Ernest Hutton's
Book.

If thou art borrowed by a Friend
Right welcome shall he be,
To read, to study, not to lend,
But to return to me.

Not that imparted knowledge doth
Diminish learning's store,
But Books, I find, if often lent,
Return to me no more.

Read slowly—Pause frequently—
Think seriously—Keep cleanly—
Return duly.

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JOHN A. SEAVERN

August 20th Feb 1913
at St. Mary's Hospital
(St. Mary)

THE ROYAL FAMILY AND FARMING

GEORGE III TO GEORGE V

BY

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PREFACE

The stimulus given by Royal participation to any industry, above all to such an industry as farming, is of a kind that could be given in no other way, and I trust that the following pages may do something to show the farmers of the kingdom how great is the debt we owe to our sovereigns as patrons of, and leaders in, agricultural affairs

It would be difficult to over-estimate the value of Royal patronage to any industry; above all would it be difficult to over-estimate the advantages the Royal patronage of and participation in farming confer upon the agriculturists of the country

We see and feel the advantages of such patronage most clearly perhaps when the sale of some stud, herd or flock brings a representative from Windsor or Sandringham to the ring side to make purchases on behalf of a member of the Royal Family. The presence of such a representative at the sale

confers upon it a distinction which can be given in no other way, serving as proof that the animals to be sold are the best of their kind

Similarly a sale of stock owned by royalty is an event in the agricultural year. It is known that the Royal farms are directed by the most competent men in the kingdom, that neither skill nor expense have been spared to attain the best results, and that the animals to be sold are the finest that care and money can produce

Agricultural England owes much to her sovereigns since the time of George III. The fact that our sovereigns themselves are practical farmers goes far to strengthen the attachment of the country to the throne; while the part taken by members of the reigning family in agriculture assures the farming interest of Royal sympathy and understanding

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George the 3rd reign from 1760 — 1820
 His first attack of insanity 1788
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See All Cooper "with Ruysdael"

THE ROYAL FAMILY AND FARMING

THE Royal Family of England have been closely identified with farming since the days of George III, whose popular nickname, "Farmer George," shows how his subjects appreciated the interest he took in all that related to agriculture.

GEORGE III

The King's interest in farming was proved by his mastery of its details and by the time he devoted to the subject; and England was particularly fortunate to enjoy for a long period of years, when agriculture most required attention, the rule of a sovereign who made our greatest industry his principal hobby.

Before attempting to trace this monarch's personal work as a farmer and patron of farming, it may be well to glance at the general conditions of agriculture in England when he came to the throne.

The "common farm" system of cultivating the soil and breeding stock was then

prevalent over a great part of the country. More than half the arable land of England was cultivated by groups of farmers, who dwelt together in isolated villages, the inhabitants of each village tilling the surrounding country on a system which has now been forgotten.

From Lady-day until the harvest was gathered the lands were fenced, each man in the village tilling his own strip. As soon as the crops were removed, the flocks and herds which the villagers owned in common, and which during the summer had been grazed on the waste lands round, were turned on to the fields.

Under the above conditions, the members of the farming community had no opportunity to try and improve the stock, which interbred promiscuously; nor had any individual temptation to break away from the traditional method of cropping the land.

These farming villages consisted of wretched hovels; the inhabitants were sunk in poverty, and held little communication with other villages, depending upon the jobber* for the sale of cattle, and living

* See *Farm Stock 100 Years Ago* By Sir Walter Gilbey, Bart.

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new history says (p. 769) "The numerous enclosures which began with the reign of Henry II 1179 & specially marked that of successive."

almost entirely upon the produce of the land about them.

The "common farm" system prevailed when George III came to the throne, and continued until the end of the eighteenth century, when the Enclosure Acts began to be passed. These Acts made an end of the system: as the "common farms" were broken up the old villages were deserted and gradually fell into decay.

Such was the state of affairs at the time when the great pioneer agriculturists, the Duke of Bedford, Thomas Coke, afterwards Earl of Leicester, Robert Bakewell, George Culley, and others were working at the problems with which their names are identified.

It will be recognised that royal endeavour to promote the improvement of agriculture conducted with the aid of such able men and under such conditions found ample scope; and England was fortunate in having upon the throne at such a time a king whose love of farming was so strong.

King George established farms at Windsor, Kew, Richmond, and Mortlake, and the operations on each farm received his personal attention: he studied the nature of various soils, learned by experiment how

the best results could be obtained from each, and, in a series of letters which he contributed to the *Annals of Agriculture* over the signature "Ralph Robinson," pointed out errors in the system of farming followed at the close of the eighteenth century.

In 1785 the Little Park at Windsor was stocked with cattle and sheep; in 1791, a thousand acres of the Great Park, the area of lightest soil being chosen, was converted into what afterwards became known as the Norfolk Farm; and another 400 acres of good loamy soil from the Flemish Farm.

Any topic which exercised the minds of farmers engaged George III's eager attention: thus, when the relative merits of horse team and ox team for ploughing were under discussion—and the question which was the more profitable was debated for many years—the King made practical experiments on his own lands, and his teams competed with those of members of the nobility who shared his anxiety to promote the welfare of agriculture. Lord Somerville is mentioned in this connection.

It was quite in keeping with the enthusiasm for experiment in cross-breeding cattle and sheep during his reign that

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George III should have determined upon the step which, had he done nothing else, would earn for him the gratitude of later generations of farmers, as well as the gratitude of his own contemporaries.

Some attempts had been made to introduce the Merino sheep from Spain with the view of improving the wool of our native breeds by crossing, but none had proved successful; probably because the animals, which were imported from France, were not of pure blood.

Those who tried these Merinoes, notably Mr. Morris and Mr. Ellman, famous breeders of Southdowns, gave up the attempt to establish a Merino cross, finding that the progeny did not thrive on the Sussex downs.

King George III was a firm believer in the merits of the Merino, and in the possibility of improving British sheep by crossing them with it; and in 1792 he procured five rams and thirty-five ewes direct from Spain. These were first kept at Windsor, but subsequently were removed to Oatlands Park, in Surrey.

Few sheep-masters of the time shared the King's belief in the Merino. Sir Joseph Banks, and Arthur Young, the famous writer

on agriculture, were among those who believed in the possibilities of the breed, but the vast majority condemned it as having been already tried and proved as a failure.

Thus the King had to contend not against the innate British dislike to something new, but against prejudice already formed. His perseverance in the experiment therefore showed courage and tenacity of purpose, as well as wisdom and foresight.

The early difficulties which confronted the King were great. By a piece of stupidity, for which the farm manager was no doubt responsible, the shepherds in charge of the Merinoes—the "Spanish Flock" as it was called—were allowed to take, as a perquisite, the skins of lambs which died. The inevitable result was that "the mortality among the lambs was very great; the number of deaths fell to a normal average after the shepherds had been forbidden to take the skins of dead lambs."

The manufacturers of woollen goods proved quite as difficult to convince as the sheepmasters. When the first Merino clip was shown them, they acknowledged

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the excellence of the wool, but expressed the fear that it would not, when manufactured, prove so valuable as its appearance promised, and none of them would offer a price for it.

The King was not discouraged; firmly convinced that Merino wool would preserve its quality in manufacture, he had cloth woven at his own expense, and continued to do this for a number of years, the material always proving excellent; and still the manufacturers continued to disparage Merino wool, maintaining that it must in time lose quality.

In 1796 some manufacturers more enterprising than the rest, bought the Royal wool clip at 2s. per lb., which was a little over the market price for Southdown wool at the time; and in the three subsequent years the clip was purchased at increasing prices.

In 1799 the best of the crop brought as much as 5s. 9d. per lb., the second quality 3s. 6d., and the third 2s. 6d. Imported Spanish wool that year was dearer than it had ever been, but these figures were regarded as extraordinary. Southdown wool in 1799 was bringing from 2s. to 3s. per lb.

The battle was won. The King, who had

been giving away rams and ewes to anyone who would promise to use them for crossing, now ceased making these gifts. He had never been eager to give away Merinoes, holding that anyone might take what was given him for nothing; for, as he wisely argued, if a man had to pay for ram or ewe, he would at least take some care of it.

His Majesty, in 1799, ordered Merino rams and ewes to be sold at an average of five guineas for the former and two guineas for the latter; and at such prices they found ready purchasers.

In 1807 the Spanish Grand Junta presented George III with a flock of 2,000 Merinoes, the finest in Spain; and these were steadily distributed throughout the kingdom among buyers who now were only too anxious to have them.

In 1810 Arthur Young wrote ^{/ 15} Lasteyrie, a great French authority on sheep, that there were some Merinoes in almost every part of Great Britain, and that they had been successfully crossed with various English breeds.

George III had accomplished the task he had set for himself; and in wearing down the prejudice against the Merino he rendered a service to what was then one

George 3rd 2nd fit of insanity, which lasted till his death, began in 1811.

of our greatest industries whose value it would be impossible to overstate.

It was a task which only the Sovereign with the prestige and influence of his position could have carried through, and proves the enormous importance of royal interest in agriculture.

He was anxious that his sons, Prince George and the Duke of York, should acquire a taste for farming pursuits, and he appointed Arthur Young director of a farm in Kew Park which was cultivated by the two young princes. Under the King's commands they bore part in all the manual labour of the farm, ploughing, sowing, and reaping with their own hands; even making the bread themselves according to the Rev. J. Croly.*

George III had a very high opinion of Arthur Young, to whose periodical, the *Annals of Agriculture*, as already said, he contributed essays from his own pen.

Young was the King's constant adviser in matters connected with the royal farms, and he records with just pride that the King once said to him, "I consider myself as more obliged to you than to any other man in my dominions."

The establishment of the old Board of Agriculture was a measure which had the King's warm support, and he gave countenance and encouragement to many of the agricultural societies which were founded during the period 1790-1810.

The King cordially approved the policy of enclosing the land, as expressed in the numerous Enclosure Acts, which made an end of the "common farm" system, with all its waste and deficiencies. "The ground, like man," he said, "was never meant to be idle; if it does not produce something useful it will be overrun with weeds."

During the last thirty years, 1791-1820, of King George III's reign upwards of 3 $\frac{1}{4}$ millions of acres were enclosed, and great numbers of the old farming villages disappeared.

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GEORGE IV

George IV took little interest in farming, in spite of the training he had received at Kew in his boyhood.

He carried on the royal farms which had been established at Windsor by his father, but there is reason to doubt

whether he ever paid them more personal attention than a rare visit.

The King's indifference to agricultural affairs was regrettable, inasmuch as the condition of rural England since the close of the Napoleonic wars in 1815 was at its worst.

The high profits farmers were making during the wars disappeared with the restoration of peace, while the heavy taxes remained.

The ranks of the unemployed were swelled by the thousands of soldiers and sailors whose services the country had ceased to need, and the distress among the poorer classes was appalling.

The price of land during George IV's reign fell everywhere, and rents were proportionately reduced; troubles with labourers, agrarian outrages, bad seasons, and sheep rot aggravated the distress; in a word, English agriculture was passing through one of its worst periods.

WILLIAM IV

The same condition of affairs prevailed during the seven years of William IV's reign, but in less degree; the worst was

over, and the distress was beginning to subside during the last year or two of his brief reign.

William IV took a somewhat perfunctory interest in agricultural affairs. It was hardly to be expected that a sovereign who had spent much of his life at sea, whose heart was still in his profession as a sailor, and who came to the throne at the age of sixty-five should conceive a real interest in a great and complex industry, more especially when the earlier years of his reign were marked by such political struggles as those which preceded the passing of the Reform Bill.

QUEEN VICTORIA AND THE PRINCE CONSORT

It was reserved for the Prince Consort to restore royal farming to the position it held under George III, and to renew that king's close personal interest in agriculture.

The Prince's invaluable services to the industry began with his marriage to Queen Victoria in 1840, at a time when farming was beginning to recover from nearly a quarter of a century of depression and could profit by the stimulus royal interest was able to impart.

English farming was still in a backward condition at the beginning of Queen Victoria's reign. The labours of King George III, of the Duke of Bedford, Bakewell, and men of the great school of pioneers who had done so much to improve both stock and methods of cultivation, had not made their effects felt among the mass of farmers.

The majority followed the methods of their ancestors. They made little attempt to improve their cattle or sheep, they adhered to the old three-course rotation of crops, and though Jethro Tull's *Horse-hoeing Husbandry* had been published for over a hundred years, few farmers used drill, horse-hoe, or other labour-saving implement.

The plough commonly employed was the old, cumbrous implement that required six horses or even, on heavy soil, twelve oxen to draw it. Crops were reaped with the scythe, broad hook, or sickle. It is recorded that a good man with the scythe, aided by a gatherer, a binder, a stoker, and a raker, could deal with two acres of wheat in a day's work.

"In 1837," says Mr. Prothero, "a hundred farmers plodded along the Elizabethan road where one marched in the twentieth century track."

There were various reasons for this backward state of affairs: foremost, no doubt, was the innate British dislike to change; education was at a low point; and had it been otherwise there existed a general contempt for books on a subject of which the farmer believed he knew far more than any writer could teach him.

At this period there were no practical object-lessons in the thirties, such as the great "sheep shearings" at Woburn in George III's time, and agricultural shows were few and far between.

The time was ripe for the inception of new methods when the Prince Consort began his beneficent work. The Royal Agricultural Society of England, projected in 1837, was established in 1838, and received its charter as "Royal" in 1840.

The facts that the charter was granted, that Queen Victoria accepted the office of Patroness, and was married to the Prince Consort in the same year will be remarked. It is at least permissible to suppose that the Prince's advice was followed in giving the Society such valuable aid.

The instincts of the statesman which were so strong in Prince Albert told him that he should do wisely to give rein

to the taste for farming which he possessed, and that the Throne should lead the way in our greatest industry.

The Prince continued to maintain the Norfolk and Flemish farms established by George III near Windsor ; and in addition to these he established, in the year of his marriage, the Shaw Farm for breeding stock and testing improvements.

The Prince at a later date established the Home or Dairy Farm ; and afterwards the Bagshot and Rapley Farms, which for the most part were used for feeding cattle, Galloways and West Highland beasts, which were bought annually.

These several farms were peculiarly suited to the uses for which the Prince required them. The Home Farm was all pasture ; the Flemish (clay) and Norfolk (lighter clay) farms were partly arable ; and while Bagshot and Rapley (light poor soil) were taken in hand more as a game preserve than anything else, they were suitable enough for grazing purposes. The farms, differing in soil and situation, required different management, and afforded that scope for experimental work upon which their royal owner was bent.

As was said by an eminent agricultural

authority soon after the Prince's death, "His Royal Highness stood alone in British agriculture, as in himself the exemplar and exponent of a greater diversity of farm practice and experience than any other single agriculturist."

The total acreage near Windsor farmed by the Prince was 2,600 acres. When Queen Victoria acquired Osborne House in the Isle of Wight, the Prince established yet other farms in the immediate vicinity—Osborne and Alverston, which extended to about 1,800 acres, of which 700 acres were arable; and Barton—part of the Osborne estate—820 acres, of which half was permanent pasture.

At a later date, about 1849, the Birkhall property of about 6,000 acres, near Balmoral, was purchased for the then Prince of Wales; Abergeldie Mains, some 14,000 acres, was taken on a forty years lease; and the Balmoral farm, about 200 acres of arable land, was established. Thus, whether at Windsor, Osborne, or Balmoral, the Prince had agricultural work to occupy him.

There is ample evidence to prove the close personal interest taken by the Prince in the work carried on at all these farms.

The several managers always received from him in person instructions as to the conduct of affairs. Monthly accounts of each farm were regularly prepared and submitted to the Prince, who used to examine them closely with the manager.

He took a keen interest in the business side of farming, and found genuine pleasure in a successful sale. Thus in October, 1843, he wrote to Baron Stockmar that the price of cattle had risen again, and he had "netted a good return" from his auction.

It was the business-like fashion in which he carried on his agricultural work that did so much to commend him to the farmers of the kingdom as a practical leader in their industry.

The Scottish farms provided scope for work other than agricultural. The tenantry, when the estates came into the royal hands, were sunk in poverty, and the Prince's first care was to undertake work that should improve the standard of living and elevate their general condition.

In 1842, Prince Albert became a governor of the Royal Agricultural Society, and from 1843 he was a regular exhibitor and frequent prize winner. He was also

constant in his attendance at the Society's shows and business meetings, and his speeches at the annual dinners have been singled out as some of his happiest efforts ; not only were they models of good sense and tact ; his remarks invariably betrayed the intimacy with practical details which showed him to be a farmer in the literal sense of the word.

The Prince clearly foresaw the results which must follow abolition of the Corn Laws. This momentous change came at a time particularly unfortunate for farmers. Agriculture was still in a backward state, but the industry was at last recovering from the period of great depression through which it had passed since the close of the Napoleonic wars, and brighter times seemed to be in store even for the majority of farmers who clung to the obsolete methods of their ancestors.

It was this conservatism that the Prince had in mind when he spoke the following words of warning to an audience of agriculturists at York in July, 1845 :—

“Science and mechanical improvements have in these days changed the mere practice of cultivating the soil into an industrial pursuit requiring capital, machinery, and

industry, and skill and perseverance in the struggle of competition. This is another great change, but we must consider it a great progress, as it demands higher efforts and a higher intelligence."

Machinery was beginning to come into use upon the lands of the more progressive farmers, and the Prince fully realised the importance of encouraging the use of labour-saving implements. He devoted much attention to agricultural machinery, and had an extraordinarily keen eye for the complexities of any machine that might be placed before him.

An anecdote is related which shows his wonderful grasp and acuteness of observation: in 1858, when at the Exhibition of Social Industry at Leeds, he was shown the parts of a new wool-combing machine which the exhibitors' men were about to put together; and soon after, in another room, the machine set up ready for work.

The Prince studied the latter for a few moments, and then drew attention to the fact that the machine lacked a wheel or some other part. It was found that a wheel had by accident been omitted when the machine was set up for exhibition: it was an

omission which not one man in ten thousand would have noticed.

It was his conviction of the importance of the part that machinery was to play in the agriculture of the future that led him to devote the attention he did to this department at the Society's shows.

When at York for the Exhibition of 1848, he was in the implement yard at six o'clock in the morning, and spent two hours examining the various exhibits. He wrote to the Queen expressing his admiration for the ingenuity of the machines brought to his notice, saying that they kept "our attention on the stretch for a couple of hours."

Any promising novelty or invention in the shape of agricultural machinery arrested his attention at once, and if he saw reason to believe that it would prove useful, the maker was sure to receive commands to send it to one or another of the royal farms for practical trial.

The Prince, as said on a former page, was a regular exhibitor at the shows of the Royal Agricultural Society of England. He also exhibited regularly at the Royal Agricultural Society of Ireland and the Royal Dublin Society.

It was at the meeting of the latter body

in 1849 that the Prince made a speech which showed his mastery of large problems connected with agriculture, urging upon his hearers the paramount importance of seeking improvement in Irish breeding stock. He recognised that Ireland, with her drawbacks of climate, could never become a great corn-growing country, and that her hope of agricultural prosperity must lie always in her cattle.

Breeding was in a very backward condition in Ireland in those days, and the Prince's keen eye for such matters showed him how great was the need of the improvement upon which he insisted in his speech.

The Prince would have appreciated at its full value the good work begun in this direction by the late Mr. John Thornton twenty years afterwards.*

It was said, and with perfect justice, that an account of the work done on the royal farms during the twenty years of the Prince Consort's control would be a "a history of the agricultural improvements of all the soils in England" during that period. In

* See *John Thornton : A Memoir.* By Sir Walter Gilbey, Bart. Vinton & Co., 1910.

1840, when he took them in hand, all were ill-provided with buildings, were ill-drained or undrained, the pastures were rough, and roads were wanting.

The Home or Dairy Farm was in the worst condition of any: the buildings were inconvenient, where they were not ruinous, and the land was flooded when the Thames was high. In 1845-6 there were heavy losses among the cattle from pleuro-pneumonia, arising from the state of the farm.

By degrees this state of affairs was altered. The necessary roads were made, extensive drainage works were undertaken, new homesteads and outbuildings were constructed. All these improvements were carried out under the personal supervision and guidance of the Prince, who displayed his usual practical spirit in dealing with plans and designs.

When, in 1852, Mr. Turnbull was commissioned to produce plans for the new dairy buildings on the Home Farm, the Prince told him that, though an ornamental structure was desirable, no beauty would atone for lack of utility; the building was to be useful first, and decorative afterwards.

His own designs were largely followed in erecting the dairy.

Shorthorns and Jerseys were the principal stock kept on the Home Farm under the Prince's direction, Devons at the Norfolk, and Herefords at the Flemish farm. It may be noticed that the first animal with which Prince Albert won a prize was a Hereford ox, exhibited at the Smithfield Show in 1848.

The Home Farm was probably among the first, if it were not actually the first, on which "milk records" were regularly kept in England. An accurate account of the quantities of milk obtained at each milking was kept, with particulars of the quantity of cream taken and weight of butter churned. Pigs were a feature at this farm, that the dairy offal might be used in the most profitable way.

Numerous experiments were set on foot with the object of elucidating vexed questions of practical moment to farmers: thus, when the Shaw Farm was reorganised, boxes were constructed some with open yards attached and others without, in order to ascertain whether bullocks of various breeds would fatten more readily if denied

exercise altogether or allowed some freedom of movement.

Again, the Southdowns which had previously been kept on the Home and Shaw Farms suffering much from foot-rot, the Prince determined to try a change: he procured 200 Cheviot ewes and put them to a Leicester ram; with the result that he got sheep able to withstand the defects of soil which had proved so detrimental to the Southdowns.

A few words about the animals on the Prince's farms will not be out of place. The Shorthorn herd on the Shaw Farm was established in 1854; the Jersey herd on the Home Farm about 1858; the foundations of the Hereford and Devon herds on the Flemish Farm—which, when the Prince's alterations and improvements had been finished, was considered one of the most complete homesteads in the kingdom—were laid between 1855 and 1858.

Clydesdales were principally kept at Barton, where also was a small herd of Jerseys; some thirty or forty Galloways, purchased each year at Barnet Fair—a famous mart in those days—were fattened at Barton.

not horses

Not the least noteworthy result of the

Prince Consort's labours was the opportunity the farms afforded great personages from foreign countries to observe the progress that was being made in the breeding of English cattle and sheep.

In 1857, by which time exhibits from the royal farms were frequent prize winners at the great shows of the kingdom, the Emperor of the French paid Queen Victoria a visit at Windsor, and, among other things, inspected the farms.

The Emperor was so much impressed by what he saw that he made purchases of the best Shorthorns and Southdowns procurable for the purpose of improving French stock. The Prince, by the way, had exhibited cattle in Paris two years earlier.

In the Prince Consort, the farmers of the kingdom lost a great and enlightened leader and a staunch friend.

After the Prince's death, in 1861, Queen Victoria carried on the work at the royal farms in the same wise and practical spirit, but of necessity she was obliged to depend more than he had done upon the managers.

The success with which stock bred on the royal farms were exhibited stands to prove Prince Albert's discernment in the choice of

men and the fidelity with which first Mr. H. Tait, and afterwards Mr. William Tait, followed the principles laid down by their royal master.

Queen Victoria continued her patronage of the "Royal" and other societies for the advancement of agriculture, and displayed a kindly interest in their work. The Aberdeen Angus herd at Abergeldie Mains was established by Queen Victoria as a step towards promoting and encouraging the improvement of cattle breeding in Scotland. It was appropriate that the herd should have been established in the district which from early times had been famous for cattle rearing and known as a source of supply to drovers and dealers who catered for the markets of the south.

Of necessity she delegated to the able hands of the Prince of Wales much of the public work connection with the industry implies, but when opportunity served she never failed to give proof of her interest in farming.

In recognition of the fiftieth year of the Royal Agricultural Society's existence she accepted the Presidency in 1889. The show of that year was held in Windsor Park,

and was honoured by four visits by the Queen.

At her command, too, a state banquet was given at St. James' Palace to commemorate the jubilee of the Society.

KING EDWARD VII

Our late King made his first public appearance at an agricultural show before he was ten years old, the occasion being the "Royal" held at Windsor in 1851; and, under the wise guidance of his father, his interest in all matters pertaining to the farm was carefully fostered.

The Smithfield Club Show of 1861—which some of us remember as the last held in its old quarters, the Baker Street Bazaar—was the first at which the young Prince of Wales figured as an exhibitor; but his career as a practical farmer did not really begin until the purchase of the Sandringham Estate in 1863 afforded him scope for the exercise of his own tastes.

While he took a lively interest in all departments of agriculture, it was soon apparent that he found greater pleasure in stock-breeding than in the growing of crops. This may have been due in part to the nature of the soil, which is more

suitable for the barley and roots to whose cultivation the 2,000 acres were devoted, than to wheat—a circumstance which would naturally lead to the bestowal of greater attention upon stock.

It was well that cattle, sheep, and horses should thus have claimed the special attention of our future King. Free trade, established in 1846, had not, in the early sixties, made its effects felt by the English wheat-grower.

But those men who could look forward—and among these the Prince Consort must certainly be included—foresaw that the time would come when the enormous wheat-growing areas of the United States and Canada would be developed, and improved land and sea transport would enable those countries to pour vast quantities of corn into Britain to meet the needs of a population which was steadily increasing in numbers and also in wealth by reason of the gold discoveries in Australia and California.

The far-seeing statesmen and farmers of the fifties would have foreseen that in course of time corn-growing in England must be affected by free imports of wheat, and that, as a natural consequence, the

production of beef and mutton must become of greater importance.

It was well therefore that stock-raising should be singled out by Edward VII for special attention, and it was as a stock-breeder that he was always known in the world of agriculture.

The policy adopted on the Sandringham farms was that which the Prince Consort had pursued at Windsor and Osborne—to produce the best of each breed selected, and to vie in friendly rivalry with other breeders at the leading shows.

As time passed the fine tact for which King Edward was famous appeared in the selection of breeds. The Sandringham herds represented the three chief divisions of the Kingdom : Shorthorns, as the breed most characteristic of England ; the shaggy long-horned Highlander, identified with Scotland ; while Ireland was represented by Dexter-Kerries : all the best of their kind.

It was not, however, with cattle that the Sandringham farms were first stocked. The flock of Southdown sheep was first established. It was founded in 1866 by purchases from three of the most famous flocks of the time, those of the Duke of Richmond, Lord Sondes, and Mr. Webb.

On these foundations the royal flock was built, and not only showyard successes stand to prove its merit. Rams and ewes have, at various times, been exported to New Zealand, Canada, and the United States.

The Shorthorn herds were founded about the year 1870. At that time, I need hardly say, the antagonism between the "Booth" and the "Bates" breeders ran high, and it was impossible for one in the position of the then Prince of Wales to patronise one strain to the exclusion of the other. Accordingly, two herds were established, Bates blood being maintained at Babingley, and Booth blood at the Wolferton farm.

For many years the two strains were kept distinct, but eventually, when the relations between the Booth men and the Bates men became more cordial, the two royal herds were merged in one.

Judicious purchases from the most eminent breeders of the time formed the foundation stock. Strains of Sir Charles Knightley's stock were to be found in the pedigrees of both herds. Mr. Hugh Aylmer and Mr. J. Gamble, famous Norfolk breeders, supplied bulls and cows, as also did Mr. T. Holford, Mr. J. Harris,

Mr. Booth, of Warlaby, and Mr. Willingham Fowler.

Among the families represented in the Sandringham herds were Grand Duchesses, Oxfords, Barringtons, and Winsomes; representatives of the Diadem, Fleecy, and Paragon families were also to be found.

As time passed the herds were strengthened by purchases from Alnwick, Brougham, Duncombe, and Warlaby, and the bulls Gael, 60855, and Red Rover, 63192, were hired from the royal farms at Windsor.

A son of Gael, named Celt, 66798, bred at Sandringham, was first at the Royal Show at Leicester in 1896, and was sold for 1,000 guineas to go abroad.

Among the famous bulls used at various times were Pride of Collynie, 78248, purchased from Mr. Duthie; Crystal Prince, 76221, bred by Mr. Deane Willis, and bought from Mr. G. F. King; Carlyle, 65226; and Stephanus, from Windsor.

In 1896 a sale of stock was held, and an average price of £70 2s. 9d. was obtained. In 1900 the average was £69 3s. 3d.

Highland cattle were much in vogue at Sandringham. No regular breeding herd has been kept, but large numbers of beasts

were bought every year in Scotland to graze the stud paddocks and marsh land.

Examples of the beasts fed on the royal farms were exhibited with great success at the large fat stock shows.

Our present King, George V, carries on the work inaugurated by his father, several fine animals having been sent to the show of the Smithfield Club last winter.

The Dexter Kerry herd was founded in 1887 by special command. The late Mr. James Robertson supplied the foundation stock, a bull and two heifers, and for many years past representatives of this herd have been very successful at breed and fat stock shows. King Edward also had some Jerseys, which, with Dexter cows, formed the dairy herd to supply the royal household.

The Shire Horse stud, which was destined to become famous throughout the kingdom, was founded about 1881, three years after the establishment of the English Cart-horse Society, as this body was originally called.

The first important purchase was the mare Jewel, by Sir Colin, half-sister to the famous Chance. Jewel, it will be remembered, was first in her class at the Royal

Show at Norwich in 1886. A noted champion mare was Gloaming, from Glime, a mare bought from myself. Gloaming, and Solace, also bred at Sandringham, were champions at the London Shire Horse Show.

Among the famous sires recently used were Calwich Blend, 17226, and Premvictor, 19947. At the Shire Horse Show of 1911, a horse of his late Majesty's breeding, Hoe Forest King, 24321, was first in the class for stallions under 16 hands 2 in.

The Sandringham Shire sales have long been events in the heavy horse breeders' year. In 1892, the average obtained was £113 8s. 6d., the highest price being 370 guineas; in 1895, the average was £119 3s. 8d., highest price 450 guineas; in 1898, the average was £224 7s. 6d., highest price 1,150 guineas, paid for the mare Seabreeze. At this sale also the yearling Victor's Queen made 600 guineas. In 1907 the average was £124, the stallion Ravenspur selling for 825 guineas.

The 1898 sale of fifty-four lots was a remarkable one, four "records" to that date being established, viz., the highest average, the highest total (£12,117), and the highest prices for mares and yearlings.

The Hackney Horse stud was established

about 1887. It was peculiarly fitting that King Edward, residing in Norfolk, should identify himself with the breed for which the county has been famous for centuries, and the stud of Hackneys he built up was worthy of the royal owner. The Cadet horse, Field Marshal, 2896, was a prominent sire among the sires used. The mares were rich in the blood of such horses as Lord Derby, Old Confidence, Triffit's Fireaway, and Denmark, sire of Danegelt.

King Edward VII's Hackneys won their full share of honours in the showyard, and high prices were frequently obtained at the Wolferton sales, as much as 900 guineas and 1,000 guineas being paid for match pairs. £164 was the highest average made at the periodical sales held.

The decision to cease breeding for public sale was received with general regret. The extensive sale of 1901 was the last held at Wolferton.

King Edward always took a close interest in the live stock at Sandringham, keeping himself fully informed concerning the progress of studs, herds, and flocks. When in residence he never failed to take his place at the ring-side on the occasion of a sale.

The King had wide personal knowledge of the principal studs owned by his subjects, and when he did me the honour to visit Elsenham in 1893, I was impressed by the extent of his information concerning strains of Shire and Hackney blood, as I was by his quick and accurate judgment.

King Edward possessed the love for a good carriage horse which was so strong in George III.

It is hardly necessary to remark upon his success as an exhibitor. Success whether with horses, cattle, or sheep, as I have reason to know, always gratified him, and when he made his inspection of the exhibits at any show he would display the discrimination of a practical farmer in his comments upon the prize winners, and, it often happened, upon animals which had been passed over by the judges.

The King's connection with the Royal Agricultural Society began in 1864, when he was elected a Life Governor; in 1868, he was elected President for the first time; he held the office again in 1878-9, 1885-6, 1889-90, and 1900-1. He intimated in 1879 his wish to take an active part in the Society's work, and accordingly he was elected a trustee in that year.

He frequently attended the Council meetings of the Society, and often spoke. His speeches recalled those of his illustrious father in the practical knowledge he displayed and the tact with which he treated any subject about which the members of the Council might not be wholly in accord.

Equally graceful was His Majesty by the manner in which he invariably combined proof of his own strong personal interest in the Society's work with maintenance of the principle that he was to be regarded as the representative and spokesman of Queen Victoria.

King Edward's outlook was necessarily wider than that of his royal predecessors. His lifetime covered the period which witnessed the closer drawing together of the mother-country and her colonies, and his interest in agriculture was not confined to Britain.

The King kept himself informed concerning the opening up of new areas of cultivation and stock-breeding in his kingdom beyond seas, and was anxious that his colonial subjects should enjoy every advantage that England could give them in the shape of pedigree stock capable of improving the local races. Thus he

regarded with particular approval export to the colonies of good stallions of any breed, bulls, and rams.

Fully alive to the value of the agricultural show as an object-lesson in types at which to aim, he, in the early nineties, sent Shires from Sandringham to make the tour of autumn shows in Canada. This was a step calculated to produce larger results than that directly sought; it was eloquent of the King's thought for the welfare of his subjects in the Dominion.

He was always glad to identify himself with any movement which made for the advancement of agriculture, and the close inspection he used to make of new or improved implements at each "Royal" he visited, and his remarks upon what he saw, showed how fully he appreciated the importance of the part machinery plays in farming.

He was as thoughtful in small matters as he was wise in important affairs, and was always ready to do anything that would afford pleasure to his subjects. The people of Bishops Stortford do not forget his kindly action in August, 1900, when he sent a number of homer pigeons to be "tossed" at the annual flower show.

Her Majesty Queen Alexandra carries on the work pursued by King Edward at Sandringham. At one time Queen Alexandra had a farm of her own, on which every animal and every bird was pure white, and in this establishment she took close personal interest.

KING GEORGE V

I need hardly add that King George V follows in the footsteps of his illustrious father and grandfather. He maintains the farms at Windsor as they have been maintained since the days of the Prince Consort, and he displays the same warm interest in agriculture that gained for his predecessors the place they held in the esteem and affection of the farmers of the kingdom.

His Majesty's gift of a cup to the best winner of a King's Premium at the Islington Show last March (won by Berrill, winner of the last Cambridgeshire) indicates the reality of his anxiety to encourage horse-breeding in England. No wiser step could have been taken than one which displays appreciation of the gravity of a question that grows more pressing each year as self-propelled vehicles increase in number, and the breeding of light horses declines.

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