

yet, and will continue to be so while sound statesmanship continues in the future, as it has in the past, to guide the helm.

The limits of a letter will only admit of a few allusions to such matters that have come under my observation as may possess some degree of interest to your readers, and here I may just remark that the site chosen for the Bedfordshire Agricultural Show this year, was the most beautiful, and comfortable for the cattle, that I have yet seen on either side of the Atlantic. The fine old park of Luton was granted for the purpose, and both visitors and stock felt truly grateful for the cool shade of those gigantic and symmetrical trees, such as form the characteristic beauty of English park scenery, during one of the hottest days I ever experienced. The show itself offered but few occasions for comment. I felt rather disappointed in its extent; many of our local shows in Canada exceed it in that respect. The quality, however, was generally very good, yielding therefore a *high average*, which I find to be now-a-days the ordinary condition of British exhibitions. I well remember the time when it was not so; a fact which should encourage Canadians to follow in this matter—and we may do so beneficially in others—the example of the parent State. The cattle were all either pure short-horns, or very largely mixed with strains of that blood. Mr. Charles Howard, of Bedfordham, had some very fine specimens, and also Oxford Down sheep, a breed much cultivated and appreciated in this section. In most of the flocks bred for the butchers a mixture of Down blood of some variety, either with Leicesters or Lincolns, is quite apparent; but crosses are seldom bred from. The new Lincoln is decidedly making progress in many places, while in others the Leicester or Cotswold has a strong hold. The cart horses at the show I consider too heavy, at least for Canada, and even the lighter soils of England. But the modern Suffolk Punch, (not wholly unknown in Canada), seems to combine many excellencies as a draught horse—he has often good action, with decidedly a large amount of muscle compressed into a small compact compass. The dinners which inevitably form sequels to English shows, are not among the least of their attractions; good humour, and sometimes good speeches, containing useful and reliable information as the results of experience, characterize the proceedings. I must not omit to mention that in connection with Luton Park, a farm of a thousand acres, is the most complete and extensive farmery, probably, in the world. I have neither time nor space to enter on a full description of it here, but having got full particulars and a ground plan of the whole, I hope on my return to prepare a paper on the subject. The changes introduced of late years into agricultural architecture are certainly no less striking than those belonging strictly to the art of culture.

I had the pleasure of spending a day or two with my old highly esteemed friend, Mr. Thomas Bennett, land steward of the Duke of Bedford, Woburn Abbey. I wish I could give your readers an idea of the management of this princely domain. Park, (3000 acres within a high wall,) gardens, conservatories, with a mansion reaching back into remote antiquity, all on a magnificent scale, with numerous and extensive farms, villages, and churches, comprising the elements of a happy, orderly and well-to-do moral community. Whatever objections may apply to some large estates on account of bad management, have certainly no relevancy to Woburn. The Dukes of Bedford have for centuries been honourably distinguished, not only for sound statesmanship, but for an intelligent and munificent encouragement to agriculture and horticulture in all their branches; and some of the most happy and instructive gatherings to promote these objects have been held at this distinguished place. For many years past a thorough system of draining has been progressively carried out on this estate; a large number of improved farmeries and cottages erected, and every encouragement given to

the improvement of agriculture, including both the farmer, mechanic and labourer. The old herd of Hereford cattle is still kept up in the park, and this breed continues to occupy a high position as beef cattle.

I have also had the gratification of inspecting the agricultural works of Messrs. James and Frederick Howard, of Bedford, and of the Messrs. Ransome and Simes, of Ipswich. These are the most extensive and complete of any, perhaps, in the world, and having jotted down many particulars, I propose, when I return, to give your readers a pretty full account of them. It is workshops like these that impress the conviction on the mind, not to be doubted or misunderstood, that agriculture is indeed rapidly becoming a science, and can no longer be looked down upon as a mere empirical art. The Messrs. Howard have a farm of some 600 acres near their works, and certainly their wheat, after steam culture, looked much more luxuriant than that of their neighbours after the ordinary manner. The fact is, both chemical and mechanical science are largely contributing their valuable aid to British agriculture, which owes probably as much of its modern improvements to the latter as to the former. I had time only for a mere glance at the farm of Mr. Charles Howard, a brother of the manufacturers, but that glance was sufficient to convince me that he occupies a high position among his countrymen. His extensive herd of Short-horns contains some animals not to be excelled anywhere, and as to his Oxford Downs, they have already more than a British reputation. Mr. Chas. Howard is regarded as one of the most intelligent and successful English breeders.

On my return to London, through Essex, I spent a very pleasant day with Mr. Mechi at Tiptree Hall, near Kelvedon. It was twenty-four years since I visited this wide-famed farm, soon after Mr. Mechi had commenced his improvements. What a change did I witness! literally a "wilderness made to blossom as the rose." Here skill and capital have converted a formerly barren heath into a highly productive farm. It has been the work of enlightened perseverance, and the application of capital to a degree which many sober-minded people regarded, if not as reckless, still decidedly unprofitable. Mr. Mechi shows by his accounts that it has been far otherwise, and that he has reaped, at least, a fair profit. I can not now go into details, which I shall be happy to do at some future opportunity. I found Mr. Mechi as frank and generous as ever, although near a quarter of a century has elapsed since I last saw him; and he has suffered heavy losses during the recent commercial panic. I looked over seventy-five acres of wheat, drilled with one bushel of seed per acre, with a prospect of more than fifty-five bushels. A portion was dibbled with a peck per acre, and the crop, though a few days later in ripeness, will probably prove as large as the former; a fact clearly showing that superior cultivation requires less seed.

The agricultural prospects here are not very bright. The weather continues extremely hot and dry. Hay not half a crop, and spring grain generally must be very deficient. Swedes will be an entire failure, and mangels in some places nearly as bad. Keep for stock is very deficient, and should the drought continue for a few weeks longer (and there are no signs of a change at present) the consequences will be disastrous, for in many places there will be neither food nor water for sheep and cattle. Fortunately there is a considerable amount of old hay left throughout the country. Wheat is decidedly the best crop, and in the best, moist soils, will be heavy, but the yield generally will be affected from want of rain. Hops promise an abundant crop, but they have suffered of late from the same cause. The harvest will be unprecedentedly early; peas, barley and oats, on the forward soils, are already cut. It is said that so intense a drought has not been experienced in England and portions of the continent since 1818. I hear that in Canada the copious rains of May and part of June have been succeeded by warm sunshine, so that abundant crops may be reasonably anticipated; a result most devoutly to be desired. I am off to the show of the Royal at Leicester in the morning, and will send you some account of it the earliest opportunity.

GEO. BUCKLAND.

Hedge-Plant Growers' Convention

A convention of hedge-plant growers was held at Bloomington, Ill., June 25, 1868, for the purpose of organizing an association, and in various ways advancing the interests of their business. A Constitution and set of By-Laws were adopted, to the effect that the organization be called the "North-Western Hedge-Plant Growers' Association;" its officers to be

a President, not less than five Vice-Presidents (who shall be *ex officio* Corresponding Secretaries), a Secretary and Treasurer, all to be elected annually. Any person actually engaged in growing hedge-plants may become a member for one year on payment to the Treasurer of \$1 admission fee.

Capt. W. H. Mann, of Gilman, Illinois, was unanimously elected President, and on taking the Chair said he thanked the Association for this honor; that the fact that the hedge-growing interest of the North-west now involved millions of capital showed the necessity for this organization, and he bespoke for it a future of usefulness, both to the growers of plants and to the farmers who must depend upon them for fencing material. He had been over twenty years a hedge-plant grower, and he saw men now making mistakes that caused him serious losses ten or fifteen years ago. The discussions of this Association would prevent such errors by its members hereafter.

The following Vice-Presidents were then chosen: G. N. Parker, Kankakee, Illinois; S. W. Lamson, State Centre, Iowa; E. Safford, Marengo, Illinois; D. W. Norris, Paxton, Illinois; M. Neal, Bloomington, Illinois.

H. N. Pearce, of Bloomington, was elected Secretary and Treasurer.

Official Reports of the Condition of the Crops in the United States.

The following is from the Department of Agriculture:—Wheat—an increase of the average is observed, in a greater or less degree, in nearly every State. The Eastern States show no increase of fall sowing, except four per cent. in Vermont, but the enlarged area of spring crops, which are the main home reliance for bread supplies, is very marked in Maine and Vermont; the former showing an advance of twenty-six per cent., the latter of sixteen per cent. New York indicates five per cent. increase in the fall average, with no change in spring wheat. In Delaware a reduction of seven per cent. appears, while an increase of nine per cent. is shown in Maryland, eleven in Virginia, seventeen in North Carolina and South Carolina, eleven in Georgia, ten in Alabama, fifty-three in Mississippi, thirty-one in Arkansas, forty in Tennessee, and thirty in West Virginia. The increased acreage in the West, where the great bulk of the wheat crop of the country is grown, is of peculiar significance of the State in which winter wheat is mostly cultivated. Ohio presents an increase of five per cent. of that variety; Indiana, ten per cent.; and Michigan seventeen per cent. In portions of these States an unusual effort has been made to enlarge the area by spring sowing, showing respectively eleven, fourteen, and six per cent. increase in the States, which rely mainly upon spring-sown crops. Illinois indicates an increase in that variety of twelve per cent.; Wisconsin, four per cent.; Minnesota, twenty-three per cent.; Iowa, twelve per cent.

An analysis of these averages will show a general average of about eleven per cent. increase in the fall sowing, and twenty-eight per cent. in the breadth of spring wheat, altogether an increase of eighteen to twenty per cent. in the aggregate number of acres in wheat. The reports of the condition for June are generally very favourable. A promise of the best crop ever known is held out by local correspondents in many places, particularly west of the Mississippi. Winter grain on new land is looking very well; but there is a large proportion of wheat sown on old, worn-out land, poorly managed, and a very light crop will be the result. Barley—Kentucky, Missouri, and Minnesota have given increased attention to barley, but most of the other States are either slightly below the average or barely up to it. The fall sowing especially was deficient in most of the Western States, but the deficiency was generally made up by extra exertions in preparing for a spring crop. Oats—An increased area in oats, averaging seven per cent. for the entire country, is reported. Clover—It is worthy of note that every State in the Union reports an increased attention to the clover crop, with the single reduction of two per cent. in New Hampshire, and the prospect for a good crop is almost universal, Kentucky only being marked a trifle below the average. Pastures—Delaware and Wisconsin are the only States failing to give increased averages. Fruits—The appearance of apple blossoms was unusually late on the Atlantic coast, opening very fully; at last they were injured in many places by storms and unpropitious weather. In the central portion of the West, the bloom of the orchards was not generally abundant. It was small on the Atlantic coast between New York and Georgia. With the single exception of apples west of the Mississippi it was large, and in some localities excessive.