



WILTS AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY

The annual meeting of this Society was yesterday held in Devizes. The exhibition was not so large as we have had for many years past; and there was but little competition in dairy stock.

The fat stock, on the other hand, was very superior. A 3-year-old heifer belonging to Mr. William Fowle, and a red yearling bull belonging to Mr. Jonathan Grant, attracted much attention, and were spoken highly of. A pair of working oxen was exhibited by Mr. John Spencer of West Lavington, and a competing pair by Mr. Pearce Brown of Burderop, and their merits were so nicely balanced, that the Judges had some difficulty in determining to which pair the premium should be awarded. Mr. Stratton, of Salthrop, and Mr. Stratton, of Manningford, as usual, exhibited some splendid fat oxen; and each received a prize. The Messrs. Clark of Devizes showed in the same class some remarkably fine beasts, for which a premium was awarded.

A fat steer belonging to Mr. Johnson Hayward, a high-bred calf of the short-horn breed belonging to Mr. W. Fowle, and the short-horned cows that carried off the prizes, were deservedly praised. The rams of Mr. Hooper and Mr. Moore, and the fat down wethers of Mr. James Stratton and the Messrs. Clark, were excellent specimens. Mr. W. Brown, of Horton, obtained the first prize, for a beautiful white pig. Mr. Pocock showed an excellent breeding sow and pigs, which entitled him to a premium, but he was disqualified on account of being one of the Judges: - a bounty of a sovereign was however awarded.

A southdown six tooth sheep that has never been shorn attracted universal attention as a great curiosity. Some gentlemen estimated the weight of its wool at twenty-five pounds.

THE DINNER

Which took place at the Bear Hotel, was served up in Mr. Davies's usual sumptuous style, and consisted of all the good things of the season (including some prime venison, presented by the Marquis of Ailesbury), accompanied by excellent wines, and followed by a rich dessert. We regret, however, that the company was not so large as might have been expected; but we believe all who were present will agree that a more pleasant and social meeting has not taken place since the formation of the Society. Mr. BENETT, M.P. (the excellent President of the Society) was in his usual place, supported on his right by the Mayor of Devizes, Mr. Neeld, M.P., Mr. John Neeld, M.P., and Mr. S. Mills; and on his left by the Hon. T. Methuen, Mr. Heneage, M.P., Col Estcourt, M.P. and the Rev. Mr. Ashe; and among the company there were also Mr. G. Elgar Sloper, Mr. Grant (of Manningford), Mr. T. Brown, Mr. W. Brown, Mr. S. Neate, Mr. Benjamin, Mr. S. Mills, Jnr., Mr. Maton, Mr. Jonathan Grant, Mr. Pocock, Mr. Melsome, Mr. Chas. Harding, Mr. J. Wentworth, Mr. R. Stratton (Salthrop), Mr. Jos. Stratton, Jnr. (Manningford), Mr. Hull, Mr. Clark, &c. &c. Mr. Nicholson (the worthy Secretary of the Society) filled the vice-chair.

On the removal of the cloth, a bumper was pledged, with hearty, loyal cheers, to Her Majesty; and the other members of the Royal Family having received a similar mark of attachment, the CHAIRMAN gave, as the next toast, the Bishops and Clergy of the Dioceses of Gloucester and Salisbury, with which this county is connected.

The toast having been cordially drank,

The REV. Mr. ASHE (who was the only clergyman present) said he hardly knew how to take upon himself the onus of two Dioceses. They had heard that Atlas had carried the world upon his shoulders, but even he could not have carried two worlds; and to expect an humble individual like himself to represent two Bishops was indeed too much. He could only say that during the 30 years which (with few exceptions) he had attended the meetings of the Society, he had felt that the toast they had just drank was received as cordially as any toast of the evening, and most cordially did he thank them for the expression of their good feeling (cheers).

The Army and Navy, and the health of Col. Estcourt, was then proposed by the CHAIRMAN, and readily responded to.

COL. ESTCOURT, in acknowledging the toast, said - Happily, in this country, the army and navy are so deeply endeared to all classes, and particularly to the agricultural interest, that whenever the two services are toasted in a public assemblage, they always meet with a cordial reception (cheers). And, I may add, that it is fortunate for the army that the agricultural interest are its benefactors; for it is from them we derive our best recruits, and some of our bravest soldiers have been those our villages have produced.

The next toast was the health of the Lord Lieutenant of the County, which was well received.

The CHAIRMAN: - We will now, if you please, drink to the health of the three Judges who have taken so much trouble and pains to discharge the duties they so kindly undertook; and their duties have not been of a very light character, for the equality in the animals was, in some of the classes, so great, that they must have had considerable difficulty in coming to a satisfactory decision. This however, they have done, and in the name of the Society, I beg to thank them for their services, and to propose that we now drink to their good healths. - (Drank with 3 times 3.)

Mr. MELSOME returned thanks. He regretted there was not a larger assemblage of stock; but those exhibited were of a very superior quality. He and his brother judges had endeavoured to give satisfaction in awarding the premiums, and he hoped they had succeeded (cheers).

The next toast from the Chair was The Successful Candidates, on whose behalf Mr. MOORE appeared. I do think (said that gentleman) we all of us ought to feel very much obliged to the Mayor and Corporation of Devizes for the accommodation they afford us for the exhibition, for a better place could not be - (hear, hear, and cheers). I am sorry, however, to see that the show falls off as it does. This is one of the oldest societies in the world (bravo! bravo! and cheers): and, I think, by the alteration of some of the rules regarding its management, we shall very much tend to increase its success: indeed, unless something of the sort is done, we cannot expect to go on favourably. For instance, suppose I take the trouble to bring a large quantity of stock here, I must have 3 or 4 waggons and a number of people to take care of them; and then, notwithstanding I may be entitled to 4 or 5 premiums, I can, according to the rules, only have two. Now, I think, if the competition were thrown entirely open; that is, if no limit were put to the prizes any man might take, but that everyone should be entitled to that which he could win, we should have ten times more stock than we now have (hear, hear). I myself should have exhibited today in two or three classes for pigs and also for cows, but what is the use of a man trying for prizes when he knows there is no chance of gaining them? (Hear, hear).

Mr. BENETT said he was very much obliged to Mr. Moore for his observations. He was old enough to recollect when the Society allowed prizes to a considerable extent; and the rule to which Mr. Moore alluded was established to prevent one man (and that one man was his old friend Robert Hughes) from carrying away everything, for it was at that day a common saying that it was of no use to send anything to compete with Mr. Hughes. The rule, however, might in the present day act injuriously; but he thought Mr. Moore's more proper course would have been to have come before the Committee yesterday, and there have proposed the alteration, and he had no doubt, if he had done so, and urged it with the same eloquence he had now exhibited, that it would have received their best consideration. In all societies it was thought desirable that questions of detail, such as this, should be referred to a Committee; or at a general meeting one person after another might jump up and propose first one thing, and then another, and endless confusion would be the consequence. He knew Mr. Moore's zeal and desire for the welfare of the Society; and if he would be good enough to attend the committee meeting next year and state what he had stated today, he had no doubt it would make a favourable impression. As to the finances of the Society, it made no difference whatever to them: the rule was introduced solely to meet the object he had named.

Mr. MOORE said he was not on the Committee or he should have very great pleasure in following Mr. Benett's suggestion.

Mr. BENNET - Whether you are a member of the Committee or not, the Committee, I am sure, will have great pleasure in admitting you and of attending to your suggestion; and they will, besides, have the pleasure of your company another day.

The health of the Mayor of Devizes (Mr. Bramble), was then proposed by the CHAIRMAN, and drank with 3 times 3 hearty cheers.

His WORSHIP, in replying to the toast, said - From my connection with this Society, I certainly felt somewhat diffident in occupying the honourable position in which Mr. Benett has placed me; but I can assure you I feel highly gratified in receiving such manifestations of good will and kindness as you have just shown towards me as the Mayor of this borough (cheers). I can only say, as far as the Corporation are concerned, that it will, at all times, be their desire to have things in order and to afford every facility in their power to this Association (cheers); and I think I may say, with pride, that in this town, we range second to none in the accommodation our market house gives, when the number of stock brought for exhibition is taken into account. It was good before, but during last year we have gone to considerable expense to have it glazed, and gentlemen may now be under no apprehension of having the rain upon them, nor may those who keep their stock very carefully feel any fear of their receiving injury from draught, wind, or damp. His Worship then took a review of the financial affairs of the Society, and expressed a hope that their funds might go on progressing as they had for some years past - that they might have more stock sent to their meetings and be able to give premiums to a larger amount (cheers).

The CHAIRMAN then rose and proposed the Hon. F. Methuen as a Vice President of the Society, observing that in being permitted to do so, he felt the Society was being honoured with an acquisition, and that as one of the Vice Presidents Mr. Methuen would be rendering a service not only to the agricultural interest of the county, but to himself, by encouraging that interest on which he and all of his family would, he trusted, long depend. He hoped, therefore, his health would be drank as he had seen many toasts drank in that room. - Drank with 3 times 3.

The HON. Mr. METHUEN, after acknowledging the compliment, said, he was well aware of the strong ties which existed between country gentlemen and the agricultural interest, and it was a source of much gratification to him to feel that he lived on terms of amity and friendship with those connected with that class (cheers). He trusted that at the next meeting of the Society there would be a fuller attendance, and that he might then have an opportunity of renewing the friendship he had now slightly made, but which, hereafter, would, he hoped, become more deeply seated (cheers).

After resuming his seat for a moment, the hon. gentleman again rose and said - He had the honour of proposing the health of a gentleman whom they all knew too well to require any encomiums from him; and when he mentioned the name of Mr. Benett - [Here hon. gent. was interrupted by loud and long continued cheering.] I anticipated (said Mr. Methuen, as soon as he could make himself heard) the reception you would give the toast. It is not for me, a young man, to tell you the character of Mr. Benett. That you knew, before I was born.

I shall therefore resume my seat, contented with merely proposing the toast, and expressing a hope that for many years yet to come we may see Mr. Benett filling the chair he has long so worthily occupied.

The toast was drank amidst the most enthusiastic applause.

On Mr. BENETT rising to respond to the toast, the cheering was renewed, and continued for some time. The hon. gent. said:-

It was extremely gratifying to him to come among them, and be received in the same kind and courteous manner as he had been in the days of their fathers and their grandfathers. He was now an old man, but he could see in the countenances of many of those by whom he was surrounded, [particularly in those of the Browns with whose relatives he had been connected for half a century] a family likeness - a likeness to those long since departed. And it brought painful recollections to his mind. It reminded him that he had lost many excellent and valued friends; and that those whom he now looked upon had been deprived of near and dear relatives.

He knew not upon what subject to address them, but upon that of agriculture; and he would say to them as he had often said before - Be not dispirited! The Agriculture of England could not be put down until every other interest was put down. It would last as long as the monarchy itself lasted. The agriculturists were to a man loyal, and they would support the Crown against the machinations of the world. "Peace and good order," was their motto; and peace and good order they would seek to enforce in England, though the rest of the world groaned amidst the wreck of constitutions. It was to the honour of England, that whilst the whole of the civilized world - if civilized it could be called - was

in a state of convulsion and agitation - it was to the honour of England, that she was devoted to the promoting of the best interests of social society.

As to agriculture (the hon. gent. continued) he had been an agriculturist for the greater portion of his life. He did not seek the pursuit for profit - for profit he had none. He sought it as a rational amusement; and old, as he was, he felt a greater interest in it than ever. He really loved the pursuit; and he would venture to say that those who did love it would never lead a life of vice. It connected him with a country life - with his labourers. He formed a friendship for his labourers; and he was sorry to say that during the last winter he had lost seven of them, from old age. Yes, he regretted their loss as the loss of good and trusty friends. That was the equality he contended for, and sought to inculcate - the equality of all who were alike virtuous.

The hon. gent. then spoke of the rapid strides which had been made in agriculture during the last 14 or 15 years. The man who would farm now upon the same system as he did some 20 years ago, would stand no chance. And they were chiefly indebted for the improvement that had taken place to the extraneous manures which had been called into use. The land was more skilfully cultivated, and its greater productiveness was the result of higher knowledge. He would venture to say that ten years would scarcely elapse, before every inch of Salisbury plain would be broken up for wheat; but if he had made such a prediction a few years ago, he would have been looked upon as a mad man. It was true they could not extend the surface of the country - but they could turn some of it to a better use; and he looked forward with interest and with hope to the various methods in operation for extending agricultural knowledge - for even an increased productiveness of the soil. The divine decree "Increase and multiply," could not be counteracted; and in this was their great security. The increase of population was sure to keep pace with the increase of the soil.

As he was riding yesterday from Pyt house to Devizes, he could not help comparing the state of the country as it then presented itself, with what it was some 20 or 30 years ago. Formerly, a good piece of wheat was the exception - some was bad, a greater quantity indifferent, and little indeed was the good. - Not a bad piece was the exception. Throughout the whole distance he saw but one piece of bad wheat. - But whatever advantages manures might afford, all the manures in the world would not succeed without skill in directing their use. It was necessary to be acquainted with the nature and qualities of the land - the particular manure it required - the quantity, &c., so as to give the soil a proper consistency; and many other matters. He would therefore impress upon those around him, who were parents, to take care, in the education of their children, that they were instructed in the sciences necessary to farming. It was a great error of the French, that though they conceded it would require an apprenticeship of 7 years to make a coat or a pair of shoes, they thought they could become legislators and statesmen without any preparation. - With the greatest amount of industry and attention they would always find something to be learnt - still find that they had been imperfectly instructed - still unable to explain important appearances, or to give satisfactory solutions in regard to many agricultural operations. They would never be too old to learn. He himself learnt something yesterday from Mr. Grant, which he did not know before, as to the sowing of wheat after mangel wurzel. But they must not only give their sons a sound education, they must teach them to be useful - to be industrious - to love order - for all these matters were necessary to a good English farmer. Duly impress them in this way, and leave political economy for those who have a taste for it; and they would find the pursuit of farming, the pursuit of happiness. That "Property had its duties as well as its rights," had been said so often that it had become almost a cant phrase. He himself had used the expression 40 years ago; but frequently as it had been used, it had lost none of its truthfulness; and the primary duty it entailed was the care of the labouring classes. Without the labourers they would not be able to exist. Their estates would be useless. It was with great pleasure he read in a newspaper (the Devizes Gazette) a fortnight ago, the report of a meeting held at Chiseldon, in celebration of the establishment of a branch of the Wilts Friendly Society in that little place. And this was the carrying out of a part of the plan of his late esteemed friend, Mr. Ruddle Browne - than whom few persons had more the interest of the lower classes at heart. His friend had not only promoted the system of letting them have small portions of land, but he encouraged them in the cultivation of it by annual premiums: he also rewarded their domestic industry, and established a school for the education of their children; and about six months before his death, he spoke to him (Mr. Benett) about establishing a branch of the Friendly Society, which his brother, Mr. John Browne, had so well carried into effect. He repeated that it afforded him the greatest pleasure to read the report of the meeting; and from the number of the Clergy who were present to support it, he should say, it was sure to succeed. In connection with the present Dean of Salisbury (the Rev. Mr. Lear), Mr. King of Chilmark, and others, he was among the first who sought to establish the County Friendly Society, and contributed £50 towards its support. For a long time it remained dormant. At length Mr. Sotheron, who was a model of kindness and benevolence, took it in hand; and through his energy, there was

now scarcely a district in the county without a branch of it. After a few more observations, Mr. Benett concluded by passing a high eulogium on Mr. Sotheron, and proposed his health, which was drank with 3 times 3.

[It should be stated that Mr. Benett was listened to with the deepest attention, throughout his excellent speech (to which we are unable to render justice), and resumed his seat amid reiterated cheers].

COL. ESTCOURT - I cannot allow the toast to pass, without thanking you for your very kind expression of feeling towards my brother. I am charged by him to express his deep regret that he is not able to attend here today. He is detained in London by duties which are not at all agreeable to him, having been placed on the Dublin Election Committee, where for the last 6 months he has been daily engaged from 11 in the morning till 4 in the afternoon. Were it not for this, no one, I am sure, would have been more pleased to have been one of our party today than himself; and in his absence I beg to thank you, and Mr. Benett in particular, for the terms in which he has been pleased to comment upon his conduct. It is a great pleasure to him whenever he is engaged in improving the condition of the labouring classes. - That particular Society to which Mr. Benett alluded, has been the object of his solicitude many years. During the early part of its existence, as you are aware, it made little progress, but it is now, I am happy to say, flourishing, and no one can feel more gratification in witnessing its success than my brother does (cheers).

Mr. G. ELGAR SLOPER then rose and having proposed Mr. Col. Bucknall Estcourt as a Vice-President, and one or two other gentlemen as members of the Society, said, it must be peculiarly gratifying to the friends of the Society to see that Devizes maintained that pre-eminence - or perhaps he should rather say, to see Wiltshire maintained that pre-eminence - it had always occupied as an agricultural county. If they referred to the statements that had appeared of the Royal Agricultural Society's meeting at York last week, they would find no less than 3 of the first prizes had come into this county. This, he hoped, would prove an incentive to the younger classes and induce them to maintain the pre-eminence Wiltshire moonrakers had always occupied. - Mr. Sloper then proposed as a toast the Members for Devizes - which was drank with 3 times 3.

Mr. HENEAGE, in returning thanks, said, with respect to the prize which had been placed at the disposal of the Committee of the Flax Association, he had received a communication from Mr. Schomberg, stating that they were unable to settle in what way it should be bestowed, and begging that it might stand over for another year, to which Mr. Heneage had readily assented. - The hon. gentleman said, on finding last year that there was no competition in the class in which he offered the premium, he had withdrawn it, and offered it to the Flax Association. In a county like this, where the population was large, the labour in proportion to that population limited, and the wages lower than in some others, he thought it would be very desirable to give flax a fair chance, and it was with the view of doing something to promote its growth that he had offered his premium (cheers).

COL. ESTCOURT said it afforded him great satisfaction and pleasure, after a considerable absence from this country - for it had been his lot, since youth, to pass a large portion of his life out of England - to attend such meetings as these, and where he found himself in the presence of gentlemen, whose faces called to him old feelings, and brought back the recollection of old times which he could never revert to but with feelings of pleasure.

The next toast was the Members for Chippenham - in proposing which the CHAIRMAN said their friend Mr. Neeld had shown towards the Society a great deal of liberality and kind feeling. - He had not made it a contest between the two Societies at Devizes and at Chippenham, but supported the interests of agriculture wherever they were founded. Whether at one place or the other - there was Mr. Neeld; and as to their meeting in Devizes, that he never failed to attend. [The toast was received and drank amidst loud applause).

Mr. NEELD begged to thank them for the kind manner in which they had done him the honour to receive the toast. He regretted he was not here in time to see the stock; but he had heard that though limited in number it was very fine in quality, and all would agree with him that quality was the chief point to be attended to. From the account the worthy Mayor of Devizes had given, he had also heard that they had now a proper place in which the stock was received. He was glad to hear it, because two or three years ago he felt himself obliged to stand up and show the superior accommodation afforded in Chippenham. - The worthy Mayor had said that the place was glazed; that there was no danger of the beams catching cold; but he would advise those who brought their fat stock into a warm place to put a lancet in their pockets (laughter and cheers). And he said this, not from any feeling of rivalry, but purely by way of advice - (continued laughter and cheers). His friend, Mr. Benett, had

stated that he was one of the founders of that Society which Mr. Sotheron was now working with so much advantage, and which under his management, was no longer sleeping as it did some years ago. This only convinced him how useful a man Mr. Benett had been during his life; and he would ask of any gentleman who had been in the habit of attending these meetings, whether he had ever gone away without feeling that he had added something to his stock of agricultural knowledge? (Hear, hear). As far as he himself was concerned his inducement to come here arose from a desire to promote the general benefit of agriculture, and since his residence in the county, he had exerted himself by every means in his power to further that science - (hear, hear, and cheers). Mr. Benett had alluded to the agricultural labourer. That was a point to which he (Mr. Neeld) had paid great attention; and speaking as he now was to practical men, he would say that there certainly never was a time when it was more incumbent upon them to pay attention to the condition of their agricultural labourers than now, - not only because they were dependent upon them, but because of the increase in the population. He would not call upon them to raise the wages, or to do that which might be injurious to themselves; there were many other ways - many little acts of kindness - by which they could cheer the labourer and make his life happier; and, among them, he could not but believe, that the premiums which this, and similar Societies - at Marlborough, Chippenham, and other places in this county - gave for the encouragement of industry and good conduct acted as a powerful stimulus (cheers). At Christmas last, he had had 40 labourers ranged round the room at Chippenham, to each of whom a reward was presented; and among them were many who had passed through a long life of honest servitude, and who but for the Society would have gone down to their graves unknown beyond the precincts of the parish in which their days had been passed. It was by the means of societies like this that the worth our villages contained was made known, and from his own experience he could assure them that the gifts with which they were enabled to reward that worth, were most gratifying to the recipients (cheers). After one or two further observations, Mr. Neeld resumed his seat amidst much cheering.

The Members for Cricklade were next toasted with 3 times 3.

Mr. JOHN NEELD said - I wish to express, in the briefest but at the same time in the strongest form, the sense I entertain of the compliment you have been so kind as to pay me as one of the Members for Cricklade. I assure you I feel extremely grateful to you for it (hear, hear). I am not going to talk about agriculture, though at an agricultural meeting agriculture no doubt is the subject which ought to occupy our chief thoughts; because, in the first place, I know that every one present is much better acquainted with the subject than myself, and in the next I am not altogether desirous of submitting myself to the criticism of practical men. I am here to listen - to hear what you have to say - and if the fact of my dining here, and if the fact of my attending all meetings of this sort be considered as tending to promote agricultural associations, of this I can assure you that you will not find a better "diner-out" in England (cheers and laughter). I am sorry to see there are not more in the world able to give themselves a similar character, but I think we may say of the meeting as was said of the exhibition that though limited in number, it is remarkably fine in quality (cheers and laughter). I confess I came here fully charged with eloquence, but the appearance of that green table opposite me has so completely floored me that I feel myself utterly unable to fire off as I had intended (cheers). I must say, however, that I feel very much gratified in attending the meeting of this society, limited though it may be in number; and as it has been suggested that the health of some gentleman should be proposed who can give us some information upon that subject in which all of you are interested, and who can make a speech, I will propose that we drink the health of one whose face I always see when I come to these meetings. It is not often that I visit Devizes, but when I do I invariably see his happy face, and his good-humoured smile, and which seems to cheer up and animate all around him. The gentleman I allude to is Mr. William Brown, whose health I propose that we drink with 3 times 3. [We need not say that the toast was received and drank with the greatest pleasure. "Three times 3" did not suffice - they were followed by "one more" and "one more" - and "another" when Mr. BROWN rose to reply].

I can assure you (said that worthy gentleman) that whatever you may have felt as to making a speech, I am completely "floored; for what is sport to you is death to me. You have, in truth, completely unnerved me by the way in which you have spoken of me, and all I will attempt to say is that I feel most sensibly, not only your kindness, but that of all the gentlemen in this room (cheers). At the same time I would express the great pleasure it always gives me to attend the meetings of this Society under our excellent friend, Mr. Benett. I have derived the greatest gratification from listening to his speech today, and I am satisfied that that speech, when it goes forth to the world, will be read with pleasure by all who take an interest in upholding what is good in this country (cheers). As to myself, I am but a humble occupier of the soil, and I do my best to cultivate it in the most advantageous way, and I believe I may say that the agricultural body generally are as desirous of

taking advantage of every real improvement that may be discovered as their most earnest well-wishers could desire. I trust it ever will be so, for agriculture has always been the great mainstay of this country, and will, I feel convinced, continue such, as long as England shall be blessed with prosperity (cheers). In conclusion, Mr. Brown again warmly acknowledged the kind manner in which he had been received, and sat down amidst general applause.

I have jumped up (said Mr. BENETT, immediately rising from his seat) as quickly as possible, for fear some gentleman should take my next toast out of my hands. We can't have too much of a good family, and I am now going to give you the health of Mr. Thos. Brown, who has been kind enough to consent to fill the vacant stewardship so long held by our lamented and worthy friend Mr. W. R. Browne (hear, hear, and cheers); I am sure we shall find his services exceedingly valuable. I give you (said the Chairman) the health of the Stewards - Mr. Thos. Brown, and Mr. H. Butcher - [Drank amidst general cheering].

Mr. BROWN, in acknowledging the compliment, said it was a great satisfaction to know that the first year of his Stewardship had been one of unexampled pecuniary prosperity to the Society, and he only hoped it might go on increasing in the same ratio every year (cheers). As to their exhibition that day, as had been remarked by other gentlemen, though limited as regarded number it was very fine in quality. He trusted that every member would do his utmost to extend it on another occasion: indeed, he thought it was their bounden duty to do so, for they well knew how much the welfare of the Society depended upon their annual show (hear, hear). No doubt, as Mr. Moore had said, many of their rules required revision, and, perhaps, by attending to this much might be done to further the objects of the Society, and contribute to its usefulness - (cheers).

The MAYOR - I rise, with the permission of the chair, to propose the next toast, and it is one which perhaps at the present time emanates from me more appropriately than it would from any other party. I mean the highly respectable body of agriculturists who support the town of Devizes by bringing their produce to our market; for I believe it is our market (and that almost alone, for we possess very few innate sources of wealth or prosperity) which has placed Devizes high in the list of country towns; a position which I hope the continued support of her agricultural neighbours will enable her to maintain. - And on behalf of our town in return for their favours, allow me to say that I have the most positive knowledge that they may lay out their money with the tradesmen of Devizes to much greater advantage than by seeking bargains at a distance, (hear, hear, and cheers). To many of our country friends we are also much indebted for their support both by person and purse of many of our charitable, useful and convivial associations (cheers). But I will not detain you but at once propose the health of the agriculturists who support Devizes market, and couple with the toast the name of Mr. Stephen Mills.

Mr. MILLS said he could assure his Worship and the good people of Devizes, that he and his brother agriculturists felt very great pleasure in attending the market in this town, because it was one of the means by which they were enabled to carry out their pursuit; and he only wished they were in the receipt of better prices to enable them to carry it out with more spirit; for without the support which agriculture ought to receive, he was much afraid it would decline in this country; and if it should, he feared the consequence would be that the consumer would be obliged to buy his corn at some distant place at a price much higher than he was now paying. And in this question, it should be borne in mind, the labouring classes were as much interested as the occupiers of the soil; for the very sheet-anchor of their proceedings was the employment of agricultural labour. Gentlemen had spoken of the great quantity of land which of late years had been brought into cultivation on Salisbury Plain and other downs, very much to the advantage of the occupier; but it should not be forgotten that the advantage was equally participated by the labourers. From the commencement of newly-converted soils labour began, first by turning up the sod and burning it, then by ploughing, sowing, and the management of the land, and afterwards by reaping, thrashing, &c., followed by the turnip system. So that all the produce which grew upon the land was, in fact, shared by the labourers. That class, consequently, as he had before said, were as much interested in the breaking up of old pasture as the owner of the soil himself. And he might remark that improvements in agriculture were never more necessary than now; for he felt satisfied that, in the present day, if farmers were not enabled to produce good crops (and good crops could not be obtained without improved management) they would find themselves in a situation ill able to compete with those by whom they were opposed in the market. Remember (said Mr. Mills) we are not now competing with each other; we have the whole world against us, and our only means of meeting the prices of the foreigner will be by increased crops. High prices we must no longer look to: in future the man only who has the skill and the means properly to cultivate his land will be able to stand, and he who can grow 8 sacks to the acre will see his neighbour who produces by 5 swept away by the current (hear, hear). Mr. Mills then proceeded to

make some remarks with reference to the Society, observing that he saw no reason why it should not be made equal to any Society in the kingdom; and after a few words of congratulation upon the success the farmers of Wiltshire had had at the Royal Agricultural meeting, proposed as a toast the health of Mr. L.P. Maton, one of the judges of sheep at York - a gentleman (he said) who had distinguished himself as an agriculturist in this county, or he would not have been selected to fill the office he did.

The toast having been cordially drank, Mr. MATON, in returning thanks said - It was true he had the honour of being called upon to attend the Yorkshire meeting and to assist in adjudging the prizes in the different classes of Southdown sheep; and perhaps it might not be out of place now, inasmuch as one of their own countrymen had gained the first prize, to express the great pleasure all the judges felt in seeing so fine an animal as that exhibited by Mr. Sainsbury (cheers). The race, indeed, was a single-handed one, for nothing came anything like near to the ram Mr. Sainsbury showed (cheers). It was not, however, in sheep only, but in stock also, that this county had been fortunate; and he only hoped his brother farmers would go on the march of improvement, and of that he had little doubt. But he trusted, as Mr. Mills had said, that they would not continue to have such low prices as they had lately experienced. It was all very well for men to talk about farming on this method or the other method: to use artificial manures, and to try one process and the other. - The farmers did all they could; but it was very disheartening for any man to lay out a guinea and get a pound only in return! (hear, hear). Politics he knew were excluded from this meeting, and he would not trench upon their rules; but he did hope he should have had an opportunity of seeing the members for the Northern Division present (though their absence had been satisfactorily accounted for) that they might have learnt from them what their prospects really were - whether, in fact, there was any chance of getting a protective or import duty replaced upon foreign produce; for the present prices were not sufficient (hear, hear). They required, as his friend Mr. Mills had said, some consideration when brought into competition with foreigners (hear, hear). Mr. Maton then said he hoped he should be excused for saying what he had, but this was almost the only opportunity they had of speaking their opinions. He believed many gentlemen who went to Parliament really desired to do their duty to the agricultural interest, but if they were unacquainted with the position in which that body was placed it was impossible they could know how to alleviate it, and it was for that reason he had taken the liberty of making these observations (cheers).

The health of Lord Ailesbury, and thanks to him for his venison, was next drank.

Mr. NEELD then proposed the health of Mr. Nicholson (the Secretary of the Society) and thanks to him for his important services; at the same time impressing upon him the desirableness on occasions of this kind of giving a timely intimation to the friends who were good enough to furnish them with venison. "Your good health, Mr. Nicholson, (said the worthy gentleman) - about a fortnight before the dinner, if you please. About the first week in July, if you will be kind enough to bear it in mind!" - (loud cheers and laughter)

Mr. NICHOLSON returned thanks, and promised not to forget the injunction of Mr. Neeld.

The CHAIRMAN next proposed the health of his old friend Mr. Salmon, which was heartily responded to.

Mr. J. WENTWORTH said there was a gentleman present whom every one in the town of Devizes and many out of it highly respected - one who always attended these meetings and who was always seen among them with pleasure. He meant Mr. George Elgar Sloper, whose health, if the Chairman would permit him, he would propose that they should drink. [The toast was most warmly received and drank with 3 times three.]

Mr. SLOPER - I am quite sure I am totally unworthy and undeserving of the honour you have done me. Why, in the name of wonder, my friend Wentworth should have proposed my health I do not know; but this I can say, that I will yield to no individual in the county of Wilts in the interest I feel in agriculture (cheers). I occupy the chair today in the place of Mr. Butcher, who is engaged in a noble undertaking in another part of the county. He is gone to Everleigh, to take part in a meeting in that place of a branch of our Friendly Society. I am a member of that Society, and I hope the time will come when there will not be a labourer in any of the villages of this great county who will not feel its good effects (hear, hear, and cheers). Gentlemen, the name of SOTHERON is dear to me and to everyone in this county. It is a name which will be immortalized by that Society. It is a name which will live, Mr. Chairman, long after I shall be forgotten; and I do indeed rejoice in the delightful sentiment that the day will come when, on the east and on the west, on the north and on the south -

when, in every village in the county of Wilts - the honest labourer will be seen blessing the day that a county Friendly Society was established (cheers). I recollect when the Society was extremely unpopular, and I then said to my friend Sotheron, "you may depend upon it you will do nothing until you give a good jollification! Let the fellows have a good dinner, let everything be done in a proper manner, and let temperance be joined to the Society!" Temperance I mean in the abstract, for I never will believe that a glass of regular good strong beer ["Mr. Sloper brews 14 bushels in the hogshead," interposed the Mayor] - (cheers). I was going to say that I never will believe that a glass of regular good strong beer will do any real injury to a Wiltshire labourer (hear, hear); though at the same time I would be the last man under the face of heaven to advocate anything like intemperance. I was a farmer for 20 years, and in those days I recollect a proposition was made to me by many to do away with the supper at the end of harvest and to give half-a-crown instead. "My good fellows," I said, "call that dog away, he will never catch a hare;" and during the 20 years I lived at Etchilhampton I always had a harvest supper, and I never recollect on any occasion witnessing a single instance of intemperance (cheers). Therefore, I say to all of you, "Give your labourers a regular good supper; for I can tell you that there is nothing so gratifying to a labouring man as the anticipation, at the close of harvest, of this treat!" (hear, hear, and cheers). I have always evinced a lively interest in agriculture, and the same feeling I trust will exist till the day of my death (cheers). With sentiments of the deepest obligation for the honour you have done me, unworthy and undeserving as I am of it, allow me once more to thank you, and to drink to the very good health of you all - (loud cheers).

The CHAIRMAN then proposed the health of the Ladies, and the toast having been loudly responded to, a bumper was filled to their "next merry meeting".

On leaving the chair, Mr. BENETT said - I hope I may live to meet you again, but whether I do or not, depend upon it my last days will carry with them a kindly feeling towards you and towards the agriculturists of this country. It is you who are the strength and safety of the British constitution - it is you upon whom the defence of everything of value in this country depends. Yes; there is in the middle classes of England - a power so great, a spirit so brave, that nothing can put it down. It is this which has marked the influence of Great Britain throughout the world, and has shown that there is something in the constitution our ancestors have given us which can withstand all the shocks that can come upon us - that there is something in it founded upon sense. I am an old man and may not see you again; but do not forget the advice I give you, to endeavour to maintain that which is good and not seek after novelties which may overthrow the social condition to which England has so long owed her prosperity and happiness.

The company then separated.

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PREMIUMS - HORNED CATTLE

To Mr. Jonathan Grant, for the best Bull, under three years of age	£3 3 0
To Mr. W. Fowle, for the best Heifer (No. 1) under four years old	£3 3 0
To ditto ditto (No. 2)	£3 3 0
To Mr. J. Spencer of West Lavington, for the best pair of working Oxen	£3 3 0
To Mr. R. Stratton of Salthrop, for the best fat Ox	£3 3 0
To Mr. Jos. Stratton of Manningford, for the next best fat Ox	£3 3 0
To Mr. S. Hull of Devizes, for the best fat Cow	£3 3 0
To Mr. C. Beaven of Highway, for the next best	£2 2 0

PIGS

To Mr. W. Brown of Horton, for the best Boar	£1 1 0
To ditto for the best Sow	£1 1 0

SHEEP

To Mr. Moore of Littlecot, for the best two-toothed Ram of the Southdown breed	£3 3 0
To Mr. Hooper of Lavington, for the second best	£2 2 0
To ditto for the best four-toothed Ram	£3 3 0
To Mr. John Moore, for the second best	£2 2 0
To ditto for the best Ram of any age	£3 3 0
To Mr. William Hooper, for the second best	£2 2 0
To ditto, for the best pen of six Ewes	£3 3 0
To Mr. James Stratton, for the best pen of three fat Wethers	£2 2 0

BOUNTIES

To Mr. John Moore, for his pen of six breeding Ewes: to Messrs. Clarke, for three Down Wethers: to Mr. T.P. Brown, for a pen of working Oxen: to Messrs. Clarke, for their fat Ox: to Mr. R. Stratton, for his fat cow: and to Mr. Jonathan Grant, for his yearling Bull, the Judges recommended a bounty of one guinea each.

JUDGES - SAMUEL POCOCK - WILLIAM MELSOME - CHARLES HARDING

GREAT COATS were awarded to the following-

Robert Fowler, servant to Mr. Ingram of Upton Lovell.
John Davis, servant to Mr. John Spencer of Lavington.
George Drew, recommended by Mr. Bramble of Devizes.
James Amor, servant to Mr. W. Ferris of Draycot.
James Cooper, servant to Mr. Pocock of Thoulston.
George Bishop, servant to Mr. W. Brown.
Robert Chivers, servant to Mr. Stratton of Salthrop
John Macklin, servant to Mr. Grant of Manningford.

CLOAKS TO FEMALE SERVANTS

Sarah Kirk, servant to Mr. S. Pocock, for a service of 47 years.
Ann Akerman, servant of John Grant, esq. for a service of 45 years.

Devizes & Wiltshire Gazette, 20 July 1848