

fertility, and increase to his own fields." For this he was ordered peremptorily, by Albinus, a Roman general skilled in agriculture, to answer the charge before him. Cresinus fearing the issue, resolved upon his best defence, brought his plough and other rural implements, and displaying them openly, together with his daughter, a stout, strong and handsome lass; then turning to his fellow citizens said; "My masters, these are the soceries, charms, and all the enchantments that I use; I might also allege my own travel and labour, my early rising and late sitting up, and the painful sweat that I daily endure; but I am not able to present these to your view, nor to bring them with me into this assembly." This bold, ingenious, and we may add truthful defence subdued the jealousy and hatred of his assailants. Cresinus was pronounced not guilty; and it is said that his opposing neighbors had the good sense to benefit afterwards by his improvements and example. This incident is only one of a very numerous class, showing that it is the common lot of discoverers, and reformers to incur the jealousy, mistrust, and not unfrequently the persecution even, of their neighbors and fellow countrymen.

As the agriculture, commerce, and institutions of the British Islands are essentially connected with the interests of the Colonies and dependencies of the Empire,—including no small portion of this mighty continent of America,—in tracing a few of the salient lines of the state and progress of British Agriculture, we shall be the better prepared to understand and practice our own. For it should ever be borne in mind that the great scientific and practical principles of this noble and useful art are essentially the same all over the world; and that it is the province of reason and experience to modify their practical applications so as to meet the varying conditions of soil, climate, markets, &c.

The Norman conquest was no doubt in many respects a great benefit to the agriculture of England, then in the rudest state, by the introduction of improved practices from a more advanced country, but the subsequent disposition of the Norman Kings to turn smiling corn fields and green pastures into wild hunting grounds, was injurious to the progress of agriculture as it was to the prosperity of the nation, often resulting in a most exasperating tyranny. The profound and faithful historian of the Middle Ages, Mr. Hallam, in reference to these matters observes: "The exclusive passion for the sports of the field produced those evils which are apt to result from it; a strenuous idleness, which disdained all useful occupations, and an oppressive spirit towards the peasantry. The devastation committed under the pretence of destroying wild animals, which had been already protected in their depredations, is noted in various authors, and has also been the topic of popular ballads. What effect these must have had on agriculture it is easy to conjecture. The levelling of forests, the draining of morasses, and the extirpation of mischievous animals which inhabit them, are

the first objects of man's labor in reclaiming the earth to his use; and these were forbidden by a feudal race, whose control over the progress of agricultural improvement was unlimited, and who were not willing to sacrifice their pleasures to their avarice."

From the fifth to the eleventh centuries, when the nation was frequently embroiled in feudal wars, agriculture, like the other arts, found a refuge in the religious houses, and was both encouraged and improved by the sacerdotal orders. "We owe,"—observes a modern writer, the agricultural restoration of great part of Europe to the Monks; they chose, for the sake of retirement, secluded regions, which they cultivated with the labor of their own hands. Several charters, are extant granted to Convents, of lands which they had recovered from a desert condition. To the Benedictine order, severe labour in the acts of tillage stood in the somewhat strange double capacity of an usual penance, and a favorite occupation."

The Monks were in fact not only the most advanced agriculturists, but the best landlords in the highest acceptance of the word. Connected by the ties of ecclesiastical dependence and intercourse with Rome, the fact at once of their supreme authority, and of whatever still remained to the world of ancient art, science, and literature, and employed in the transcription of manuscripts whose language was a sealed repository of knowledge to all but their own order, they kept alive the embers of past learning and civilization, which were otherwise threatened with an utter extinction; and though the georgical writings of Greece and Rome were deficient in that one great preliminary of northern Agriculture, the subject of Drainage, it may be readily conceived from the works of the Roman writers that the mental influence of their studies would be more or less perceptible over the lands of proprietors thus comparatively enlightened. Extensive draining operations were commenced, and successfully carried to completion by the religious houses, in various parts of the kingdom; such as the fens of Lincolnshire and Somersetshire of Romney Marsh in Kent, during, and subsequent to the reign of Edward the first. Some of these districts are still known by the names of the ecclesiastical dignitaries who commenced or carried out their reclamation as "Becket's Marsh," "Boniface's Marsh," and "Baldwin's Marsh," forming that rich and extensive alluvial tract along the Kentish coast, now denominated Romney Marsh, so celebrated for its large long-woolled sheep. There appears to have been considerable improvement effected about this period in the rude agricultural implements which have come down from still remoter times. The value of manures began to be appreciated, and their application to the crops better understood. Some of the more far seeing and close observers seem to have had an indistinct idea of the benefits of rotation, and the legislature made enactment relative to the proper preparation of the soil for cropping, and the keeping of the ground free