

TO CORRESPONDENTS. Our correspondents would oblige by writing on one side of their paper only. Anonymous communications can on no account receive attention. Every contribution must be authenticated (in confidence) with the name of the writer. Our columns are open for the expression of opinion, but we do not necessarily adopt the views of our correspondents.

THE Teesdale Mercury.

BARNARD CASTLE, JANUARY 22nd, 1862.

The Annual Meeting of the Steindrop Farmers' Club was held on Thursday last. The proceedings are fully reported in our pages. It will be seen that an admirable paper on the "Progress of Agriculture" was read by Mr. R. D. Middleton, and that the evening closed with an interesting discussion.

On Thursday, the 16th inst., a fearful accident took place at the Hartley Colliery, imperilling the lives of more than 200 men and boys. The latest accounts are not favourable, and it is feared that the workings (where the men and boys are still imprisoned) are becoming pervaded with choke-damp.

LOCAL & GENERAL NEWS.

BALL.—On Friday evening last, the Barnard Castle Quadrille Party gave their Opening Dance of the season, in the Mechanics' Hall. Upwards of 30 couples were present. The music was supplied by Mr. Sang's Quadrille Band. The refreshments were provided by Mr. H. Raitton, and were on a scale of liberality which received general commendation. The best thanks of all present are due to Messrs. Lee and Cameron, the managers, for their excellent arrangements. Dancing commenced at 9 o'clock, and was kept up with great animation till 6 o'clock on the following morning.

MICKLETON.

MICKLETON LIBRARY.—The Annual Meeting for the election of officers and the passing of accounts, was held in the School Room on Saturday evening the 16th inst. The Rev. J. C. Gregory in the Chair. The treasurer's account showed a balance of £4 3s 6d in favour of the society, although a large number of volumes had been added to the library during the past year. Mr. John Sutherland was appointed Secretary, Mr. Joseph Longstaff Treasurer, Mr. Joseph Bainbridge and Mr. Christopher Walker, Librarians for the ensuing year.

BOWES.

On Saturday, the 11th inst., the Primitive Methodists of Spital and its vicinity visited Bowes with their able choir of singers, who sang through the town in an admirable style under the able leadership of Mr. Benjamin Wade, of Agri; and afterwards entered the Wesleyan Chapel, where an able address was delivered by Mr. Wade to a large congregation. Great praise is due to Mr. Wade for his indefatigable exertions in the above locality, and for his establishing a Sabbath school and superintending with the greatest zeal. A dozen years ago no inhabitant of the place would have dreamed of such a thing as a Sabbath school at Spital.

STAINDROP FARMERS' CLUB.

The annual Dinner was held at the Queen's Head Inn, Staindrop, on Thursday last, the 16th inst. After the transaction of business at the Club Room, the members and their friends sat down to dinner at half-past 8 o'clock. The repast comprised every delicacy, and was highly creditable to Mr. Jackson, the host.

Among the gentlemen present were T. F. Scarth, Esq., President of the Club; H. Lipcomb, Esq., the Rev. H. C. Lipscomb, Dr. Copeland, Dr. Brunskill, Mr. W. Hodgson, Staindrop; Mr. Watkin, Secretary of the Club; Mr. Hawdon, Walkerfield; Mr. Graham, Burton House; Mr. H. Bolam; Mr. R. D. Middleton, Hill Top; Mr. Gale; Mr. R. W. Atkinson, Mr. R. Raitton, Barnard Castle; Mr. Bell, Baby; Mr. V. Heavside; Mr. Raw, Langleydale; Mr. Barnes; Mr. Dodds, Whorley Hill; Mr. T. Arde, Winston, &c., &c.

After the cloth was drawn, the Chair was taken by T. F. Scarth, Esq., and the Vice-chair by Dr. Copeland. The Chairman, in proposing the loyal toasts, referred, in touching language, to the death of the late Prince Consort, and hoped that the Princes of Wales would at the same time emulate the virtues of his illustrious Father, and prove a stay and a support to His Royal Mother. The toasts were received with suitable demonstrations.

The Chairman, in proposing the next toast, the "Bishop and Clergy of the Diocese," said that, although Dr. Baring, their new Bishop, had but lately come into the diocese, yet the knowledge they had of him was sufficient to warrant them in believing that he would worthily fill the position to which he had been advanced; he trusted, however, that they would shortly meet the Bishop, at the consecration of their new Burial Ground at Staindrop. The Clergy of the County of Durham, especially in the eastern parts, had many difficulties to contend with—they laboured earnestly and devotedly, and were but ill-remunerated for their toil. As an instance, he might state that the incumbent of St. Cuthbert's, Darlington, had the care of 4,000 souls, and his stipend was quite inadequate to the duties of his office. These were matters which deserved the early attention of the friends of the Church, and he hoped would receive the serious consideration they demanded. With the toast, he begged to couple the name of the Rev. H. C. Lipscomb.

The Rev. H. C. Lipscomb, in responding, alluded in grateful terms to the pleasure he always had in attending the meetings of the Steindrop Farmers' Club. The science of Agriculture was one which materially concerned the welfare of the community, and thus, necessarily, enlisted their warmest sympathies. He then, at length, and in eloquent terms, thanked the Chair-

man for the hono- rable mention he had made of the Bishop and Clergy, and said that the Bishop would probably visit Staindrop within the next two months, as the consecration of the Cemetery would take place within that period. Before resuming his seat, he begged again to tender his acknowledgments.

The Chairman then proposed the "Army, Navy, and Volunteers."

Mr. R. W. Atkinson (Ensign 7th North York Rifles) in responding, said that, in many a hard-fought battle, the Army and Navy had crowded themselves with glory; and the Volunteers, he was confident, would be ready in the hour of danger. If there was a subject in connection with the Volunteer force that he regretted, it was that Staindrop had not yet furnished its quota. Staindrop formerly possessed a gallant troop of Volunteer Cavalry, and he hoped on the occasion of his next visit, to find that Staindrop had resolved not to be behind the rest of the Country in taking part in the National defence. He returned them his cordial thanks for connecting his name with the toast.

Mr. Middleton proposed the health of His Grace the Duke of Cleveland. The Duke, he was most excellent landlord, and in his munificent charities, he gave without distinction of sect or creed. The toast was received with "three times three," and the Chairman replied in an appropriate speech. The Chairman then gave "Success to the Steindrop Farmers' Club." The Duke, he was confident, suggested that a certain amount should be set apart for the rebuilding of a portion of their Library. If there was an agricultural work that any of the members wished to have added to the Library, it would be desirable for them to name it, in order that it might be purchased. During the past year, six new members had joined the Club, which now numbered 81, and one member had retired. In the same period they had had several interesting discussions, amongst which was an admirable subject introduced by the Rev. W. F. Wharton. In the present year, the first subject for discussion would be on "Artificial Manures," which would be brought before them by Mr. Edward Scarth; the second would be on "The Harvesting of Hay and Corn," to be introduced by Mr. Graham. The Ploughing matches had been successful, and it was for the members to consider whether anything else could be thought of to add to the popularity and interest of their meetings. The Club had been established for fifteen years, and he hoped that it would continue to flourish, and that its sphere of usefulness would be annually extended.

The Chairman called upon Mr. R. D. Middleton to read his paper on the "Progress of Agriculture." Mr. Middleton commenced as follows:—

"The little time that I have had to reflect upon this subject since our worthy Secretary requested me to introduce it to your notice, added to the wide field over which I have had to ramble to select material, convinces me that, after my hastily-collected scraps are unfolded to you, there must be scope left for a spirited discussion, this being the first time that my friends seated around me. This subject confines my observation neither to time nor space; I shall therefore proceed to unfold to your consideration a running commentary upon both ancient and modern Agriculture. The reader of ancient history is always surprised to discover that previous to the Christian era, farming was carried on with as much success, with as great talent, and with almost the same description of implements as were used in England in the last century. But our astonishment vanishes when we reflect that the inhabitants of that mighty empire as Babylon, Nineveh, and Rome, had no other implements, and, notwithstanding the necessities of life but also the luxuries; and, contemplating the wonderful architecture, the magnificence, the grandeur, the power of the Ancients, we cannot be surprised if their knowledge of agriculture was commensurate with that of their other pursuits. Agricultural literature, as we have seen, has not advanced in the modern history but compared to the ancient chronicle. Hesiod, Theophrastus, Virgil, Cato, Pliny, Columella, and many others, not only churn us out an ornamental and poetical history, but descend into the very minutiae of farming. The cropping, ploughing, sowing, harrowing, threshing, and all the particulars of the construction of their implements, plans of farm-houses and buildings, roads, manure-heaps; in truth, every particular of management and labour is in these ancient writers concisely delineated, and even a system of keeping farm-accounts accurately laid down, which would puzzle a modern farmer to decipher. It is to be regretted that, in the present day, Pliny died A.D. 79, and yet he described a reaping machine, pushed by an ox, with which some of the farmers of Gaul cut the whole of their harvest. Pliny also discloses that, next to corn and grapes, the cultivation of the turnip is the most profitable. He says, after five ploughings on dry and free soil, the best sort of turnip is sown in rows, well manured, they must be thinned to eight inches," and he states that he has seen one 40 lbs. in weight,—about double the weight of any that I have grown. Columella says that "in Gaul, cattle and sheep were kept in winter upon turnips." If such was the agriculture of Rome and Gaul when Julius Cæsar crossed to Britain, the system of agriculture would be implanted by his followers, and would grow with their growth, during the period of about 400 years in which they held possession of our island. Their roads, straight as an arrow, for miles in length, traversed not only the level plains, but the highest hills, and were the best, saving the rails, which we ever possessed. After the Romans, in 459, had left the island, at the break down of their empire, the aid of the Saxons was sought to repel the destructive and continual incursions of the Picts and Scots; and, like nations of the present day, when they got a foot upon a weaker nation's land, they had no idea of returning. The Danish sea-kings plundered and sacked the country, so that agriculture again declined. The Heptarchal feuds, usurpation, and confusion, and confusion almost undisturbed, during nearly five centuries, the noble agricultural works of the Romans. These are sometimes called the dark ages, "though at this time, A.D. 686, the Christian faith was taught by St. Austin, and was received with joy by the inhabitants. Large tracts of unreclaimed land were given to his followers, which were speedily rendered fertile by the monks and their servants. Exempt from military service, encouraged by the permanent and secure tenure which their estates enjoyed, connected still with Rome, the monks, who remained to Britain, the system of agriculture, they kept alive the members of past learning and civilization, and cultivated the reclaimed waste in comparative peace and content. In 1066, the Norman again revolutionized the island; then succeeded the wars with France, and the terrible and furious intestine contests of the Houses, so that England, with the exception of ecclesiastical property, was little but a hunting field of battle ground, till the advent to the throne, A.D. 1609, of Henry VIII. During his reign we have the revolution in religion, the suppression and annihilation of the monasteries, followed again by war, rebellion, the unhappy, miserable reigns of the Stuarts. In words of Mr. Middleton, who died on the 18th of June, 1815. "It is true that, in the 17th century, progress was perceptible, and the way was being paved for future improvement. From 1765 to 1800 there were 683 Acts of Parliament relating to roads, bridges, &c.; 634 to enclosures and drainage; and the Acts relating to the transportation and exportation of grain, &c. I found so numerous when I began to count them that I gave it up in despair. In 1784 the Highland Society of Scotland and the Smithfield Club were established. Jethro Tull had invented his drill and horse-hoe. The Board of Agriculture, with Arthur Young (the writer of the present paper) as Secretary, was in full sail, so that when peace was proclaimed, a rapid advance in the im-

provement of agriculture soon became visible. Still a fresh era must be dated from the time when Smith of Donston promulgated his methodical and practical parallel drainage. Since 1840, about which time his plan became fairly developed, wide is the space which has been thoroughly drained, and thus prepared for future improvement. The Government loan of £2,000,000 for drainage was all allotted by our wide-awake Scotch friends, and a portion of the third million was also expended in Scotland. Land, now drained, was in a fit state to receive the artificial manure, proved to be useful by the chemistry of Liebig and Johnson. A few statistics will show how near we are to the farmer, to the utility of guano, artificial manure, &c., and also to insect-killers for bringing his cattle and sheep to early maturity. In 1840 our worthy Secretary received his first consignment of guano in an envelope, and his drill was a pepper-box 1 in 1858 was imported the largest number of tons, namely, 353,541; last year 41,435 tons. In 1840 I find no record of the importation of bones—

Table with 2 columns: Year and Quantity. 1858: 85,263 tons; 1859: 84,843 tons; 1860: 69,921 tons.

besides bone ash, coprolites, Baldern-bay and other guanos. In 1858 we had 80,623 tons; 1859 " 95,208 tons; 1860 " 108,826 tons. Statistics show us that we have in wheat 4,000,000 of acres, barley 3,000,000, oats 2,000,000, potatoes 700,000, other crops 700,000, and 3,000,000 of acres in England, Wales, and Scotland. In 1840 we were held 20 years crop, we have now each week, or each succeeding week, a market full of cattle and sheep, rich in quality, perfect in symmetry, and ripe for the butcher. Bullocks at 2 years old, equal in weight to those of times gone by at 3 years; and what all the rest of sheep, or, in other words, a bushel of wheat and a bushel of barley, sold last month 11 sheep at 71d per lb., for the enormous sum of 278 15s; half of them were a cross between the Leicester ram and the Cheviot ewe, the other better the Leicester ram and the black-faced ewe. Look into our farm-accounts, and you will find a school of progress, showing what can be done by carefully rearing cattle and sheep, forcing them to earlier maturity, with a determination to meet the demand for animal food by our rapidly-increasing and industrial population. Let us turn now to the implement-yard of the Royal Agricultural Society, established in 1838. At the exhibition at Cambridge in 1840, there were 36 implements shown; at Liverpool in 1841, 319; at Leeds, in 1861, there were 103 stanzas, 353 exhibits, showing 5,500 articles. At Cambridge the prizes amounted to £800, at Leeds to £3243. Crookill's clod-crusher won the first gold medal in 1844, in 1850 the genus of Fowler's steam-plough attracted attention. In 1851 the reaping-machine attracted a sensation, and the present year, at the time when ancient Rome was in the zenith of its glory (at which time the Romans introduced the art of agriculture into Britain) and then to pay no further attention to the agriculture of any other country. He thanked Mr. Scarth for his paper, and the Chairman for the "Committee," who then severally proposed and responded to, and the meeting separated.

Mr. Middleton replied that the expressions of satisfaction which had fallen from those around him, had amply repaid him for any trouble he might have had. He should have wished to have noticed the scattered accounts of agriculture given in the Bible, but his object was to show what progress had been made at the time when ancient Rome was in the zenith of its glory (at which time the Romans introduced the art of agriculture into Britain) and then to pay no further attention to the agriculture of any other country. He thanked Mr. Scarth for his paper, and the Chairman for the "Committee," who then severally proposed and responded to, and the meeting separated.

TERRIBLE ACCIDENT AT THE HARTLEY COLLIERY NEAR NEWCASTLE.

On Thursday last, an awful occurrence took place at this Colliery. A portion of the pumping apparatus, which was several tons, broke, while in operation, and, falling down the shaft, killed several men in the act of descending. The accident occurred at 11 o'clock, and 215 men and boys were imprisoned by the flood. During the whole of Friday night and Saturday, the work of clearing away the immense mass of rubbish, in the shaft, was prosecuted with, if possible, more intense vigour than at first, for the very obvious reason that the long time that has now been consumed, caused serious doubts as to their safety, and those doubts and fears, must necessarily increase in the minds of the anxious friends above, in a corresponding ratio to the time spent in gaining access to the sufferers. During the whole of the time stated, fresh reports of stout athletic men, with strong arms and willing hearts, the night long, in the hope of the safety of the unfortunate men and boys. Other particulars will be found in our second page.

already mentioned, and finding themselves ungrateful, they would at once set to work to clear as much of the debris as practicable and safe from beneath. The purpose of this operation will amount to the "jowling" going on for some time, but the period when it is reported to have ceased. The cause of its cessation is attributed to the supposition that the men below had achieved two objects; they had worked away as much of the rubbish from beneath as they could without incurring the risk of bringing the whole mass down upon them, and they had come to the surface with the men above, and assured them of their safety. It was therefore presumed that from motives of personal safety the "jowling" was not again answered, though often repeated from the men above. The fact of having established a communication would moreover lead the men below to think that their deliverers were nearer at hand than they really were, and that thus there was increased danger from their staying any longer beneath the heap of rubbish, which was threatening every moment to come down upon them. And they may also by this time be in total darkness, which may also be safely taken as another reason. During the whole of Saturday, the greatest interest was manifested on behalf of the sufferers. Every succeeding train from both north and south brought numbers of people of both sexes to the scene of the sad catastrophe, many coming from mere curiosity, as is often the case, while in the case of others it was apparent, from their swollen eyes and care-worn countenances, that the continued safety of the men, or it might be that all hope was lost. Many—chiefly women—wandered to and fro about the pit-head; others stood still, holding communication with none around them, until they became almost transfixed to the spot; others, old and young, standing in the distance in small groups, not consoled each other, but sharing each other's griefs in the reflection that all hope was gone. One poor woman has come from a distance, with a young child; both are numb with cold, and at the solicitation of the bystanders, as the child is crying, they approach one of the "lamps," when the cause of the tears soon became painfully apparent—it is not the sharp biting frost which causes that poor child to weep and sob bitterly, or the mother to look wan and sad, but when the poor little thing sobb out, "Oh, my dear, my dear," and its already too afflicted mother tries to assuage its grief by simply saying, "Your dear's not here, honey," the real cause of their suffering manifests itself.

Mr. Middleton thought that Mr. Middleton had introduced the subject in an able and interesting manner. He, too, dated the commencement of agricultural improvement from the establishment of the system of parallel drainage, improved upon by Mr. Parkes. Much credit had been done, but agriculture had not reached the point of its infancy. He believed that, not only would the land in less than twenty years be cultivated by steam, but that the same power that large fields possessed many advantages, but that iron hurdles would be dangerous obstacles to the progress of the reaper, and that Mr. Middleton had given them a great amount of information in few words. He certainly was pleased, but he thought that something might have been said of agriculture as it is described in the Bible. He supposed it would be from the writings of Pliny the younger that Mr. Middleton had drawn a portion of his notes; as he himself remembered reading some of the facts mentioned.

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NARROW ESCAPE.—James Burnell, a man verging upon 70, employed as a gate keeper at the Blue-rook Crossing, near to Bishop Auckland, fell into the fire in his cabin on Tuesday. The semi-conscious state in which he must have been at the time is attributed by some persons to his melancholy, consequent on the accident which is elsewhere recorded in our columns; it is probable he would have been burnt to death. He was removed to his own home, where he lies in a precarious state.

ALLEGED CONSPIRACY AND RIOT AT WEST HARTLEPOOL.—On Friday, Mr. Wm. Kitching, printer, Mr. Wm. Scarr, grocer, and Mr. Isaac Robinson, master tailor, were charged before the county Magistrates with conspiring together to commit a riot on the occasion of Mr. Coleman going down to Hartlepool, on the 29th Nov. last, to examine the books of the West Hartlepool Harbour and Dock Company. Evidence was given to show that the defendants took an active part in the disturbances on the occasion referred to, &c. The Bench expressed an opinion that there was a prima facie case against them, upon which the prosecutors said they were satisfied, and the defendants were discharged with a caution to be more careful in future.

MARRIAGE.

At the Register Office, Barnard Castle, on the 16th inst., Mr. T. Richardson to Miss M. Tallentire, both of Middleton.

DEATHS.

At Barnard Castle, on the 16 inst., Mr. Geo. Brown, carpet weaver, aged 46 years. On the 16th inst., Martha Jane, daughter of Mr. B. Burrows, aged 2 years. On the 17th, Thomas, son of Mr. T. Gregson, aged 4 months. At Boldron, on the 13th inst., Mary Ann, daughter of Mr. John Coates, aged 15 years. At Angleton, aged 41, Hannah, eldest daughter of the late Mr. John Rayson, farmer, much respected.

MARKETS.

Richmond, Saturday.—White Wheat, 17s 6d; Red do., 15s to 16s 0d; Barley, 8s 0d; Beans, 11s 0d; per bushel. Oats, 3s 0d per bushel. Butter, 1s 10d per lb. Turkeys, 7s 6d; Chickens, 1s 6d to 1s 9d per lb. 24oz. Eggs, 17d for 100. Potatoes 10s 0d per ton. On the 17th, Thomas, son of Mr. T. Gregson, aged 4 months. At Boldron, on the 13th inst., Mary Ann, daughter of Mr. John Coates, aged 15 years. At Angleton, aged 41, Hannah, eldest daughter of the late Mr. John Rayson, farmer, much respected.

THE CASE OF MR. WINDHAM.

Twenty-second Day.

Mr. George Young said he was Mr. Windham's private secretary from January to March, 1855. He never saw anything to indicate untruthfulness of mind.

Mr. H. Ingram, a Friend and mathematical master preparatory school at Felham, where Windham was for years before going to Eton, said he did his work well. He told him in 1855, and he never saw anything to indicate untruthfulness of mind.

Mr. W. F. F. Barnes, a wine merchant in Lincoln's Inn, said he knew Mr. Windham, who was valued to his uncle, Lewellin, was never suspected in any way as a conspirator for his firm.

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