

## GERMAN AND BRITISH AGRICULTURE COMPARED.

THE English Board of Agriculture has published a valuable and interesting memorandum by its Assistant Secretary, Mr. T. H. Middleton, C.B., entitled "The Recent Development of German Agriculture." Under the heading of "Some Lessons" Mr. Middleton summarizes his study as follows:—

1. The German farmer now produces about the same weight of cereals and potatoes per acre as the British farmer, but a much greater weight per 100 acres of cultivated land. The German produces about the same weight of meat and nearly twice as much milk per 100 acres as the British farmer. The German feeds from seventy to seventy-five persons per 100 acres of cultivated land; the British farmer feeds from forty-five to fifty.

2. The ascendancy of the German has been gained in the past forty years.

3. The soil and climate of Germany are less favourable to agriculture than those of Britain.

4. The actual methods of tillage adopted in the growing of corn, potatoes, &c., in Britain are not inferior to the methods adopted in Germany. The difference in production is chiefly due to the circumstance that in Britain more than two-thirds of the cultivated land is now in grass, while in Germany less than one-third of the cultivated land is in grass. There has been a slight decrease in the area annually ploughed in Germany; in England and Wales the area which is annually ploughed decreased by about 26 per cent. in the forty years before the war.

5. German land is mostly tilled by peasant owners, British land by tenants. The German depends to a great extent on women labour, provided by the families of the occupiers. Wages are relatively low in Germany, and rural industries help to provide winter employment and tend to cheapen summer labour.

6. Much attention has been given to organizing production from German soil. The credit system is well adapted to promote good farming. Co-operation is largely resorted to. Education has been well developed. Societies have been created to provide leadership.

7. German economic policy in recent years has favoured agriculturists, who have benefited partly from the higher prices resulting from tariffs and partly from the steadying effect which the known policy of the State has had upon the industry.

8. The general effect of the agencies and influences mentioned in the two preceding paragraphs has been to produce a very rapid improvement in the technical methods of the German farmer. The use of manures and feeding-stuffs has greatly increased. Superior strains of both plants and animals have been raised. Business methods have been introduced, and important rural industries have been developed.

In his concluding remarks Mr. Middleton says,—

"If one attempts to summarize in a paragraph the impressions produced by a study of the recent progress of German agriculture, the conclusion is that from the agricultural policy of Germany we may learn something, and from the admirable machinery—administrative, educational, and commercial—set up to lead, teach, and finance agriculturists we may learn much. On the other hand, from the actual processes of German husbandry there is relatively little to learn. In many parts of Britain the tillage of the soil and the management of stock are as good as anywhere in Germany. When we set about increasing the food-supply of the country we may find examples of the necessary methods without looking across the Rhine; and, fortunately, there is not any reason to suggest that before our farmers can hope to regain the position which British agriculture has lost they must be prepared to remodel their own practice from seed-time till harvest on the farming of the Fatherland, and to write the name of their ancient industry with a 'k'!"