

fields, as is the case with us ; but these hedge-rows are a source of considerable profit to the landlord and to the tenant, the former reserving the trees, and the latter having the liberty of cutting the underwood every seven years. This is so general a practice, that the incoming tenant is obliged to pay to the outgoing the value of all the underwood, which has not been cut the last year, according to its growth ; he receiving the same allowance when he quits. This insures the proper care of the fences. The ditches are cleared out as often as there is any deposit of mud sufficient to pay for the expense, which is generally in two or three years. There is no such thing as a raised bank to be seen in all Flanders, except the dykes along the rivers. The earth which is dug out of the ditches is spread over the land on each side, in order to raise it, and where there is any danger of floods in winter the ditches are wide and more numerous, in order to raise the land above the floods. In low places the ditches are so near to each other, that they take up a large portion of the land, which lies in narrow strips between them ; but this is no loss, as the earth raises the land, and lays it dry, besides deepening the soil : and those strips of land drained by the ditches, and by the trees planted along them, which suck up a great portion of the superfluous moisture, are in general very productive. Where the land lies high and dry no ditches or hedge-rows are to be seen ; the fields and properties are only distinguished by land-marks, and the whole has the appearance of a common field, although no right of common pasture exists over them, except such as is voluntarily given to the common flock of sheep, or to the sheep of the person who keeps a bull and a ram for the use of the parish, as was mentioned before (page 94.)

Fences and ditches, where they are not necessary to carry off the water, are considered as taking up ground which may be more profitably cultivated. This is a general notion on the continent, contrary to our invariable practice of enclosing with a hedge and ditch. Fences and hedges are not only useful to protect the crops from the inroad of cattle or trespassers, but they break the force of the winds, and often prevent the storms from laying the corn. In cold springs also they intercept the sharp, cold winds, and prevent them from nipping the young blade in its tender state. If they intercept the rays of the sun in summer, they do so in a very trifling degree : and, provided there are no high trees in the fences, a neat low hedge will have little effect in retarding the maturity of the crop. Trees in hedge-rows, except