

FALLOWS.

BY A PRACTICAL FARMER.

In the Book of Exodus, chap. xxiii., verses 10 and 11, we read: "And six years thou shalt sow thy land, and shalt gather in the fruit thereof; but the seventh year thou shalt let it rest and lie still." This was the law which God gave to the Israelites, and is the first intimation we have in the world's history, from which we may gather information relative to the requirements of the soil, and the early usages in agriculture; for I take it to be analogous to what is generally understood, in our day, to *mean* lying under fallow, or to constitute fallowing. Be that as is it may, it is certain that fallowing was practised, and was one of the regular systems adopted in the management of land, from the earliest periods of which we have any record. It has, however, been reserved for a very recent age to make any great advances in fallowing, and to adopt totally different courses in the appropriation of land undergoing a fallow. The fallowing of land has now become a subject of very considerable scientific research, and is of immense agricultural importance, as upon the fallow crop depends, in the present day, the ultimate success of the whole system of modern farming. No green crop, no corn crop. The ancient idea of rest adopted by the Jews, pursued by the Romans, and all other nations adopting agricultural pursuits, has been nearly abandoned in this country during the past half century; and instead of *rest*, the soil or land farmed is now made to bear enormous crops of highly nutritious food, thus providing most abundant supplies for both man and beast in the season of winter, when so much is needed; and, at the same time, the soil is so much replenished with all those necessary constituents, as to ensure successful cereal cropping for several succeeding years.

What, then, are fallows? and what do we understand to constitute fallowing, in the present day? Fallows consist of all lands or soils which are undergoing the process of pulverisation, cleaning, aëration, and other amelioration, by the various means employed, either mechanical or otherwise, for these purposes. They are usually classed under several heads, or distinguishing modes of management—i. e., *winter or autumn fallows*, *summer fallows*, *bastard fallows*, *green-crop fallows*; to which may be added *trenching fallows*, *broadshare fallows*, *rafter fallows*, and the like; as also the various operations of *paring and burning*, *skim and skeleton ploughing*, *scarifying*, *subsoiling*, or other like means by which the process of cleaning, exposure, amelioration, or improvement of the soil is attempted or effected. The soil, therefore, which is subjected to any mechanical agency or order of management, for the above purposes, is under a certain course or character of fallowing, and accordingly, constitutes fallows.

What, however, are more commonly known as fallows and fallowing are those various operations of tillage which are carried on, and are indispensably necessary, to prepare the soil for a fallow crop (green crop)—i. e., turnips, mangold-wurzel, rape, and the like—and those more continuous operations to prepare for the future wheat crop, being a bare or summer fallow, which on poor clays and some other soils is considered necessary. Winter or autumn fallows are those lands which have undergone various modes of tillage in the autumn, and are subsequently laid well up by the plough for winter aëration by frosts, snow, &c. Bastard fallows consist in the partial working and cleansing of the soil, prior to the putting in of the crop. Trenching fallows are the efficient trench-ploughing of the soil, for exposure to atmospheric influences, and are chiefly used prior to the coming of winter's frosts, by which it is much ameliorated and greatly benefited. Broadshare fallows are the breaking up of the surface-soil for cleaning, by harrowing &c.; and to promote the speedy growth of annuals, in order to insure their ready extirpation. Rafter fallows are the ploughing of one furrow on to the adjoining strip, to promote aëration, &c., by more prominent exposure to atmospheric influences. Paring and burning, though not strictly coming under the appellation of fallows, are in fact a fallowing. The soil is pared, exposed, dried, burned, and spread, ploughed in, and well harrowed, by which course most of the intentions of fallowing are attained. Skim and skeleton ploughing are almost synonymous with broadshare fallowing. Scarifying fallows are the continual application of powerful drags or scarifiers, to move and expose the soil at a considerable depth, so that atmospheric influences may have greater effect.—Subsoil fallows are the breaking up of the subsoil at great depth, and bringing it near to the surface, for aëration, amelioration, and intermixture with the surface-soil, and is a wonderful improvement upon the old order of fallowing.