

fashionable, and we shall not any longer have to complain that its interests will be neglected. We shall, in future numbers, give some interesting selections from Lectures and Essays read before the Society.

#### AGRICULTURAL SOCIETIES.

We know that such societies are calculated to effect much good, provided they are established and managed on proper principles. Without this they are not of much benefit to the general improvement of agriculture. The Royal English Agricultural Society should be the model for one in Canada, if we possessed the same sort of materials to form one here, which we regret to say is not the case. We have, therefore, suggested the propriety of forming a Board of Agriculture to act for Canada, in the same way the Royal English Society does for England. The following remarks from *The Bristol Mercury* respecting that society, may be useful in showing what might be expected from a similar Society or Board of Agriculture, formed here on the same principles:—

“The Royal Agricultural Society of England may be regarded as the natural head of the numerous ‘Agricultural Associations’ and ‘Farmers’ Clubs’ scattered throughout the country. From the wealth and intelligence, and scientific acquirements of its leading members, it is enabled to reduce theory to practice, and to engage in experiments of a nature and extent which would deter individuals or local bodies of more limited means. Hence its real value. It *proves* and then recommends. It is composed, not of dreaming theorists, or of scientific abstractions, but of intelligent men of business habits, anxious to turn the discoveries of science to practical profitable uses; to increase the productive returns of the soil by the application of manures, suited to its character and capabilities; and to increase the stock, and to improve the breed, of our valuable domestic animals, by careful attention to those principles of breeding the value of which have been tested by results.

“In order to accomplish this in the most effectual manner, and to pursue and render available the knowledge and information gained by its several members, in the course of their respective experiments, the society has established a Quarterly Journal in which, men glad with useful suggestions, and recommendations, are accumulated the fruits of the labours of men who, from inclination, interest, or a sense of duty, have turned their minds to the important subject of agriculture; and who, from their actual position and advantages, have been able to test the merits of discoveries, which would have lain dormant if recommended *untried* to the *hard-working* farmer. In short, the object of the society is to show the farmer what it will be for his interest to adopt.”

The same paper again observes:—

“If any thing had been wanting to convince us of the sterling value of such associations as the present, it would have been furnished by the appearance of the Show-yard. Persons of all classes, from the owner of the princely estate to the hard-working cultivator of the soil, were to be found mingled together in friendly conversation, exchanging opinions and receiving and imparting information in their remarks and criticisms on the various stock and ingenious

implements of husbandry. This, of itself is a great good. The agricultural mind too often becomes apathetic or prejudiced, from moving too much in a circle, and from limited means of observation; and the maxims and modes of a narrow locality becomes regarded with as much veneration as ‘proofs of Holy Writ,’ and are handed down from sire to son as fundamental laws. But as each locality is distinguished by its excellent management in some departments, and noted for its deficiencies in others, nothing tends so much to diffuse a knowledge of the one and to correct the other, as a mingling together of men from various districts, engaged in a common pursuit, anxious for improvement, and with the living proofs before their eyes of what may be effected by care, skill, and science. In the present instance, there were men from Hampshire and Northumberland—from Cornwall to Kent, with sprinklings from Wales, Ireland, and Scotland mingling with the dense crowds of farmers from Somersetshire, Gloucestershire, Worcestershire, Wilts, Hereford, Dorset, Devon and their neighbouring counties; and such being the case, it is impossible to calculate the sources of knowledge which may have been opened, the fresh trains of thought originated, and the obstinate prejudices which may have been broken down by a day spent in the Royal Agricultural Society’s Show-yard.”

The object of the society is not directed chiefly to the improvement of live stock, but to the general improvement of the cultivation of the soil and crops—of implements—and the destruction of vermin injurious to the produce of agriculture. Indeed, there is scarcely any subject that has any influence on agriculture, that is not an object of their inquiry and attention. When we have Agricultural Societies in Canada that will follow the example of the English Society, we may expect they will produce much good; but while our Societies direct their chief attention and encouragement to the improvement of live cattle alone, we shall not expect much good to be effected by them.

#### MR. HOWITT’S SOUTH DOWN SHEEP.

On the 136th page of the present number, will be seen a correct likeness of one of Mr. Howitt’s South Down Ewes,—a breed of sheep we consider in every respect well adapted to this country.

Within our recollection, the Canadian farmers have been sadly in error in their mode of improving their stock of sheep—they have run into two extremes in point of wool and mutton. Not many years since, a full-breed Merino or Saxon Ram would bring from £12 to £15. As the improvement of the wool was almost the sole object of the admirers of these particular breeds, no regard was paid to improve them in points which so much characterize good feeders; the result was obvious. The mutton was found to be ill-flavoured, and the stock not adapted to our cold winters. At a more recent date, the Leicesters and Lincoln breed of sheep have been introduced, and are at present held in high estimation. The principal fault that can be attached to the spirited gentlemen who imported these

sheep, and who still continue to do so, is that they have not paid sufficient attention to the improvement of the wool, a point by no means of secondary consideration in a country like this, where every farmer should feel proud in attuning himself in his own domestic manufactured apparel. We speak from experience. Five years ago, the *Mania*, for these particular grades of sheep became so very general, that we were induced to pay an extravagant price for a flock of them, and the particular sheep which we most highly prized, turned out worthless for wool, as the carding machines in use in the country, could not manufacture it unless they cut into pieces with transverse knives fixed for the purpose. The wool in question measured 13 inches in length and was extremely coarse. We wish it to be understood, that we do not mean to condemn either of the breeds in question. They may all be justly prized, under certain restrictions, but the idea we wish to convey is this, that some regard should be paid by breeders to the best interests of the country, and in their crosses should improve their stock in those points which they may be deficient in, and by that means we would have a stock that would not only be suited to our circumstances, but worthy of eulogy.

In our last we mentioned some of the particular features of Mr. Howitt’s South Downs, and have endeavoured to bring them into the favourable notice of the Canadian public, in doing so we have been actuated by disinterested motives. To show our subscribers that we are not alone in our estimation of the South Downs, we beg to give them the following paragraph from a late English paper:—

“THE BRISTOL MEETING.—Mr. Jonas Webb’s sheep, as our readers saw by our last week’s paper, carried off all the first prizes at Bristol; in addition to this he let there in the show-yard, six sheep for the season, at £409. 10s., and refused 120 guineas for the hire of another; and it is gratifying to us to add, that he exhibited four out of the fine best shearlings present, one of which obtained the second prize of 15 sovereigns, and the other three were all commended by the judges; thus proving the fact, that four out of the best five sheep were exhibited by this gentleman. The sheep, which obtained the first prize of 30 sovereigns against sheep of any age, was let by Mr. Webb at 100 guineas.—*Cambridge Independent.*”

These prices are higher than is paid for any other description of sheep at present in England. One hundred guineas for the hire of a ram for one season, is a very high price indeed, considering that the stock of sheep in England are so generally improved and of the best quality.

MUSHROOMS.—The following simple and easy method is recommended for trying the quality of field mushrooms:—Take an onion, and strip the outer skin, and boil it with them. If it remains white, they are good; but if it becomes blue or black, there are certainly some dangerous ones among them.