

iority of the husbandry of this province as compared with most of the other parts of the kingdom. It is certain at least, that notwithstanding the many efforts made by persons in power to promote the introduction and adoption of better methods, the general farming of La Belle France advances with comparative slowness. This country indeed presents another striking instance of the small connection which may exist between the existence of extensive means of agricultural instruction, provided by the central government, and the practical skill of the rural population. In 1813 there existed in France one hundred and fifty-seven agricultural societies—six hundred and sixty-four agricultural committees—twenty-two model farms, some of which had schools attached to them—and fifteen schools and chairs of agriculture and agricultural penitentiaries. In the early part of 1849, under the auspices of the republican government, and as part of the plan of M. Fourret, then Minister of Agriculture, twenty-one farming schools had already been opened—a national agricultural university was about to be established on the farms in the little park of Versailles, and a hundred and twenty-two agricultural societies, and three hundred minor institutions, had participated in the funds voted for the encouragement of agriculture. Though it is unquestionable that the country may attain a high rank in agriculture without the aid of normal agricultural schools—provided, as in Scotland, other early mental training is placed within the reach of the rural population—and that in spite of numerous schools, if other obstacles intervene, the cultivators of the country may lag far behind:—yet both common sense and experience show, that of two nations of the same blood, placed otherwise in the same circumstances, the one which teaches the principles of agriculture in its schools, will exhibit the most productive harvests in its fields; and that, as in England and Scotland now, a time will come in the agricultural history of every country, when old means and methods will fail to maintain the rural community in a flourishing condition, and when every new means of fertility which advancing knowledge can supply, must be made generally known, and become generally employed. Such are the simplest and most common sense arguments in favour of agricultural teaching—the inutility of which might be argued with some show of reason, from the comparatively small progress yet visible among the fields and farmers of France and Bavaria. The agricultural statistics of France, which the government has collected and published in great detail, would supply many interesting subjects of reflection, were I at liberty to dwell longer on this part of Europe. I may only mention—as pregnant with thought and instruction in regard to the condition, the food, and the general mode of living of the

rural classes of France—the fact that the number of conscripts who are rejected on account of deficient health, strength and stature, is constantly on the increase; that forty per cent. are turned back from this cause; and that though since 1789 the standard has been three times reduced, as large a proportion of the conscripts is below the required height, (now five feet two inches), as ever—(Rubiclion.) Such facts as this show how closely the discussion of agriculture is connected with that of the most profound social evils.

SWITZERLAND.—To Switzerland, I only allude as one of those countries in which the influence of national intelligence and a fair share of early instruction, has been brought to bear most successfully on the improvement of the soil, and especially of the breeds of stock which are best adapted to its peculiar dairy husbandry. Those advantages which require the application of capital and science, such as thorough draining and special manuring, are there, however, still unmade; and it will probably be many years, before, in these respects, the cultivators of the Swiss vallies and mountain slopes, can closely imitate the present improved practices of the British Islands.

SPAIN.—The agricultural condition of Spain, suggests melancholy reflections. The central table lands of this country are reckoned among the finest wheat growing districts in the world. The culture is rude and imperfect. The soil is scratched with a primitive plough, and is seldom manured, yet the returns are said to be prodigious, and the quality of the grain excellent. But where nature does much, man too often contents himself, with doing little. Amid all this plenty, the peasant is miserable. He lives in a cabin of baked mud, or in burrows scooped out from the friable hillocks, ignorant of the luxuries of furniture, and barely possessing the necessaries of life. The want of roads and of means of easy transport, makes his produce almost worthless, so that a comparatively sparse population exists, and such wretchedness in the centre of fertile fields and a land abundant in corn. We sometimes think ourselves unfortunate to have been born, or to be doomed to live where clouded suns impart a lessened light and heat; or where the frosts of Winter bind up for many months the hardened earth. Yet in such climes, man more really lives, and exercises a truer dominion over inanimate things, than where tropical skies appear to prepare him for a ceaseless enjoyment. Where mind and mental energy are dormant, he only vegetates or exercises his brute passions. Where by perpetual struggles he subdues the adverse elements, bends circumstances to his will, forces a copious abundance from an unwilling soil and in spite of inclement seasons—there he most truly lives, and amidst his hardships enjoys life most; there refreshing sleep visits him with