

ing back to the few years during which the Journal has been in existence, one cannot help being struck with the freshness and value of the information which it has conveyed. Every new fact or practice connected with agriculture and included in the scope of the society's objects, has found therein a ready medium of publicity. The state of cultivation in each country, and the capabilities of the soil, have been carefully described, experiments have been minutely detailed, and the peculiar systems of widely separated districts, and even countries, recorded for the common benefit and instruction of all. The catch-water meadows of Devonshire, the warp lands of the Trent, the great level of the Fens, drained by wind-mills and steam-engines, are, perhaps, among the most remarkable developments of English agriculture; and it is reassuring, in times of distrust like those which we have lately passed through, to have the attention directed to results which, through many difficulties, and pursued during a long course of years, enterprize and energy have achieved.

The employment of a consulting chymist by the society adds greatly to the usefulness and dignity of its labour; for, however the ignorant may deride the still obscure teachings of chymical knowledge, a time will come, and is already foreshadowed, when the laboratory will form an usual appurtenance of the farm, and when scientific analysis and experiment shall supersede the rule of thumb, by which our fields have been cultivated and our food supplied. The society has felt and still feels all this. Besides those elaborate investigations into the qualities of manures and of soils to which we have already adverted, and which have yielded practical results of the highest value, many examples may be found in the records of the society's proceedings of the unexpected aids which chymistry affords. We may quote as an instance the treatment of flax straw as a substance adapted for manufacture; but the most remarkable proof of the interest felt in this department, and the large expectations entertained from it, is the announcement made a few days ago that the Society would confer a prize of £1,000 for the discovery of an artificial manure as fertilizing as Peruvian guano, and capable of being sold at £5 per ton. Such a discovery is not deemed impossible, and yet the effect of it would be an average increase of production which Mr. Hudson, of Castleacre, told the Earl of Derby recently, would be more than equal to any protective duty the Government could place upon corn.

The town meetings of the council, and the lectures which are read and the discussions which arise therein, form a prominent feature of the Society's means of action. The subjects treated usually possess the interest of novelty, or of circumstances which have arisen to fix attention upon them. Here the business of the society is chiefly conducted by the most active and enterprising landowners and farmers, their continuance in the council being made dependent,

to a large extent, upon the punctuality with which they attend the proceedings. So far the result is satisfactory, and the working of the society efficient; but it is a necessary consequence of the present constitution of the council, that its members have facilities for remaining in office to a degree incompatible with that character for freshness and vigour which should mark the governing bodies of voluntary associations like this. Let an impression once get abroad that the affairs of such an association have fallen into the hands of a clique, and farewell to its usefulness. The Royal Agricultural Society has been more open to this charge than it is at present, and, we believe, perceives its own danger with regard to it. The ordinary meetings of the councils at Hanover-square necessarily command no great variety in the attendance; but means might be adopted, by the formation of committees from the general body of members on special subjects, or by a union with the local societies, similar to that which has recently been organized by the Society of Arts, for giving all parts of the country a practical share in the operations of the society, and thus enlisting them by their own services in the cause of agricultural progress. A few of the leading farmers of England are active members of the society; but the great majority still regard it as a landlord's institution, given over to an amateur spirit of improvement, and comparatively regardless of those economical considerations from which practical men cannot afford to have their attention diverted. This we believe to be a narrow-minded view of the objects of the society, but as long as it exists a great barrier of opinion and feeling is presented to its usefulness. Such facts do not escape observation, as the large proportion of members in the council who come from the very county in which the present year's meeting is held.

Looking at the implement-yard as a whole, one cannot help being impressed with the enormous aids held out therein to practical agriculture. Thirteen years of experience have exercised a most salutary influence on the description of machines brought forward, and, whereas formerly there was much useless rubbish, now the practical requirements of the farm are taken as the true guides of invention. Perhaps no more remarkable evidence can be afforded of this than the case of reaping machines, of which no less than seventeen specimens are exhibited, the best makers being competitors. From among them, Messrs. Garrett and Son have deservedly borne away the palm, not only by their selection of Hussey's machine, demonstrating its superiority over that of McCormick, which gained the council medal at the Great Exhibition last year, but introducing a very simple improvement in the construction of the scissor-like knives, which is thus described in the catalogue:—

“In the machines brought over from America the cutters were bevelled on both sides, similar