APPENDIX 21:

John Farncombe The Sussex Breed of Cattle in the Nineteenth Century by J. P. Boxall
https://bahs.org.uk/AGHR/ARTICLES/20n1a2.pdf

IV.—*On the Farming of Sussex.* By JOHN FARNCOMBE.

PRIZE REPORT.

THIS county, of 1,400,000 acres, and between 300 and 400 parishes, contains a great variety of soils and systems of usage, which consequently render it too difficult to describe in particular; but having been bred a farmer, and having practised in different parts of the county on a great variety of soils and systems applicable thereto, having had twenty-five years' practice as a valuer, with the advantage also of being employed by the Tithe Commissioners as their usual local agent for the county, in reporting on the agreements for the Commutation of Tithes; and having been likewise extensively engaged in the apportionment of the rent-charges, I am induced to offer to your notice my experience, and to report on the Farming of Sussex. I shall begin by dividing the county into three districts. The first comprises

South and West Downs, which rise towards the east at Southborne, and continue westward as far as Hampshire,—southward by the places named as the northern boundary of No. 2, and northward by the great valley of the Weald.

The *soils* on this range are various, but generally kind and principally of chalk quality, some flinty, a small portion sandy, and the smallest portion of all adhesive and black land.

The *systems* of farming, like the soil, vary very much and generally according to the proportion of the arable to the meadow and pasture. Where the arable land is in much the lesser proportion the general system is in thirds, viz.—

One-third wheat.
One-third barley.
One-third in equal proportion of seeds to mow and feed and of green fallow for sheep-feed.

In cases where the proportion is more equal, generally in fourths, viz.:—

One-fourth wheat.	One-fourth seeds.
One-fourth barley.	One-fourth fallow for sheep-feed.

Where there is less meadow and pasture, in fifths, viz.:—

One-fifth wheat.	One-tenth seeds.
One-fifth barley.	One-tenth oats.
One-fifth seeds.	One-fifth fallow.

And in some very few instances in sixths, viz.:—

One-sixth wheat.	One-twelfth oats.
One-sixth barley.	One-sixth fallow.
One-sixth seeds.	One-sixth sainfoin.
One-twelfth ditto.	

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The above systems are those in general use; the adoption of them varies of course according to the proportion of the quality of soil and the local circumstances under which they are situated, There are some instances in large concerns in which the same system would not be desirable to be practised throughout, and consequently an incorporation of systems occurs.

This district is applied to the purpose it is so eminently calculated for—the production of the justly esteemed South Down sheep. The usual course of maintaining the flocks is in the proportion of three ages, 1, 2, and 3 years old. The third portion of the ewe flock is drafted, on or before Michaelmas, for sale, with the lambs, (exclusive of those required for keeping up the flock,) and sold at the fairs held at convenient times and places. The tegs, which are now eighteen months old, supply the place of the drafted ewes. The flocks are usually lambed down about the latter end of March, that being found the time best suited to avoid the inclemency of the weather in exposed situations, and likewise to meet the provision of food made for them. Three weeks after lambing they are collected and put to fold, generally on the arable lands, the manure being very valuable. Indeed it may be calculated at quite one-fourth of the return made by the flock, viz.:—if 100 ewes produced 100*l.*, the manure deposited by them would be valued at 25*l.*, and so in proportion, and hence it becomes the occupier's interest to keep them well, in order to have his land properly manured. A good, clean clover-lay, folded in the autumn, is generally the most productive part of the wheat crop. Rape is the principal provision for autumnal feeding, which is generally commenced being fed off about the middle of September, and continued till near Christmas for a wheat crop. The sheep generally thrive very fast on this till the frost comes, when they require some portion of hay or old grass with it. About forty years ago the feeding of sheep with hay and water, shut up entirely in yards, was begun, and found to succeed so well that it is continued by some, and partially by the generality of flockmasters. I have kept 500 ewes in lamb this way for more than three months after Christmas, and had them in very high condition with plenty of milk on their lambing down. This may be supposed a very expensive mode of keeping a flock; but when I explain that my occupation consisted of four-fifths of cultivated land of not more value than 12*s.* per acre on the average, 40 acres of which in sainfoin were more than sufficient to produce this quantity of hay, it may be thought not a very expensive, but very profitable mode of applying such land. Having represented the general provision under the flock system to be in rape for autumnal feeding, and the reason for this being, that it is a good preparation for wheat, I

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have only to add that, for the winter, a small portion of turnips and mangold are grown for cattle and sheep, which are generally drawn off the land which is sown with wheat or other corn; but it may be quoted as a very small portion of the preparation, being very unkind for wheat and unhealthy for breeding ewes. A very experienced farmer (a neighbour of mine for many years) remarked, respecting turnips, that if you had an extra quantity of hay you were desirous of consuming, he thought it might be desirable to raise some turnips to encourage the appetite of the animals, as there was no satisfying quality in them. He planted cabbage (Drumhead) instead, which continue to be raised to a considerable extent for working cattle, being a much more certain crop (no fly to contend with), as well as being much more nutritious. He observed with what advantage I had for several years, in the same parish, raised this plant in preference to any other for at least six months in the year in maintenance of cows kept for milk near Brighton from the adjoining parish of Rottingdean. This is still continued, and also now adopted by almost all the cowkeepers as the principal winter provision for milk.

On Sheep-breeding.—Having been for many years not unsuccessful as a South Down sheep-breeder, I may venture a few remarks on this subject; and first, I shall bring to your notice that most distinguished and indefatigable character, the late John Ellman, Esq., of Glynde, near Lewes, deserving of remembrance for his improvement of this most valuable animal. I was resident near to Glynde, and consequently had the opportunity of observing how Mr. Ellman managed his flock; and I feel I shall not be doing justice to his merits if I do not state the perfection to which he brought his sheep. I have competed with some of the most eminent breeders from other counties, the Duke of Bedford, the Earl of Bridgewater, Sir John Sebright, Mr. Boys, and many others whose blood was almost entirely from Glynde, and who displayed the benefits of pure breeding. Nay, I state that in fifty years' experience I never knew a flockmaster in the county or out of it who had better sheep than others, but the improvement was to be traced to Glynde; and this most valuable blood still remains with the son at Landport, near Lewes. The mode adopted, and still continued, which produced so much perfection, is in the choice of the ewes to the rams, and the constant attention to the produce from such selections. This should be practised annually by every flockmaster, who might thereby much improve his flock. As one ram only is necessary for 100 ewes, so would the expense be small and the trouble little for him to be always certain of the sort he is breeding from; but when five rams, perhaps of different character and blood, are

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used indiscriminately amongst 500 ewes, such uncertain breeding renders it impossible that he can make any selection from them to be depended on for stock; this, with hard keeping, accounts for the now generally inferior quality of the South Down sheep.

I must not pass over in silence the mistaken practice generally followed in this district of sowing too much wheat, a portion of which is illtimed, sparingly manured, and therefore on such soils not to be calculated on to produce profitably. It is better to confine the quantity sown to that which can be done well, and improve the flocks in condition, by growing more green keep for them; thus raising also the condition of the land, and eventually increasing the yield of corn. And here I propose some calculations which I hope may be useful as being the soundest mode whereby occupiers can ascertain what quantity of sheep or stock can be kept in good and profitable condition. The way to apply them is to value the produce to arise, exclusive of corn, from the land according to its quality, and the result will give the amount of money to be thus obtained. *Thousands of acres on these downs, I believe, may be profitably cultivated, which produce now little but heath and furze.* I give, as under, examples of the best systems in support of my opinions.

No. 1.—Farm supposed to be 240 Acres.

	Acres.	Acres.	£.	s.	d.
Arable	80	20 Barley and wheat	0	0	0
Down pasture	160	20 Seeds, to mow and feed	50	0	0
		20 Oats	0	0	0
	240	20 Fallow for rape and turnips	50	0	0
		160 Sheep-pasture	80	0	0
		240	180	0	0

No. 2.—Farm 240 Acres.

Arable	80	16 Sainfoin	40	0	0
Down pasture	160	16 Barley and wheat	0	0	0
		16 Seeds to pasture	40	0	0
	240	16 Oats	0	0	0
		16 Fallow for rape	40	0	0
		160 Sheep pasture	80	0	0
		240	200	0	0

No. 3.—Farm 240 Acres.

Arable	120	20 Sainfoin	50	0	0
Down pasture	120	20 Barley and wheat	0	0	0
		20 Pasture	50	0	0
	240	20 Ditto	33	6	8
		20 Oats	0	0	0
		120 Down pasture	60	0	0
		240	243	6	8

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No. 4.—Farm 240 Acres.

	Acres.
Arable	160
Down Pasture	80
	240

Acres.				£.	s.	d.
26	2	6	Sainfoin	66	13	0
26	2	6	Barley or part wheat	0	0	0
26	2	6	Seeds to pasture	66	13	0
26	2	6	Ditto ditto	44	8	0
26	2	6	Oats	0	0	0
26	2	6	Fallow	66	13	0
80	0	0	Sheep pasture	32	0	0
240				276	7	0

These calculations are proffered also for the encouragement of increased cultivation, founded on practical experience and observation; and with reference to the No. 4 system being so much the best, I have no doubt of the proportionally increased number of sheep, that it will keep in the flock, being also of at least 3*s.* per head improved value. No Down flockmaster can farm certainly well without sainfoin, it being a safeguard for winter provision and summer condition, taking also into consideration the often serious loss of other seed-plants, particularly clover, on light lands, which arises generally from its being sown too frequently, and from the previously exhausted state of the land. No seeds should consequently be sown either to mow or feed but in the first crop of corn manured for, and no red clover but once in eight years to mow, or any for feeding. One example of several that I have been employed in will serve to support my opinions on this subject; it consisted of 100 acres of old sown land.

Former State.

Acres.	£.	s.	d.
25 Wheat	0	0	0
25 Seeds	62	10	0
25 Corn	0	0	0
25 Fallow for rape	62	10	0
25 Down pasture	12	10	0
Former produce	137	10	0

Improved State.

Acres.	£.	s.	d.
25 Wheat	0	0	0
25 Seeds	62	10	0
25 Corn	0	0	0
25 Fallow	62	10	0
25 Sainfoin	62	10	0
	£187	10	0
Former state	137	10	0
Improved return	£50	0	0

This exhibits a benefit of 8*s.* per acre, independent of the rest given to the old sown land; and on this latter point I must remark, that any extraordinary crops I happened to grow were always to be attributed to the rest the land had, and not to extra cultivation or manuring; for example, 60 bushels of wheat per acre on land rested in lucerne, 54 bushels of wheat per acre after two years fallow, 52 ditto rested in sainfoin, 50 ditto from fresh broken down, and 10 and 12 quarters oats per acre rested in

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sainfoin, these crops being grown on soil of that quality not to be rated at much more than half these returns on the average, without extraordinary farming. To these arguments for breaking up down may be added the further inducements in the commutation of tithes and the employment of labourers; and last, though not the least, the present facility for obtaining artificial manures at a very moderate price.

District No. 2

commences at New Shoreham, and is bounded southward by the sea and northward by the hills, beginning at Shoreham and passing in a line through Sompting, Patching, Arundel, Boxgrove, Chichester, Westborn, and Futington, &c., to Hampshire.

Soils.—This district may be called the garden of Sussex, the soil being mostly of good sound land, some small portion being adhesive on clay subsoil, and some portion on the higher parts flinty, and not so deep, but of similar quality. The meadow and pasture land is proportionally good in quality, but little of it is used for the purpose of sheep feeding on the stock system, being principally applied to the fattening of cattle and sheep.

Systems.—These are various and applicable to the soil, the adhesive land being alternately sown with wheat after tares, fallow, beans, seeds, and a few turnips. Part is farmed in fourths, viz.:

One-fourth wheat.	One-eighth oats.
One-fourth turnips.	One-eighth seed, peas, and beans.
One-fourth barley.	

Part used in sixths, viz.:

One-sixth turnips.	One-sixth wheat.
One-sixth barley.	One-sixth beans or peas.
One-sixth seeds to mow and feed.	One-sixth wheat.

And in this much recommended system (on good land) I observed that the seeds for feeding were trefoil and white clover together, with which ewes and lambs are kept and fatted.

In some parts where breeding flocks are kept, and there is a portion of down, or the greater proportion of the farm is of thinner soil, the four-course system with the alternate cropping is adopted.

Remarks.—I visited many parishes in this district for the commutation of tithes that were estimated at 40 bushels of wheat per acre and the other crops in proportion. A great number of sheep and lambs are fatted on the arable lands on turnips and seeds, &c., and also cattle and sheep on the pasture lands, as well as in stalls, on cake, linseed, &c., and on hay and roots, principally Swedish turnips, which contain so much nutritive quality, that on some farms neither corn nor oil-cake is given to sheep on

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the land, nor to stall-fed cattle. I have no improvements to suggest in this district. The soil is good, well cultivated, and very productive.

District No. 3.

This district comprises all the remainder of the county lying northward of the two first described, and is commonly known as the Weald of Sussex.

Soils.—This extensive division of the county may be considered to contain a considerable portion of what is called cold clay, some part shravy land, flinty, and gravelly, on clay subsoil; sandy lands, both black and white; black lands, sandy and chalk loams, and a small portion of marly soil, with very extensive unproductive waste or common land, and also extensive marsh grazing lands. The greater portion of pasture is of that quality which is applied to the breeding and rearing of cattle and sheep, and for dairying and suckling, &c.

System.—The farming of the arable land is of course various, principally three and four-course, and in some of the most inferior lands five, six, seven, and eight-course, with some portion only occasionally cultivated.

Remarks.—The produce and management in this district are very inferior proportionably to the last quoted, it being occupied principally by tenants who are not men of sufficient capital to farm beneficially even for themselves. Many still continue to labour on as their grandfathers did in system, fearful that if they should put more capital in their farms by improvements the landlords would take the advantage of it and raise their rents. One custom has prevailed as long as I can remember, that of taking lambs to keep from the 29th of September to the 25th of March next ensuing, or to the 5th of April, being six months' keep, for which 6*s.* per head are commonly paid. Previous to Christmas they are kept in the stubbles and clover lays, with perhaps an occasional change to the meadow and pasture lands; the latter part of the season they must, of course, live on the hedges and hedge-rows, then to the meadow and pastures, and the young wheat (if any plant) for fear it would be too rank; if weak, then with the idea of improving the stock of it; and lastly altogether in the meadow and pasture fields, living principally, in a backward spring, *in* and *upon the hedges*, for I have seen them return home *with nearly all the wool off their necks to the shoulders*, and partially from the body. The keepers are bound to give them hay if they require it, but the chances are that, if offered, it would be of a quality they would not eat; and consequently they are sent back in a condition which accounts in some degree for the size of ewes in the down flocks, from which they had been taken in good condition.

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Thousands are brought from Kent, principally out of Romney Marsh, for which sort 6*d.* and sometimes 1*s.* per head more is paid than for the Down lambs, with presents to those farmers who send them in the best condition to the place of meeting on the 5th of April—the condition, however, being worse from the size of the lambs of this breed, and the longer time of keeping. There appear to be two parties in error—those who put out their lambs in good condition to be thus treated, and also those who take them at a much greater loss, not having a blade of grass left on their lands for cattle of any sort of their own. I surveyed four parishes together about 2 years past of 28,000 acres where this system is adopted in full, about 20,000 acres of which are arable, meadow, and pasture. I found, from the best information I could obtain, when the winter-kept sheep were sent away there might be 200 or 300 others remaining, where thousands might be profitably and permanently kept, and with great benefit on the arable lands for a preparation for wheat. This is the case to a great extent in this district. I remember a very different system 50 years ago, when, with very few exceptions, this class of farmers used to wean and bring up Sussex-bred calves, and on the larger farms keep a sufficient number to do a portion of the work on them (now rarely to be found), and well supply the fairs in the neighbourhood with good well-bred oxen and steers of all ages, that were much in demand by the Down farmers, for working, and the old oxen of a superior quality for the Kentish hop-growers to fat and make their manures, and to this change may the altered character of the Sussex breed (now become so nearly extinct as to be worthy only to be exhibited as a cross-bred animal) be attributed. This is a most lamentable fact connected with the loss of manures and the description of cattle now substituted. It can only be recoverable by the employment of fresh capital, rendered necessary by the fall of prices in the last 30 years, and increased poor-rates from want of means to employ the labourers. Under these emergencies great numbers of farmers have sunk, and many are still feeling the effect of them. Some of the latter may be succeeded by the unincumbered capitalist, who can, at a fair rent, employ his capital to advantage (if he can have a lease) by adopting a course of farming applicable to the soil, and properly cultivating, manuring, and under-draining, if necessary; he can buy artificial manures at a cheap rate for money, and apply them to increase the produce of roots on the arable land for the winter maintenance of stock, and so make his manures of better quality and quantity. Compare the two farmers: the one using his arable land in a three-course system—wheat, oats, seeds, and too often a portion of peas and beans (not half cultivated), and the remainder naked fallow (the principal part of this portion to be limed,

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and that in some situations at more expense for carriage than the cost price of the lime) ; this is the farming of many at the present time, some not having means of their own, and paying interest perhaps at 5 per cent. on the capital employed or part of it. The other farms, in a four-course system—1. wheat; 2. half red clover, half other seeds to mow or pasture as may be required, taking care that the part sown with red clover be dunged, which if so farmed on the most adhesive soils (even cold clay) would make more return in hay and seed than the wheat or any crop on the farm. Then 3. oats; 4. half may be part in tares to mow for the horses in the yard, only a sufficient part of peas or beans to fat the pigs for family consumption, only a part for potatoes for the family, and as much to the labourers on the farm as they may require; half being made clean summer fallow, being 1-8th, on which the red clover to be sown after wheat. I am confident, without further detail, that the difference of the produce of the last course would be remuneration for the capital, and payment of the same rent, &c.; whereas, in my opinion, the other would not. I have visited *some* parishes in this extensive district where the farming was principally three-course, where the average has been taken at 18 bushels of wheat and the oats at 20 bushels, and *a great many* where the average was taken at 20 bushels of wheat and oats at 24 bushels per acre, where I also found the system to be generally in thirds. My business was as local agent to the Tithe Commissioners, to ascertain whether the produce of the parishes I was sent to report on represented the value of the tithes proposed by land and tithe owners for commutation, where I was, of course, supplied with a schedule of the quantities of arable, meadow, and pasture, &c., of every parish I visited. It is this survey which enables me to submit my statements with accuracy, but I am fearful, in treating the subject, of making it too voluminous.

My observation respecting the systems of farming must be taken to apply generally, where the lands require attention to support themselves in their produce—local neighbourhood to towns giving to farmers advantages of other resources which will enable them to adopt different courses, according to circumstances. I am very desirous in these critical times to sympathize and give encouragement to the tenant farmers, it being with many of them an almost heartless task ; but Necessity compels them to continue, and those who are so circumstanced, let me invite to apply to that mother of invention to assist them in their pursuits ; and should any benefit be derived from my experience, the object of my submitting it will be obtained.

One very formidable enemy to the dependent farmers exists in the competition for lands by persons sometimes scientific, who are

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led to it by improvement of system and other advantages they calculate on in the present day. These facts are stated with an anxious wish to excite the present tenants to exert themselves in retaining their occupations by adopting themselves the benefits contemplated by these competitors, and so supersede them by themselves increasing the produce of their lands. Landlords can, in many parishes of this district, assist the tenants by permitting the cultivation of the inferior pasture lands, of which thousands of acres are now almost unproductive, and could be cultivated at little or no increased expense to the occupiers. This would benefit the tenant farmer and improve the estate, and be the best, or I may say, the only resource in the present prospective difficulty.

Supposed present Produce.

Acres.		£.	s.	d.
10	wheat, 20 bushels per acre, 7*s.* per bushel	70	0	0
10	oats, 24 bushels per acre, 2*s.* 9*d.* per bushel	33	0	0
4	seed, 40*s.* per acre	8	0	0
3	tares and potatoes, 50*s.* per acre	7	10	0
3	fallow	0	0	0
30				
10	inferior pasture	10	0	0
40		£128	10	0

Increased produce by improved management at same prices.

Acres.		£.	s.	d.
10	wheat, 28 bushels per acre, 7*s.* per bushel	98	0	0
10	seeds to mow and feed, 50*s.* per acre	25	0	0
10	oats, 33 bushels per acre, 2*s.* 9*d.* per bushel	45	7	6
5	tares and potatoes, &c., 50*s.* per acre	12	10	0
5	fallow	0	0	0
40		180	17	6
	Improved value at same prices	52	7	6
		£128	10	0

Increased produce by same improved system at probable low prices.

Acres.		£.	s.	d.
10	wheat, 28 bushels per acre, 5*s.* per bushel	70	0	0
10	seeds, 50*s.* per acre	25	0	0
10	oats, 33 bushels, 2*s.* per bushel	33	0	0
5	tares, &c., 50*s.* per acre	12	10	0
5	fallow	0	0	0
40		140	10	0
	Improved value at probable low prices	12	0	0
		£128	10	0

My object in these tables is to benefit particularly that class of tenants (and they are the majority) who have no other resources

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for their support but what their occupations return them for their capital employed. I by no means intend to imply that there is no good farming in Sussex; there is a great deal, and many independent farmers too, and much improvement going on in all parts of the county; and these are now the only parties who are likely to make farming answer: as, having resources in the time of need, they are not compelled to sell their cattle half-fattened, nor take their corn to over supplied markets. In the north-eastern extremity of this district are to be found well-cultivated hop lands, which would be profitable but for the extensive competition of inferior and unkind plantations, which are injurious to the general growers, and too often rob the whole farm of the manures and attention it would otherwise have; but as there is no Act of Parliament to prevent men from being speculative, so must the consequences of over plantation of hops produce low and unprofitable prices on the unkind lands, and prove, consequently, injurious to the whole of the growers. This is the evil, and not the duty so much complained of—nay, I am of opinion that, if dispensed with, it would encourage more plantations and increase the evil; for hops are not to be compared to the growth of corn, for which there must be a demand at some price; but an over plantation of hops (an article not consumable even by pigs) must be an error. The sacrifice is apparently great in capital to give up the unprofitable gardens, but had better be at once adopted. The same advice cannot be given as in the case of corn, to reduce the quantity of acres—increasing the produce of the remainder by better cultivation and manuring; this would not meet the general difficulty, nor answer the general purpose of the occupiers: it is impossible that 8 cwt. per acre can compete against 20. But that increased supply beyond the demand affects the prices, to render it unprofitable to the one and injurious to the other.

Improvements.—The further proposed improvements of importance consist in the diminution of fences in the enclosed lands of this district, and taking out of such as necessarily remain all timber and trees whatsoever, which are very injurious to the land and unprofitable to the owner; for, being exposed to the winds, they make no growth, and if permitted to stand for a century would only then make a few posts and rails, of a few shillings' value, doing, meanwhile, as many pounds damage in destroying the live fence under them and the produce about them. Fences can only be necessary to the depastured fields and for outside protection; when any portion of the arable land is depastured, temporary fences of hurdles, wattles, net or wire, &c., according to circumstances, are more desirable, the fences not being commonly in the situation to be useful, and, when they are, the fences themselves require the protection of hurdles against sheep feeding by them.

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When the ditches were made in wet land with these fences, it supposed, no doubt, a benefit to the drainage; but where little advantage is taken for this purpose, a proper under drain would be more beneficial.

Extirpation of Charlock.—The only way is by constantly pulling it; the expense is considerable at first, but by perseverance becomes trifling. In the neighbourhood of Brighton I have seen land in the occupation of Mr. C. Beard, so nearly cleared by this mode, that the cost of cleaning all that was visible on 80 acres of barley together would not be more than 20*s.*, and this was on light chalk soil. The management of this land was principally rape, for sheep-feeding (the charlock pulled out of it), next wheat, carefully looked over, the charlock pulled out, and also from the barley (which is sown with seeds), generally for two years' pasture. I am of opinion that a clean winter and summer fallow would weaken it very much; I observed this from experience, but as the land on the downs is generally wanted for feed of some sort, this can be but very little done. I have seen the rape drilled and horse-hoed to some advantage. Then the charlock in the rows only requires pulling; this is attended with less expense, but is not so effectual. I have observed that where the land is turniped, it is much cleaner of this nuisance by means of the hoeing. I visited a great many parishes in Hampshire for tithe, and the general system there practised of turnips, barley, seeds, &c., for wheat makes their land certainly cleaner altogether than in Sussex. But the turnip system on the downs not being adapted, for the reasons before stated, of the unkindness for wheat, &c., compels them to do the best they can by feeding it before it seeds, and by previously growing it out before the rape is sown. For if all were inclined to do it effectually by pulling, they could not for want of hands. This I advance from experience in the parish I farmed in many years; and consequently when it gets ripe in the rape, the sheep not liking it, disperse it on the land when feeding the rape.

Improvement of Dwellings and Condition of the Farm Labourer.—I do not think much complaint can be made of the labourers' dwellings in the county: they are of course airy, and in some instances rather too much so, where the repairs are not properly kept up. In the villages they are generally cleanly, and accommodated with some proportion of garden ground; much improvement may be made in this department, very few, comparatively, taking any pains about the produce which might be raised by cultivation and manuring: much benefit may be obtained from a small piece of land if properly attended to. In every parish I would recommend premiums to be given to the best cultivated garden or gardens, and also for the best vegetables; the mode of culti-

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vation and manuring being always certified with the articles exhibited.

The next thing that affords great assistance and comfort, and is worthy of all classes to join them, is a sick-club society; this affords them an independent resource in time of need. Those founded on the annual dissolution plan are the best—returning them once a year the unrequired amount monthly subscribed. I belonged to one of this description for many years, paying 2*s*. 3*d*. per month for 12 months; the members received back, on the average, more than one-half the amount paid: the sick receiving for the first 6 months, 10*s*. per week; the remaining six months, 5*s*. per week; and afterwards a pension of two shillings per week. This was not in a populous neighbourhood, but consisted of 170 members when I left in 1835, and continues now about the same number. On the decease of a member 1*s*. each to be paid by the members at the next monthly meeting, and given to the friends of the deceased. I introduced also, in the same parish of Rottingdean in the year 1835, a medical club, which has now between 200 and 300 members. The single man pays 1*d*. per week by the quarter; a man and his wife 7*s*. 8*d*. per annum, quarterly; a man, wife, and two children, 12*s*. 4*d*. per annum; a man, wife, and four children, 15*s*. per annum, being 1*s*. 7*d*. per head only for the children; and this includes all cases requiring the attendance of a medical man and medicine, except midwifery cases, for which the extra charge is 10*s*. And it appears from this statement that a man, his wife, and four children, by belonging to the medical club, are certainly provided for, as before stated, for the trifling sum of 6½*d*. per week for 52 weeks, 2*s*. 4*d*. per month for 12 months, and 1*l*. 8*s*. for the year.

To conclude: I will briefly sum up the improvements that have taken place in the county of Sussex from 1808 to 1849. Draining, under-draining, the use of artificial manures at reduced prices, increased cultivation, increased produce of roots and other green crops, better management of sheep and cattle, improved machinery and agricultural implements, increased consumption by visitors at watering-places, Tithe Commutation, and lastly the Poor Law Amendment Act, which has removed a great burthen from the land, Sussex having been, previously to the improvement in the poor-laws, one of the highest counties for poor-rates and also for wages. The various external causes which during the same period have lowered from time to time the price of corn, the nature of this publication will not allow me to dwell upon. These changes brought almost instant ruin to some; others were obliged to have recourse for a time to their property; and some, by the partial exhaustion of their capital in stock, &c., were formerly or now are reduced to that state that they are

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unable to take advantage of the improvements that are continually brought forward.

Under these trying circumstances I can here only reiterate the advice I have previously given to farmers—to study and apply the system of farming best calculated for their respective soils, and to increase their quantity of arable land by bringing into cultivation any inferior pasture that they may have, and I believe that the adoption of these measures would afford them some relief in their present and prospective state. And here, with my best wishes for the prosperity of the agriculturist, I take my leave of the subject.

V.—*On Winter Feeding of Sheep.* By Captain the Hon. Dudley Pelham, R.N., M.P.

To Mr. Pusey.

My dear Pusey,—Having for four years been paying some attention to the practice of home or shed-feeding of sheep, I am disposed to think it is a subject which has not yet been sufficiently considered by farmers, and that benefit may result from their attention being drawn to the practice, and I address you in the hope you may consider my remarks worthy of a place in the Royal Agricultural Journal. Most people have long given up, as erroneous in principle and unprofitable in practice, the *winter* grazing, or attempting to *fatten*, oxen in the field,—exposed to wet and cold, and injuriously *poaching* the land,—at that season; and it has become a general method to bring turnips to the homestead to feed store oxen in addition to their consumption of straw in their mere manure-making occupation, as well as for the purpose of *fattening* in enclosed buildings those animals, whether oxen or pigs, intended for immediate sale to the butcher; but when such a proposition is made as bringing in turnips to be consumed by sheep in sheds at the homestead, or on particular spots on the farm, if a large one, most men are startled at, and immediately condemn, the supposed extravagance of carting in the sheep's food, and carting out the sheep's manure; probably because it is considered that the commoner mode of taking the sheep to the turnips is the simplest way of manuring the land; nevertheless, I venture to believe that shed-feeding will by-and-by become more general for the winter-grazing or fattening sheep.

I am not going to trench upon the ground so well occupied by Mr. Lawes, in his late paper on sheep-feeding, but shall confine myself to inviting the comparison between field-feeding and shed-feeding sheep for the butcher in the winter or colder and wetter

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