

the food for a future generation of three millions and a half of people. Like a vampire, it hangs upon the breast of Europe, and even the world, sucking its life-blood without any real necessity or permanent gain for itself. It is impossible to imagine that such a sinful disturbance of the Divine order of things should be allowed to go on for ever with impunity; and the time will probably arrive for England, earlier even than for the rest of Europe, when, with all its wealth in gold, iron, and coal, it will not be able to repurchase the thousandth part of those essential conditions of life so frivolously wasted for centuries past. I am fully conscious that nearly all practical agriculturists insist upon the implicit correctness of their methods, and that they are filled with a belief in the permanent fertility of their estates. This circumstance it is which makes people so indifferent to the future, so far as it depends upon the produce of agriculture; and thus it has probably been with all nations who have brought about their extinction by their omissions and commissions. No political wisdom will be able to protect the States of Europe against a similar fate, unless both peoples and governments should be at length prevailed upon to pay a due amount of attention to the growing symptoms of an impoverished soil—to the solemn warnings of history and science."

BRIEF NOTES ON THE HISTORY OF BRITISH AGRICULTURE.

Agriculture as an art goes back to the very beginning of the human race, as we are informed by sacred history, that our first parents were placed in a garden to dress and to keep it, and that of their first two born sons, one was a "keeper of sheep," and the other a "tiller of the ground";—thereby indicating that at the beginning, this ancient art was divided into the two great departments, viz: tillage and grazing, in which it has continued to the present day.

It is not a little remarkable that an art so ancient and indispensable as Agriculture, upon the success of which mankind in general depend for their daily bread, and the raw material which their ingenuity works up into articles of comfort and ornament, should, during the earlier and far greater period of its growth, be absolutely without a history. We are dependent for the very limited and imperfect knowledge we have of this important pursuit for several thousand years, to mere incidental allusions by ancient writers, and the symbolical representations that have been discovered in works of art. One would have naturally imagined that a pursuit so essentially connected with the physical existence and well being of mankind, constituting in fact the only solid basis of the wealth and independence of nations, would have found ready and truthful chroniclers of its state and progress, in every age, by all races at all removed above the condition of

barbarism. Historians, however, not only in ancient—but also in modern times, have been too prone to limit their investigations to the intrigues of courts, and deeds of war and rapine; so that in vain we look to their works for any full or satisfactory information relative to the inner life and industrial progress of the people. In this respect Agriculture has shared the common fate of the other industrial arts; an extremely scanty knowledge of the state of which, up to a comparatively recent period, we can only acquire by a patient collection of here and there an occasional reference by writers of the ancient and medieval periods of the world's history, and what has been preserved and discovered of the remains of the industry and arts of preceding ages.

That most singular and interesting country,—Egypt,—whose history goes back to the infancy of the race, we learn was not only the cradle of the sciences, but also the granary of the world. And although we can form but very imperfect notions of the condition of our art among the ancient Greeks, from the meagre information respecting it that has come down to us in their writings, yet there is reason for believing on good authority, that a considerable number of authors among that polite and learned people treated of the subject of Agriculture, but that their writings have been irrecoverably lost. The Greek mind, however, was far more speculative and less practical than that of their successors,—the Romans,—of whose agricultural knowledge and practices very interesting and trust-worthy information has come down in the works of their poets and historians. No one can impartially consult the Roman bucolic writers without receiving a conviction that that valorous people were far advanced in this practical art, and that in a number of important particulars their writings will favorably compare with similar productions of modern date. Indeed, if the practice of the ancient Romans reached the standard laid down by several of their rustic authors, we can hardly, in the present day, be said to have got much the advance of them in several important operations of practical husbandry. And to this adventurous people the modern nations of Europe are greatly indebted for their literature, civil polity and arts; including particularly that of agriculture. Wherever Rome carried her victorious arms, and planted her eagles, she planted also her arts, and taught ruder nations,—our own loved Britain among them,—the principles and practice of improved husbandry.

Pliny informs us that Cresinus, an ingenious but humble Roman husbandman, by superior knowledge and industry so far succeeded in raising greater crops, and therefore obtaining larger profits than most of his countrymen, that the envy of his neighbors became so much excited that they brought this accusation against him:—"That by sorcery, charms and witchcraft he had transported his neighbor's fruits,