

Pocket-handkerchief Shows.

Such ought to be the title of the exhibitions got up by some of our agricultural societies. Let a stranger who is well posted in agricultural matters visit one of them from year to year, and he will look in vain for any evidence of improvement. He will perhaps see a nicely-decorated hall, hung round with neatly embroidered pocket-handkerchiefs, quilts that are marvels of sewing-machine work, knick-knacks of every kind, enough to stock a respectable embroidery store; a very few bags of seed grain, a table of fruit, without any labels attached by which the onlooker can learn what varieties prove the most successful in the section; a few rolls of butter, in which the taste of salt largely predominates, and perhaps a good show of monstrosities in the vegetable line. If he ask where is the stock and the agricultural part of the show, he will be shown a few scattered lots of cattle, sheep and horses, a pen or two of pigs and poultry, and two or three ploughs and other implements, none of them, perhaps, any better than what can be seen every day on the most ordinary farms of the country. The same mediocrity and want of competition is seen from year to year. Notwithstanding the statements made by interested parties about the society being a successful and well sustained one, it seems to do no real good, but to expend all its energies and money, not in encouraging improvements in agriculture, and raising the standard of the stock or crops in the section, but in getting up a big holiday, and drawing the money from the pockets of the general public in order to again return it, in the shape of infinitesimal prizes for everything that can possibly be thought of as being produced in the section.

The section embraced within the limits of the Society may contain the best of farmers and the best of stock, yet they are only conspicuous at the shows by their absence; and if asked why they do not take an interest in the matter, they will make some excuse or other; perhaps one will say he did not like some one who happens to have been made a director, or did not like the way the prizes were awarded last year. This is all wrong. If the really good and enterprising farmers in the community wish to see agriculture progress, they must sink all differences, and show that they really desire improvements, by attending the meeting, helping to get good men in as directors, and that done, subscribe their money liberally to help the good work. Otherwise, they

must expect to be left out in the cold, and that the work of conducting the Society will fall into the hands of village politicians and tavern keepers, whose only ambition will be to get up a crowd at the fair, and handle as much of the Government grant as they can in a small way.

In contrast to this, we may note that some societies have devoted a good part of their funds to purchasing new and improved varieties of seed grain for distribution amongst their members. Some have devoted the whole of their funds to the purchase of choice specimens of thoroughbred male animals, with which to improve the stock of their section. Others give liberally towards a conclusive trial of the qualities of the various patterns of reapers or mowers, while others excite emulation in well-doing by giving liberal prizes for the best field of each variety of root crops grown in their section.

In order to give more encouragement to legitimate agriculture, it would perhaps be well if the Commissioner of Agriculture would let it be understood that the Government grant, of whatever amount it may be, must be devoted to giving prizes for thoroughbred stock, grain, and agricultural implements. The pocket-handkerchief part of the shows may well be left out or left to take care of itself, and no fear but it will hold its own in any place where there are but few progressive farmers or implement makers.

The present age is utilitarian and in no calling is there so wide a field for the march of improvement as in agriculture; but it will never flourish as it should do, unless some public spirit is shown by the leading men in each section to foster it in a legitimate way. It would be better, and conduce more to the advancement of their interests, if a more liberal spirit were shown by the rising generation of farmers. It would be nothing to a well-to-do progressive farmer to give \$5, or even \$10, per year, as his subscription to an agricultural society; and to see that his money is not thrown away, let him attend the January meetings, and if he does not want himself to be a director, take a lively interest in seeing that good and reliable men of the progressive stamp are elected. A society of fifty members, each paying \$5, and each determined to advance only the interests of the profession, would be decidedly better than one of 250 members, each paying but \$1, and aiming only to get as much of their money back as possible in a small way, by electing directors who would go in for many small prizes in every possible way

they could manage. Let secretaries and directors work as they will, it will be found that so long as admission can be had to the exhibitions for a trifling sum, the general public will do no more than pay at the gates; and those who are induced to subscribe a dollar on the understanding that they are to get their dollar back in some small way or other, are not the men who desire to encourage agriculture.

Preservation of trees in India.

In the very able statement made lately by the Under-Secretary for India, Mr. Grant Duff, when discussing the financial condition of the "Great Vassal Empire in Asia," he incidentally referred to a question of the very first importance to many other countries as well as India—to our own among the rest. The matter to which we allude is the preservation and reproduction of forest trees. There is nothing in which men of various countries have more shown their improvidence and shortsightedness than in the destruction of these woods. "Forests," as Mr. Grant Duff puts it, "are always looked upon as 'inexhaustible till they begin to be exhausted.'" In countries where the climate is generally mild, this has been specially the case, and accordingly it is in these, through the recklessness with which the forests have been destroyed, that the scarcity of fuel is felt most. This is the case all along the Mediterranean coasts. Mild as the climate is in these countries the people need fire, and as they are entirely dependent upon their forests for this, they find the recklessness of the past now taking the shape of famine prices for fire-wood. It is notorious that this want in Algeria has been one of the chief hindrances to French settlement in that country. Not only so; the very multiplication of railroads, canals, and so forth, while cheapening fuel in the meantime, has done and is doing more than anything else to exhaust the supply by laying a wider range than ever under contribution.

But the question of fuel, in connection with the destruction of the forests, is by no means the most important one. Wide districts, of what were once the most glorious portions of our world, are now mere barren wildernesses from nothing but the destruction of the trees; while other districts in various quarters of the world are hastening to the same condition from the same cause. As the trees are cut off, the amount of moisture is lessened; and by and by when all are destroyed, the springs disappear and vegetation and fertility is at an end.