INTENSIVE CULTIVATION AND ITS PROFITS.

The following is the article referred to by Mr. George Curry in his letter which appears in our correspondence pages in this issue. We reproduce it herewith as it will doubtless interest many readers of the Journal; and in the meantime we are making inquiries (and are obtaining a copy of Mr. McKay's book mentioned in the article), with a view to publishing an article containing fuller information in an early issue:—

"It is difficult to find a parallel in agriculture or horticulture to the astonishing growth of interest in the system of French gardening since an experimental garden in Berkshire was visited by the tenant of the Daily Mail farm in March," says Mr. W. Beach Thomas in the Daily Mail. "It is not only that people of all sorts and conditions, including large landowners, leading seedsmen, and every variety of person who owns a garden have written and made inquiries about intensive cultivation; but a considerable proportion have begun to make purchases with a view to starting French gardens this autumn, and several French gardeners are being engaged.

THE INTEREST IN FRENCH GARDENING.

"The reformatory schools, to the number of two hundred and more, have already adopted the system. Oxfordshire and some other county councils are beginning to purchase a few frames and bell glasses for purposes of instruction, and companies have been started in horticultural centres in England for providing requisites. I know of cases where men have taken land and gone to live in the country in order to promote the cause of intensive cultivation and test the capacity of English soil to supply English wants. Here and there agricultural labourers have managed to buy bell glasses and frames, under the advice of horticultural schools and colleges.

"During the last three months hundreds of people have written to the Daily Mail asking for precise instruction, and every post has made manifest the fact that an authentic and simple text-book giving a diary of work in the garden was urgently needed if these hundreds of people were to profit by the system. French gardening flourished in England, to some extent and in one form, a hundred and fifty years ago, and the French learnt a good deal from our gardeners, who, they considered, could grow certain vegetables—cauliflowers especially—much better than they could. But since those early days no text-book of any authority has been written, and, indeed, no book making the due allowances for
English climate as compared with French could have been written before; a complete garden had been tested in England.

"Mr. McKay, who now makes good the deficiency, may be regarded as the founder of the French garden in England, since he first persuaded English gardeners to go over to Paris to see for themselves the wonders of cultivation which they would not believe on hearsay. His diary and manual of French gardening is published to-day, and we trust that in continuation of the accounts of French gardening given and about to be given in the Daily Mail it will promote, in a practical and healthful manner, this important industry.

**How Profits are Multiplied.**

"The prosperity of the English countryside depends first and foremost on close or intensive cultivation. The growth of machinery has greatly benefited the large farmer, and, indeed, the small farmer, but for the moment it made a reduction in the amount of labour employed on the land. That was the first stage of the new agriculture. The second came when science began to teach us that personal attention to small plots may do even more than mechanical attention to ample spaces. With the help of a cutter and binder a farmer can gather his crops cheaply and neatly. He can make, we will say, an average profit of £2 an acre where previously he would make 30s. an acre. But that advance is as nothing to the next. It is now proved that a man equipped with scientific and practical knowledge of the infinite capacity of the soil may with the help of capital now make profit to the extent of £100 of £150 an acre where in earlier days it was supposed impossible to make £30 or £40.

"Mr. McKay quotes in this book the exact figures from the farm of four and a half acres set up at Evesham. From one acre gross returns of over £600 were procured. A few of the details of the sale may be given. 'From 600 lights Mr. Harvey cut 21,600 lettuces, at an average of 2s. per dozen. Out of the same lights 2,400 cauliflowers, at an average of 4s. per dozen; again from the same lights 2,400 dozen turnips and 5,000 dozen bunches of carrots at 6d. per dozen, as well as three melons from each light occupied with them at 2s. 6d. each.'

"Entirely apart from the question how much it may cost to get that result, the fact itself is a revelation of the power of the soil to produce wealth. It means that a man who will work hard, and who has the knowledge, can easily live on an acre, and can, at the same time, pay high rent for the land and for the equipment. The man who goes in for French gardening on the highest scale will need capital and will risk it, but the system can be employed by any man, however poor. It is full of hints and suggestions, and applies to the greenhouse as to the frame. You can begin with a single frame, and test French gardening on a capital
French Gardening.

The supreme secret is that a piece of land may bear four or even five crops in the year with very much less cost both of manure and of glass than is involved either in the greenhouse artificially heated or in the ordinary hot frame of the English garden.

"From one point of view French gardening may be regarded as very costly. It involves fencing, protecting, levelling, and covering with glass a large part of the garden ground, but any other system of glass is very much more expensive and brings smaller returns.

"The people who are now beginning to start French gardens are the right people to start. One class consists of professional market gardeners, one of amateurs who have little difficulty in finding the capital, but who need considerable return if their capital is to support them; the third consists chiefly of educational horticulturists, and from all these it is to be hoped that the intensive science of the French will spread throughout the English people, and will help them to see that the land, from which we all live, ought to be treated with such scientific care as we apply to any other industry. For example, the best brewers employ the most distinguished botanists they can find and send them to study both nature and art in many countries. The farmer and the market gardener should, like the brewer, regard the treatment of the land as essentially a scientific business, and the study of the science of the soil will give as good returns to intelligent work as the ferment of the barley grain.

"The French system may be regarded as the natural development of the market garden. A man can make £60 an acre off an open garden. An hotel waiter has done this on an indifferent site in his spare hours.

Food Reform.

"The establishment of the French garden coincides with a growing desire for food reform. The French have learnt to defy the seasons for a hundred years or more. So far, we have been content to experiment with a few hothouse fruits, principally grapes and peaches. At much less cost we can provide for the general use an all-the-year-round salad and a variety of vegetables if we will consent to bring to the study of the subject such energy and skill as under the genius of Parisian gardeners have brought the value of the land round Paris up to a rent equivalent to £30 and more an acre."

If a horse's knees are bent or tremble he has been permanently injured by heavy pulling.