

TO THE EDITOR OF THE AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL.

SIR,—Being a regular reader of your Journal, a few thoughts have been suggested by the perusal of your last number, especially from the letter of a *Young Ploughman* and the answer you gave him. The following remarks I wish you to give publicity to in your next number, that they may have a chance to effect some little improvement in certain quarters—if they are sound. And as *a* and *all enquiring young ploughmen* are to me interesting, allow me to answer his questions in my own way.

And **FIRST**. If the judges at matches be judges of ploughing it matters little whether there be scales given or not, for the ploughman who takes unsuitable proportions of a furrow, will cure himself of that, when he sees the decisions of merit given, as the most desirable style of ploughing may be learned from the successful lots. But the scale that I would have a young ploughman to aim at as a standard, is 6 inches deep by  $7\frac{1}{2}$  wide: such a furrow is the most desirable and most perfect, and can be attained by means. Any other proportions will not satisfy an experienced eye, nor accomplish the requisites and effects of good ploughing, and he that possesses the knowledge to trim a plough to work a furrow of these dimensions as it should be wrought, may flatter himself of having acquired the greatest possible proficiency in ploughing so far as trimming of ploughs is concerned.

And **SECOND**. AS TO TIME, it is the most requisite condition that can be enjoined upon competitors. Where I came from, in Scotland, each lot was previously measured, and on the ticket of the lot was written the number of roods, falls and yards the lot contained, and the hours, minutes and seconds it was to be finished at.

Except at beginning and finishing, setting poles at *firing*, and leading one horse before another at *hinting*, no person was allowed to set a foot upon the land during its being ploughed, to aid the ploughman in any shape whatever, except at the head ridges or land-ends, where all had access to and where all or any interested parties might aid or instruct their *man* as in turning the horses and plough, while the ploughman took a peep along his work to detect flaws, and remedy them next *bout*, or give instructions

to him from any part of the field unoccupied by ploughs. But no person was allowed to set a foot upon the competing land except the competitors and judges, *till* the judges came off it, when all were allowed to cross it and examine and criticise as they pleased. The ploughmen were at liberty to use all the means in their power to make their ploughing as good as they possibly could, using hands and feet and all till their *time was up*, which they would do sometimes with watch in hand till the last second of their time, and if hurried, run across to a neighbour's lot rather than risk being scored out by running down to the land-end on his own lot. "Time," I overheard an old farmer on one occasion remark, at seeing the panic of some fearing they would be too late, "tries their mettle, at home, they may *stand* and plough, but here, they must *go* and plough." Time is the best subordinate safeguard to fair play, without restrictions to the less spirited and ingenuous will use it and abuse it for his own interest, as the difference of twenty minutes more taken by one than another, in a given extent of ground, may turn the prize otherwise than it would, had *time* been exacted.

Of course, lots cannot always be had alike in extent, and therefore all cannot be expected to finish at the same time, but for the falls and yards, let the time be calculated at the *given time per acre* for the entire lot. Circumstances may sometimes render exceptions expedient; but the rule should be, *in time or no prize*.

As some of your readers may not be aware of the strictness to which this point is carried in some places, I copy from a letter which I received from Scotland some months since, a remark or two on this point, showing as it does, how much order and fair play are appreciated. He says: "Your friend P. got a good lying lot but the leafield being above 30 years old, was so tough in the sward, that when the plough went fast through it, it would scarcely turn at all; and so tough was it that, if you had commenced tumbling back a furrow at one end of the field, it would have run to the other in a whole furrow. He had a pair of good horses, but they and him were nearly by with it. Many of them were best off without finishing their lots, and all of them were as well tired as ever they had been. Many were out of time, and even some who got prizes were as much as 20 minutes late: but