the dairy, for which they are principally kept: they are generally black and white in color. After being for some years in the dairy, they are fattened or sold lean to the butcher, who is generally feeder as well as butcher. The most of the beef used in Belgium, is that of these old cows. They have a practice by which they ensure the regular feeding of the calves, which they consider