

annual fairs are held, and whether correspondence is established between the societies in the counties and the State agricultural societies.

The large number of libraries reported by the societies is an indication of a wholesome sentiment pervading their membership, and is a step in the right direction; and it will be a happy day when the farmers make ample provision, in this respect, for the intelligent and earnest members of their families, when books shall be the companions of their households, and their homes, by means of culture and enlightenment, shall realize the ideal of domestic bliss. Then shall the isolation which now weighs with peculiar heaviness upon their wives and children be removed; then shall the pleasures and allurements of the homestead rival those of the city, and the young remain at home to stimulate each other by studies and experiments in the interest of their calling, thus increasing their knowledge and enabling them to become useful members of society.

Fairs are also a commendable way of increasing public interest in rural affairs, and an important element in the education of the people, being a good school for object-teaching, by exhibiting what can and has been done on the farm by farmers and members of their families. Their value is also becoming better understood by adding a more intellectual observance of the occasion, in having addresses delivered and essays, prepared by persons of experience, read, in which the practical and domestic duties of the farm are publicly and wisely considered.

Agricultural societies have been chartered by the Legislatures of a number of States, and this Department indorses most emphatically these State organizations; they form a nucleus around which the agricultural interests of the State can gather, and by means of the various associations in their counties can more readily develop the resources of the commonwealth, and confer the blessings of plenty upon its citizens.

Holding the soil in trust, not merely for ourselves, but for those who come after us, we fail in our duty if we neglect its thorough cultivation; it is therefore eminently proper that we obtain all the aid possible from association and co-operation, in order to secure a careful return of the various methods of farming, and learn the many ways by which thrifty and intelligent farmers succeed; and these results, with many others of a kindred character, are published for the common benefit by this Department in its annual and monthly reports.

The Department avails itself of these societies to distribute the seeds issued under the law creating it. The amount of seed for such distribution is limited

by Congressional appropriation; hence much care and discretion are required and exercised in its distribution; and the result so far has been that the Department has no cause to complain of any lack of attention on the part of the societies, many of them making intelligent and, in some cases, comprehensive reports of the results of the planting of seeds thus distributed. The Department reserves to itself the right to withdraw such appropriation of seeds on account of any special neglect to report as required by the law.

The annual and monthly reports of the Department are also sent to these societies for their libraries and circulation among their members, but the number issued is likewise limited by the appropriation of Congress; hence, where there are more than two societies in a county, a selection is made of the societies to receive the seeds and documents, so that each part of the country shall be reached.

MR. ROGER LEIGH, in an address lately delivered in England, gave an interesting description of a system adopted in France whereby the children attending 30,000 primary schools in the rural districts receive instruction in the culture of the soil. The child is shown the soil which best suits a certain plant to be cultivated, he is made to prepare it for planting, to sow it, to free it from weeds, to wage war against insects and grubs, and finally to record in his school books the advantages derived from the selection of special soils, the application of new manures and variations in the time of planting. These lessons are never forgotten, and the land allotment of the French peasant is made to produce a variety of vegetables fit for any man's table. The agricultural societies throughout France cordially second the Government in its efforts by bestowing on pupils and masters their counsel and assistance, and offering prizes for competition.

AGRICULTURAL INTERESTS OF MAINE.—The *Journal's* correspondent says there are some 50,000 farmers in Maine who probably own three millions of acres of land, valued at \$100,000,000, or about one-half of the State valuation. During the year these sturdy tillers of the soil have been rewarded by generous crops. The yield of hay and potatoes, their two staple crops, has been unusually good, while other products have also yielded abundantly. No occupation in Maine pays better than farming, the annual value of the crops being some \$60,001,000—nearly, quite one-half of which comes from the hay crop alone. A Bangor potato dealer estimates the potato crop this year to be 7,000,000 bushels, of which 1,000,000 bushels have been exported from the State.

FREE trade suits France but not England in this case:—In the course of the discussion on the budget of the Minister of Agriculture and Commerce, at Versailles last week, the Minister of Agriculture referred to the deplorable state of the cattle markets on the coast of Brittany, England, he said, having placed difficulties in the way of the importation of cattle into the British Isles. The trade has been reduced to a mere nothing. England was under a great mistake in its opinion of the sanitary condition of the Breton cattle. The error ought to be dissipated. Whereas the sale of Breton cattle in England in 1868 had amounted to 38,000, this year only 800 head had been sold. The purchases also had been reduced from 15,900,000fr. to an insignificant sum, in consequence of the measures of the Privy Council of England. The Minister said he had taken the matter, and more especially the existing state of things, into consideration, and had endeavoured to establish certain sanitary arrangements which would satisfy England. The urgency of these measures was now better understood, and there was reason to hope that England would again open the ports to the French cattle markets.

THE TAMING OF VICIOUS HORSES by a Mexican officer is thus described:—"He took a cord about the size of a common bed cord, put it into the mouth of the horse like a bit, and tied it tightly on the animal's head, not painfully tight, but tight enough to keep the ear down and the cord in its place. This done he patted the horse gently on the side of the head and commanded him to follow; and instantly the horse obeyed, perfectly subdued, and as gentle and obedient as a well-trained dog, suffering his legs to be lifted with impunity, acting in all respects like an old stager. That simple string, thus tied, made him at once docile and obedient as any one could desire." The gentleman who thus furnished this exceedingly simple means of subduing a very dangerous propensity intimated that it is practised in Mexico and South America in the management of wild horses. Be this as it may, he deserves the thanks of all owners of such horses, and especially the thanks of those whose business it is to shoe or groom the animal.

THE most useful American CATALOGUE OF FRUIT TREES AND PLANTS we have seen for a long time is that of W. S. Little, *Commercial Nurseries, Rochester, N. Y. State*. It contains in terse, descriptive terms the exact information which a purchaser requires, and those of our readers who mean to plant will do well to send for a copy. Mr. L's advertisement will be found in another column.