

SCOTTISH AGRICULTURAL WORTHY.

GLENTHORN. (NEAR COBURG), June 28, 1855.

DEAR SIR.—Permit me to request the favor of you to give the inclosed a place in the *Agriculturist*.—Mr. Brodie was an old neighbour and a much esteemed friend of mine, as well as the other persons mentioned, who were either relatives or intimate friends of mine, I am sorry to say they are all gone. There may be Scotchmen settled in Canada who may feel interested and be glad to read the inclosed

I am, Sir Yours faithfully,

WM BROWN.

To Professor Buckland, Toronto.

It is impossible to estimate too highly the obligations the agriculture of Scotland owes to those intelligent and persevering men who at the commencement of the present century occupied as tenants some of the farms of East Lothian. One—we believe the last of the name—Mr. John Brodie, Abbeymaids, has lately died at the ripe age of 75. Eminent as a practical farmer, Mr. Brodie earned a wider fame by the evidence he gave before the select committee of the House of Commons, appointed in 1826, to inquire into the then prevalent complaints of agricultural distress. This committee, as is well known, made no report, but the evidence taken sealed the fate of the Corn Law, though for ten years later that monstrous injustice remained on our Statute Book.

Mr. Brodie's evidence, with that of Mr. Andrew Howden and Mr. Robert Hope furnished some of the most decisive arguments urged against the Corn Laws, and demonstrated that the distress complained of was due to an erroneous system of husbandry which the Corn Law had encouraged and served to perpetuate. Mr. Brodie's evidence seems to have given offence to the landlord of his farm of Amisfield Maids; who refused to renew his lease, though Mr. Brodie had continued to improve by draining and manuring up to the close of his term in the full expectation of a renewal. When the lease expired in 1839 the farm was let to another tenant, the landlord profiting of course by Mr. Brodie's improvements. Of this, no doubt the law permitted, but the effect on the tenantry of the district was to create feelings of distrust and dissatisfaction.

We take from a memoir contained in the *North British Agriculturist*, a few passages of general interest. The writer says:

"Of all the great men who appeared in East Lothian towards the close of the last and beginning of the present century, and who shed a lustre over its agriculture none was more conspicuous or eminently instrumental in advancing agriculture than John Brodie. Entering the arena after Andrew Mickle had invented the thrashing machine—Lee of *Shatraw* had introduced the Swedish turnip, and, with Remie of Phantasie, had adopted the four course rotation, John Brodie along with Brown of Markle, Adam Bogue of Lippum, Robert Hope of Fenton Barns, and James Reid of Diem followed out every improvement in practice, and established on systematic basis the agriculture of that country, which has influenced and is still influencing, the whole character of Scottish husbandry.

In the year 1801 he entered on the occupancy of the farm of Fenton, on a lease of twenty one years, at a rent of £1,150, and which rent he continued to pay till the close of the lease. The occupancy did

not prove a lucrative one, as the farm at entry was in very bad order, and it was only towards the close of the lease that full crops were raised. This was effected principally by importing annually at Aberlady several cargoes of manure from Leith, a vessel being owned by him for the purpose. The quantity of manure so brought to the farm was at the time deemed extraordinary.

In 1820 he took a lease for nineteen years of Amisfield Maids Farm, near Haddington, to which he removed for the greatest convenience of educating his family. When the lease of Fenton Farm expired, the proprietor refused to let it to a non-resident tenant.

In 1826, he took a lease of nineteen years of Abbeymaids which was renewed by the proprietor Lord Blantyre. The change which a course of high cultivation can effect on the most unpromising soils, especially where the climate is favourable, has been nowhere more strikingly displayed than at Abbeymaids. Those who were familiar with this farm prior to 1830, and who remember the cold, thin, clay fields of the upper part of the farm, and the weeping and weak looking soils of those fields, through which the public road between Haddington and Dunbar passes, know what has been effected. Those not so acquainted with the farm at that time can form a very inadequate idea of what has been accomplished. The crops from being among the lowest average per acre in the county have for several years been among the highest, and the produce in grain and in roots equal to any farm in the same space in the United Kingdom. This change has been produced by the skill and capital of Mr. Brodie, a portion of the latter being however, borne by the landlords by contract on entry.—The outlay in permanent improvements, draining, subsoiling, &c. and in manures, has certainly exceeded the original value of the fee simple of the soil. That the occupant reaped and his friends will continue to reap the benefit of such improvements, is unquestionable; but had Mr. Brodie been equally unfortunate, as to a renewal of the lease, in this as in the previous farms, much of his skill, enterprise, and capital would have been expended upon improvements, the benefits of which others would mainly have reaped. In Amisfield Maids, he was engaged in extensive draining operations, up to the second year of the expiry of his lease. The increased value imparted to the soil during his occupancy, both of Amisfield and Abbeymaids, would of itself have proved a full return for his exertions, had he purchased the land previous to farming it, but farming the soil owned by others, neither skill, capital, nor honourable bearing protected him from the common fate of occupying tenants, his very position as an improving farmer being rather a disadvantage than otherwise."

Mr. Brodie's peculiar merits as an agriculturist are thus stated:—

"He was rather a pioneer than a follower, although with too sound a judgment to pursue novelty for its own sake. As an improver and as a cultivator, the same characteristic of patient perseverance was exhibited. Once resolved to undertake any improvement, he went straightforward undaunted by obstacles, and keeping steadily in view the object aimed at in the execution of any undertaking, whether in completing the draining of a field, or in preparing for, or in sowing a crop, patience in waiting for a suitable *tid*, and diligent perseverance when the weather was suitable, were alike the subject of remark. Scrupulously attentive to eradicating all weeds, such as couch and knot grass, on their first