



Ploughing Match

An interesting exhibition of agricultural skill took place at Bishop's Cannings, on Saturday last, on a piece of land near Shepherd's Shore, where seventeen ploughs, driven by ploughmen working on the estates of Mr. Sotheron, started for the premiums offered by that estimable gentleman as an encouragement to the labourers employed in this manner.

Mr. Sotheron himself came from London in the morning for the especial purpose of being present, and appeared (as indeed did every spectator) much pleased by the proceedings. The work altogether was considered exceedingly good, and called forth the high commendation of the two expert agriculturalists (Mr. George Brown and Mr. John Wentworth), who kindly undertook the task of deciding upon merits of the Candidates, and whose judgment appeared to give universal satisfaction.

In the 1st class, (with two oxen) one of Mr. Sotheron's own labourers on his model farm at Lacock (named Simon Willshire) won the first prize of a sovereign; the second was declared to have fallen upon Thomas Hillier, a servant of Mr. Mark Sloper's; and the 3rd was carried off by another labourer of Mr. Sotheron's on his model farm, named Michael Burgess.

In the 2nd class (with a three horse team) the 1st prize of one sovereign was awarded to George Woodroffe, a servant of Mr. Richard Coward's; the 2nd (of 10s.) to Simon Bishop, a servant of Mr. William Brown's; and the 3rd (of 5s.) to Paul Bishop, also a servant of Mr. William Brown's.

Half-a-crown was also given to each candidate whose work was specially commended by the judges.

Considering the very dry state of the ground, the ploughing was altogether well executed, and gave much satisfaction.

These are little contests, which cost little but effect much:- indeed, we question whether they are not actually more serviceable - whether they do not excite a greater spirit of emulation than is created by the competition for the premiums offered by county associations. The successful ploughman acquires a village celebrity of which he is proud: he measures his skill with those whose acquaintance form his little world: he excites, by his proficiency, the laudable ambition of those among whom he lives: one labourer will not bear that his fellow on the adjoining farm should be considered a better husbandman than himself - and, as each strives, so all become better workmen. We should, therefore, be pleased to find that these parochial trials of skill were not confined to Bishop's Cannings: indeed, we could point to many little circumstances that occur in the course of the year in this parish, in which the peasantry are interested, which are well worthy of imitation, and which, if adopted, would have the effect of more sincerely attaching the labouring classes in their masters, and make the poor not only better servants, but better men.

As soon as the business of the day had concluded, between 20 and 30 gentlemen who had been spectators of the proceedings (including most of Mr. Sotheron's principal tenants, and the two umpires) adjourned to the inn at Bishop's Cannings, where an excellent dinner, served up in a manner that would have cast no discredit upon the first hotel in the country, was provided by the worthy landlord (Mr. Sloper); and under the auspices of Mr. Sotheron, the afternoon was passed in the interchange of kind feeling, and discussion of practical matters connected with farming. Unfortunately Mr. Sotheron (in order to meet the train at Chippenham by which he was desirous of returning to London) was obliged to leave somewhat early. His place, however, was efficiently filled by Mr. Tugwell, whose social qualities and usual urbanity of manner kept the company together until about nine o'clock, when one of the most pleasant and agreeable meetings we have attended for some time past broke up - every one expressing himself satisfied with the proceedings of the day.

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