

A. Bull

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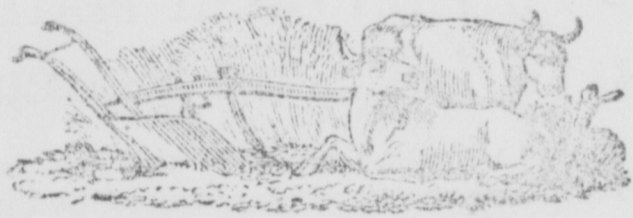
Devoted to Agriculture, Literature, and General Intelligence.--Neutral in Politics.

"Truth, Justice, Freedom, here shall find a home."

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AGRICULTURE.

REPORT OF THE SAINT JOHN COUNTY AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY.

(Continued from our last.)

The Directors have pleasure in acknowledging the honour conferred on their report of last year, by Messrs. H. Chubb & Co. and the Members of the Fredericton Athenaeum, by its publication in the New-Brunswick Almanac, by which it was introduced into localities rarely visited by books or newspapers, and they trust that these gentlemen will be repaid by the increasing interest which is being manifested throughout the Province in Agricultural improvement.

In accordance with the report of last year, the Directors petitioned the Legislature to appoint a Central Board or Provincial Society, and to introduce agricultural education, but nothing was done. This arose chiefly from the opposition of the farmers in the Legislature, they being decidedly opposed to any additional expenditure for the improvement of agriculture. Three fourths of them actually voted against the invitation to Professor Johnston.

The Directors recommend that renewed efforts be made to induce Government to furnish means of education suitable to young men designed for farmers, by the formation of one or more large schools, with model farms attached, and by the science of agriculture being taught in all the common schools. Seminaries are maintained at the public expense for the benefit of those intended for other professions; and as farming is second to none in importance, it is neither fair to the farmers nor for the general good that this occupation should be deprived of those benefits which science and knowledge can afford.

The Treasurer's account is herewith submitted, showing a balance on hand of £40 10s. 2d. The year's subscriptions and the annual grant from Government added thereto, will make the amount available, for next year's operations, about one hundred and seventy-five pounds.

The following general remarks are, as before mentioned the results of, or suggested by, the discussions at the monthly meetings of this Society.

The state of agriculture and those depending on it in this Province, are admitted by all to be in great need of improvement. There is little or no farming capital; an exhausting mode of cultivation prevails by which that little is becoming less. There is no surplus produce on which to feed those who would manufacture for us; nay, farmers do not raise even enough for themselves; and it is the reply to those who would wish to introduce draining, deep ploughing, a proper rotation of crops, and plentiful manuring whereby the crops would be more than doubled: Oh, but there are no markets!—we have no capital!—we cannot afford to pay for labour!—we cannot sell at a remunerating price what we at present produce!—and why urge us on to what would be our ruin?

Were we seeking popularity, or desirous of gaining the favour of those to whom we address ourselves, we should probably, like other quacks of the day, say to them that their present state is caused by an unpropitious climate, or a sterile soil, by errors of omission or commission on the part of Government, by want of capital or a want of markets, and would urge them to seek for protection or free trade, toyism or responsible government, reciprocity, independence or annexation, as a cure for all their evils.

But we have other ends in view, we wish to raise the agriculturists of our country to the condition which belongs to them, to that of intelligent, prosperous high principled men, who know their rights and their duties, and will fearlessly assert the one, and faithfully perform the other, and must therefore, say, that from all we have seen or can judge, we are sincerely of opinion, that general prosperity can alone be obtained by a general increase of individual intelligence, energy, enterprise, industry, and public and private economy, and in no other way, and by no other means whatever, and each one who desires to bring this about must begin at home, must do the duties which lie nearest to him, must seek out and endeavour to fulfill the purposes for which God has placed him in this

world, and resolve that the blame of being one of a spiritless, indolent, extravagant, and poverty-stricken people, shall not lie at his door. Let such a spirit but be diffused amongst us, and with our fertile soil, healthy climate, and vast natural resources, we are prepared to run a race with the best nation on the face of the earth.

But increased production will create markets, and in this way as soon as a surplus of provisions is afforded, the farmer, who was before his own blacksmith, shoemaker, weaver, tailor, doctor and minister, finding out the advantages of a division of labour, exchanges his for the labour of others. Centres of those thus employed, or towns and villages are gradually formed, as supply and demand increase. Machinery is called into aid, and then come the large manufacturing towns.

We are at about the end of the first, and beginning of the second period. Villages are becoming visible in every direction—at Hampton, the Bend, Dorchester, Sackville, Sheffield, Woodstock, &c.

Some think, and perhaps they are right, that by a certain course of Legislation, called 'protection to home industry,' the progress towards prosperity can be much hastened; others, that trade should be left to seek out and follow its natural channels, and that Government cannot interfere with the industry of one class, but at the expense and the injury of others. As an agricultural society, we discard politics, and cannot, therefore, properly express our opinion on either side; whatever way however, is taken a speedy progress to prosperity can only follow an increase of enterprise and intelligent industry.

In enquiring into the causes of the backward state of agriculture, the small amount of accumulated capital, in proportion to the business done, and the want of energy and enterprise in the people, it is obvious that, like rich men's sons, we have had so many advantages bestowed upon us, that our energies have been cramped.—Our forests have been to us like the gold mines to Spain—they brought money so easily, that not knowing the value of it, we let it go as it came.

The gambling nature of the trade in timber operated also to seduce people from the more slow but sure modes of making a living. The profits of farming—nay, in too many cases, the farms themselves have been sacrificed to the insatiable craving for an easy and quick way of making money which this trade seemed to offer.

From the ease from which the timber growing upon every farm could be converted into money, the population have also acquired a taste for certain descriptions of food, not in themselves more nutritious or agreeable than the grains and other produce of the country, but which habit has rendered so essential that their use is persisted in, now even when the timber is gone, so that the farmer, from whom we ought to expect not only all our provisions and clothing but articles of export to pay for the few foreign luxuries we require, and cannot produce, are themselves the chief consumers of imports, without furnishing a single export in return.

It may be profitable to us to compare notes with our friends across the lines—they have no advantages over us in soil or climate, and we are all of the same blood. In former times, like us they attended to lumbering, to the neglect of their farms.

Some thirty years ago they were much in our circumstances; the lands worn out, no markets, and unable to compete with the produce of the new and fertile western country. The western fever seized them, and an almost general desertion of the farming population took place.—We have read accounts of the northern States at that period, which might be applied word for word to our own country at this day. In process of time, numbers of the emigrants returned, in impaired health; having found out that a fertile soil and mild climate (competition and cost of transport rendering money making out of the question) were dearly bought at the price of health. A new stimulus was given to agricultural pursuits, better modes of culture were adopted, improved stock imported, a sound education made accessible to all, and they are now a prosperous and happy people.

Let us compare their present state with ours—perhaps we may profit by taking a leaf out of their book. While they are furnishing a surplus of butter, cheese, beef, and pork as an export to the English markets, we, with equal facilities, do not produce enough for ourselves. While we are grumbling over our long winters, wasting our time in junketing, loafing about taverns or law courts, or what is as bad, cutting logs which will require the best part of summer to get to market, and in the end run us in debt; their young men and maidens, taking the advantage of every water-power, and daily inventing new machinery, are making palm-leaf hats, pulis, brooms, rakes, and axes,

which they hand over to us in exchange for our dollars.—While we are pampering ourselves on Genesee flour and yankee pork, the very people who furnish us with these articles pride themselves in living on corn, rye and buckwheat. While they tax themselves to support a school system which surpasses all that the world has ever seen, and by which every child may obtain the education of a gentleman we dole out such miserable pittance that no teacher who has strength to become a labourer will stay with us.—While they give all honour and respect to the intelligent workers of all classes—while their farmers take pride in their occupation and keep their scorn for the loafers who seek to live on the labour of others—we despise the horny hand and homespun coat, and those only who are fit for nothing else become farmers. While they love their country and the wise institutions which their own manly exertions have founded, and stir up their national pride by bragging about themselves and all that belongs to them, we, with natural advantages quite equal to theirs, with institutions such as we are pleased to make them, and which are inferior to theirs only through our lethargy and stupidity, are contented to grovel on year after year, in servile submission to those evils which are the effects of our own spiritless and short-sighted selfishness, without the power to make that vigorous and united effort which alone is required to place us in a position quite equal to theirs, in the meantime, grumbling at and disparaging a country, a climate, and a soil, which are but too good for such thankless ingrates.

To conclude, while they, having exercised a rigid and wise economy in their domestic affairs, turn as one man to take the same care of their public affairs, to see that no extravagant salaries are paid, and that their public, like their private servants, give a fair day's work for a fair day's wages, we—but we must stop, as we are verging on politics.

In our report last year, we gave it as our opinion that the low price of beef in our markets might be attributed chiefly to undue competition amongst the producers of that article caused by the want of green crops, for winter feeding. We were agreeably surprised to find that Mr. Macaulay, in his recently published History of England, after describing the state of agriculture in the time of Charles II., in words that might be applied almost literally to this Province at this day, adduces a similar reason for like circumstances then existing, and further corroborates other of our opinions by stating, that the agricultural prosperity of England, at a more recent period, might be mainly attributed to the introduction of green cropping on an extensive scale.

But we may be required to show where the capital is to come from that is necessary for carrying out this improved mode of farming, and although the subject is a difficult one, we do not shrink from the task.

The Divine truth, "Whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance, but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath," is applicable to temporal as to spiritual things. Conducting the enquiry on this principle, we may ask—Do our farmers make a good use of the capital they have? Do they take advantage of the light shed by science and increased knowledge on their pursuits?—Do they seek to profit by the experience of others?—Do they add the profits derived from farming to the capital, and invest them in further improvements?—Or do they, on the contrary, regularly loan their profits on mortgage, invest them in more land, build saw-mills, or expend them in fitting out their sons as lawyers or store-keepers?—Or to leave generalities and go into particulars—would not the difference in produce arising from a proper rotation of crops, and the present exhausting system, soon increase capital?—Could not each farmer in the country, by the mere exercise of his common sense applied to the matter, at least double the quality and quantity of his manure?—Would not the difference between raising cows of the value of £5 and £10, between a dairy of cows yielding 4lbs. and 8lbs. of butter each per week, between beef selling at a 1-2 and 5d per lb., cheese at 3d. and 6d., butter at 8d. and 1s., oats at 1s. 6d. and 3s.—all such differences, being the result of different management merely, soon leave a surplus of profits which would change the country from a poor into a rich one.

Another mode of obtaining capital, however, is open to us, by means of Banks. Banking capital in this country has hitherto been available only to those engaged in commercial pursuits. Farmers have been rigidly excluded from it, and this chiefly because our Banks were originated for the express purpose of accommodating the mercantile and lumbering interests.

The plan on which they are formed, being a combination