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NOTE: See The formation of vegetable mould, through the action of worms, F1357.

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THE EARLIEST PLOUGHMAN.

The steel or iron plough-share is one of the most valuable of modern inventions, and has both lightened the farmer's labors and added largely to his wealth. But Mr. Darwin has proved that worms do in a quiet but effective way the same work that the plough does on a larger scale. They break up the solid crust and enrich the surface by bringing the most valuable constituents from the sub-soil and forming a rich vegetable mould.

The little piles left at the mouth of their holes are full of nutrition, and of the highest value for the growth of plants and vegetables.

The worms fill an important place among agricultural laborers. The smoothness of beautiful lawns and meadows, Mr. Darwin says, is "mainly due to all the inequalities having been slowly levelled by worms."

The improvements which their industry effects are constant and progressive. The whole of the superficial mould over any expanse has passed, and will pass again, every few years through the bodies of worms." These despised articulates ought to be reckoned by the farmer among his most valuable allies.