

of the spirit of the age, have now, in great part by its exertions, ceased to be received by the majority of farmers with contemptuous incredulity, and by the labourers with stubborn opposition. In the old days distance operated as a barrier to imitation, and three-fourths of England only heard of what was done in the well-cultivated fourth to ridicule and despise it. When the father of Mr. George Turner, of Barton, Devon, the well-known breeder of Devon cattle and Leicester sheep, who had learned something in his visits with stock to Holkham, began to drill turnips, a well-to-do neighbour looked down from the dividing bank and said to his son, 'I suppose your father will be sowing pepper out of a cruet next.' Indeed the whole history of the turnip cultivation affords a characteristic contrast between the spirit of the past and the present. It took upwards of a century to establish the proper growth of this crop, notwithstanding that the wealth of meat and corn which proceeded from it was as plain to those who would open their eyes as that a guinea was worth one-and-twenty shillings. The first difficulty was to persuade farmers to try it at all; and not one turnip was ever seen on a field in Northumberland till between 1760 and 1770. The second difficulty was to get them to be at the expense of hoeing, insomuch that Young said that he should be heard with incredulity in most counties when he bore testimony to the vast benefits which were derived in Norfolk from this indispensable portion of the process. The third difficulty was to induce them to replace broadcast sowing by drilling, which appeared, as we see, to novices no less ridiculous than peppering the land from a cruet. The bigotry of the farmer cramped the energies of the mechanics whom he now welcomes as among his best friends. The implements, even by the first manufacturers, from the absence of criticism, and competition, from the limited extent of custom, and from the want of artisans skilled in working in iron, were, however excellent in idea, both clumsy and costly. The choicest specimens which existed in 1840 have been so altered in execution by cheaper materials and improved workmanship that they can scarcely be recognised.

The Royal Agricultural Society, with its council of peers, squires, tenants, and implement-makers—its professors of chemistry, botany, and veterinary art—its thousands of subscribers, spread over every county of England—its Journal of transactions and reports—and, above all, its annual encampments in the centres of successive districts—has done for farming what the great fairs of the middle ages did for commerce—concentrated and diffused knowledge, brought customers and producers into contact, and helped to extinguish prejudices in the excitement of social gatherings. They have carried to provincial cities the best live-stock, the best implements, and the best cultivators. The influence of example, of competition, and even of rank and fashion, has been brought to bear on local obstinacy. Squires have been encouraged to improve their estates by the speeches of even greater men than themselves, and young noblemen, in want of an object, have found it in agricultural duties. Implement-makers have had the advantage of the suggestions of their customers, and, thus taught and teaching at the same time, have every year become more dependent on tenant and less on fancy farmers. Men who went to Shows stanch champions of the flail have been vanquished by the mere sight of a steam-engine driving barn-machinery; as an old Homeric Greek, if he could revisit earth, would instantly recognise the inferiority of stones hurled by the hand to the iron balls projected from the cannon's mouth. The greatest landlords, wandering unknown in the show-yards, have had opportunities of learning wholesome truths from the tenants of other landlords. Self-satisfied ignorance is abashed, and triumphant skill finds at once a large and eager audience. These agricultural exhibitions are, in fact, the Woburn and Holkham sheep-shearings, made national and expanded to the dimensions of an age of steam-driven threshing-machines. When the Royal