

THE GLEANER:

AND NORTHUMBERLAND, KENT, GLOUCESTER AND RESTIGOUCHE,
COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL.

OLD SERIES] *Nec arantur sane textus ideo melior, quia ex se fila gignunt, nec noster vilior quia ex alienis libamus ut apes.* [COMPRISED 13 VOLUMES

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Agricultural Journal.

THE Annual Meeting and Report OF THE Northumberland Agricultural Society, for 1847.

The Annual Meeting of the Northumberland Agricultural Society took place at Weatherall's Hotel, Newcastle, on the morning of Wednesday, the 25th day of March, at 11 o'clock.

The Board of Directors were convened one hour previously, for the purpose of transacting business, preparatory to their removal from office. When this meeting had ended, they retired to an adjoining large hall, in which a highly respectable—but owing, no doubt, to the disagreeable state of the weather—a somewhat scanty company, were assembled for the occasion.

The President of the Society, JOHN WRIGHT, Esq., opened the meeting with an address of considerable length; which was delivered in his usual forcible and effective style. He spoke first of the pleasure which he enjoyed, occasioned by the rapid success of the Society. He dwelt on the vast importance of agriculture to the welfare and prosperity of this, and every other country;—assured the meeting that however strenuously mercantile and professional men of the community may now feel disposed to promote the interests of the Farmer, the welfare of this Society, and the advancement of Agriculture in Northumberland, must depend—not upon the exertions of such men as these—but upon Farmers themselves; and should they in future be so unwise as to manifest anything like apathy, or an indifference to their own interests, as a body, they cannot reasonably expect anything better than that the ardour of men who are but indirectly interested in the promotion of agriculture, will gradually cool away.

The Treasurer's account—previously audited by the Board—was then submitted, read, and unanimously approved of; the same being correct and highly satisfactory.

The President desired the Secretary to read the Report of the Board for the past year,—which is as follows:

—REPORT—

In perusing the early pages of the short history of Northumberland, nothing more forcibly arrests the attention of the intelligent reader than the neglect of agriculture. He finds an active people busied in mowing down the chief resource of the country—its forests; and purchasing a large proportion of the supplies necessary for this purpose, from the rival ports of Canada, and other places around them. He is astonished to learn, that from two to four hundred cargoes of Timber, &c., were annually shipped for the British market, in exchange for money and manufactures,—that the aggregate sum expended in the purchase of food, luxuries and clothing, about equalled the net value of the timber thus exported. Yet with a productive soil, and an intelligent and industrious population, but very little attention was paid to agriculture.

How long this lamentable indifference to the best interests of the county would have continued, it is difficult to tell, had there not appeared among us one of those vigorous, intellectual minds, which, like bright stars in darkest nights, are seen but few and far between. To the talent and energy of this man, may be mainly traced the origin of the existing Agricultural Society; the birth of that spirit of rivalry, and the spread of that information, respecting the art and utility of agriculture, which now begin to characterize Northumberland, and bid fair to raise it, from its long degraded position, to rank second to no county in the Province.

It is hardly necessary to name the person to whom reference is here made. Since the present Board of Directors came into office, the All-wise Disposer of events has seen fit to cut him off from the land of the living; but the memory of our late Secretary, the Reverend JAMES SOUTER, will long live in the annals of Northumberland, associated with some of its best and most durable institutions.

Since the period at which this Society dates its origin, a gradual improvement—more rapid in latter than in former years—distinguishes our agricultural movements. By way of dis-

tinctly proving the truth of this statement, the Board remark, that taking it for granted, the trade and population of Northumberland have not materially diminished or increased since 1837. If we compare merely the quantities of bread stuffs imported in the year 1838, being the first year of this Society's operations, with the quantities imported in the year 1846, a saving to the country of not less than fifty thousand pounds appears in favor of the latter period.

During the past year the various schemes adopted by your Society for the advancement of the general interests of the Farmer, have proved most pleasingly successful.

The Annual Ploughing Match took place at Newcastle, on the 15th day of October last, in a field the property of Mr John Wyse, Douglstown. The weather, and the situation of the field, were alike delightful. The competitors numbered twelve; the ground was smooth, and in good order; and the work was all admirably well done. Six prizes offered by the Board were competed for, and won by the following persons—

1st prize by G. Scott, Douglstown, Farmer,	£2 10 0
2nd do. by W. Mahoney, do. ploughman of A. Rankin, Esq.,	2 0 0
3rd do. by R. Johnston, Newcastle, Farmer,	1 15 0
4th do. by W. Bateman, do., J. Urquhart's horses,	1 10 0
5th do. by A. Campbell, Napan, Farmer,	1 5 0
6th do. by John Rainnie, Newcastle, Farmer,	1 0 0
In all,	£9 15 0

The Society's "Cattle Show and General Exhibition," took place in the Shire Town, on the 7th day of January last, under the most gratifying circumstances. A detailed account of the articles presented for competition, and their qualities; together with the names of the successful competitors, and the sums they severally won, having been published in the *Gleaner*, Newspaper, of the 12th January last, the Board do not deem it necessary to cumber this Report with any additional remarks.

Having some time previously obtained the consent of the sister societies of Kent, Restigouche, and Gloucester, the Board applied the grant of the Legislature, made in 1846, towards the introduction of a superior breed of Horses. On the 2nd day of March, 1846, Mr Daniel Weatherall, a person well qualified to perform such a service, was despatched to the State of Vermont, and the Western Districts of Canada, to purchase the description of animal best suited to the wants of the country. Owing to circumstances, however, of a peculiar kind, instead of one, Mr Weatherall purchased two horses, both of esteemed pedigree, whose names are "Morgan Champion," and "Bulrush." And on the 16th day of April, he arrived with his charge, in safety, at Newcastle, after a tedious journey of twenty five days.

These horses were sold at Public Auction on the 20th day of May last, subject to certain conditions prescribed by the Board; the due fulfilment of which conditions was guaranteed by penalty bonds, executed at the time of purchase. The Society had of necessity to sustain a considerable loss by this transaction; but estimating the benefits which this County, and the adjoining ones, will ultimately reap by the improved offspring of these animals, they have no occasion to regret having made the outlay.

The Board having, as usual, ordered seasonably the Society's annual supply of Clover, Timothy, and Horticultural seeds, have received the whole in excellent condition. These, together with a separate supply from the United States, will be parcelled off, and ready for delivery by spring, at the stores of Mr P. Watt, Newcastle, John Porter, Esq., Douglstown, and Mr Thomas Spratt, Chatham.

The Treasurer's account—an abstract of which is hereto annexed—has been duly audited, found to be correct, and is highly satisfactory. It exhibits a pleasing augmentation to the society's funds, occasioned by a considerable increase of members during the past year; and shews a balance of cash on hand amounting to £24 12 3.

Although it be thus evident, from a retrospect of the past, that Northumberland has of late made rapid advances as an agricultural county; yet the truth is, we are still far, very far, behind older countries. Nor is it a whit less true, that these older countries—so far from having attained to anything like perfection—have only begun to reckon the extent of that advancement, to which the aid of science is capable of conducting them.

It is generally known, that the British Government has lately seen fit to repeal a law, which gave protection to the English, Irish, and Scotch farmers. Great anxiety, therefore, necessarily prevails throughout the mother countries, regarding the effect which this change will produce on the agricultural inter-

ests of these Kingdoms. At such a crisis, a fresh impetus cannot fail to be given to agriculture. Every effort will be put forth, which science can suggest—ingenuity invent—or experiment discover, to increase the growth, and improve the quality of every acre of arable land in the nation. Nor will the effect of "Free Trade" upon agriculture be confined to Great Britain and Ireland. It will extend, in a lesser or greater degree, over every portion of Europe and America.

These assertions, however, may be viewed by some as merely chimerical. Be it so;—they are the opinions maintained by the most competent judges in the world; and they are, in a measure, already verified by the partial application of science to the varied interests of the husbandman.

How, then, it may be asked, is this wonderful improvement to be effected? How are these countries to increase the quantity and improve the quality of their land productions? or by what means are they to cause lands, hitherto barren, to bring forth abundant crops?

Now, it cannot be reasonably expected that on the present occasion, the Board will attempt to give a full or comprehensive answer to these important questions. Nevertheless, they may briefly state—that by the application of the truths of Chemistry, Geology, and other sciences, to the cultivation of the soil; by the saving and properly applying manures; skilfully preparing, and adapting different kinds to different crops, and different qualities of soil; by the application of mechanical philosophy to the construction of Farming Machines and Implements; and lastly, by the ready interchange of information between different localities, so that the whole country may be benefited by the experiments and discoveries of each. By these means, and such as these, can a consummation so desirable be attained.

We know that by studying Nature, we are made acquainted with the truths of science. Scientific men, as it were, ask questions of Nature, and receive her answers. Such questions are asked, when men make experiments, and the results of these experiments are Nature's answers. For instance, it has been found that no plant, except aquatics—i. e. water plants—will thrive in soils that are saturated with water; therefore a method now advantageously adopted, in old farming countries—for improving the soil and increasing its productions—is efficient Draining. Air is as necessary to the roots of plants, as it is to their stems and foliage; but where water abounds, air cannot enter, and consequently no healthy vegetation is produced. We also know, that well drained land is easier and more effectually cultivated,—that no land can be properly stirred by the plough, or other implement, unless it be free from an excess of moisture; and that waiting in the spring till the ground be dry enough, has often occasioned the loss of a season, which never can be the case in efficiently drained lands. Besides all these advantages, not only is dry land warmer, but the air immediately over it is warmer also. Now, these circumstances combined, hasten the growth, as well as the maturity, of the crop. The Board may here notice another most important and practical expedient, to which British Farmers have lately had recourse, for enriching their land, increasing their crops, and enlarging their profit; it is an unremitting endeavor to increase the number and quality of their Flocks and Herds; and the adoption of such a rotation of cropping as will admit of a frequent repetition of green crops, for the purpose of soiling and stall feeding their Live Stock.

Here, then, we discover two strong reasons, why the farmers of this country should double their diligence, and press forward to something like as advanced system of agriculture. The first reason is this—Their antiquated method of farming, as compared with that at present pursued in all older countries. The second is—The fresh impetus which Free Trade will undoubtedly give to the furtherance of agriculture in these countries, seeing the whole world may now be termed one common field, for free and equal competition.

But here again it may be asked, how is this to be done? How is it possible for the farmers of this county to get within sight, much less to keep pace with their brethren in Britain, Europe, and America? By way of answer to the question, *Can this be done?* the Board might reply—after the manner of Sir Walter Scott—by putting another question, *Will Farmers try?*

Among a variety of expedients, however, to which they shall hereafter allude, the Board may here mention, as the first thing necessary, viz: the adoption of some medium by which a knowledge of the elementary principles of Chemistry, &c., may be easily attained and widely diffused throughout the country. This must necessarily precede anything like an amended system of cultivation.

As well might a man unacquainted with the art of mixing colours, yet call himself a painter,

expect to produce a striking portraiture, as a Farmer—so called—expect to produce luxuriant crops, who knows little or nothing of the elements contained in the composition of his soil, or of the manures with which he would enrich that soil.

By this statement, however, it is by no means meant that every man who expects to farm well, must needs be a scientific or learned man; but it is meant that he should be learned in the science and art of farming; for it is not one whit less necessary that he be so than that the Lawyer be learned in the principles of the law, the Divine in theology, or the Physician in anatomy. Surely, it will not be urged that his arm will lose its vigor, because his intellect is strong; or his barns become empty because his brain is stored with useful agricultural knowledge.

Do we not see in the mercantile and manufacturing world around us, that no sooner is any improvement made public, than it is immediately adopted. Old methods are at once put aside, and every new discovery of science and ingenuity without hesitation put into practice. Yet how differently act our Farmers! Judging by the apathy and lukewarmness evinced by not a few of them, one would almost be driven to the conclusion that they had become so solemnly wedded to old practices, and so incurably blinded to their own interests, as that they had resolved not to mudge one single foot along the road that leads to improvement. "Don't tell me about these things," says one class; "for if anything further could have been found out about farming, it would have been found out long ago." "I know enough about farming already," says another class; "don't bother me about your improvements and book farming." Such men as these, instead of gladly contributing their dollar annual brass button and a half were guaranteed as a subscription to any Agricultural Society, unless return for the outlay.

But while this is true as regards too many of the farmers of this county, fortunately there are very many who desire to ascertain the way by which they may acquire that instruction which is found to be so necessary to good and profitable farming. Now, the question as to how this instruction may be best furnished, and most effectually conveyed, is one which it behoves this Society to weigh well, with the view of being able to give it something like a satisfactory answer.

The Board of last year directed your attention to various methods practised with admirable success in Britain and the American States; and they recommended the adoption of a few of these, as applicable to the infant condition of this country. Of these methods, however, it is deemed needless to speak, on the present occasion, as they may be easily found in the annual report of last year.

Through the medium of the very excellent Report lately published by the Agricultural Society of Restigouche, the Board learn that, with the view of directing the attention of the farmers of that thriving county to the improvements of older countries, a resolution passed the annual meeting—"That 40 copies of the 'British American Cultivator,' be ordered this year, and distributed as premiums under the direction of the agricultural board." And again—"That the agricultural board of this year do import a two horse power Threshing Machine, a Clover Thresher and Separator, and a Portable Cheese Press, to be sold by public auction to any member of the society, the upset price being cost and charges." Now, although no one will deny that the farmers of this county owe Mr Pierce a large debt of gratitude for the highly judicious agricultural selections with which the "Gleaner" weekly abounds, still the Board conceive that the circulation of such admirable periodicals as the "Cultivator," Professor Johnston's "Catechism," which comprizes all the great outlines and divisions of the science of agriculture, and his other rudimental works of a similar description, would prove exceedingly beneficial. Why mercantile enterprise has not done more to introduce newly invented implements and machines, the Board cannot conceive. Had it been otherwise, the Merchant and the Farmer would have been mutually benefited.

Let us suppose that an old country scientific and practical Farmer of this day, were to visit Northumberland, and spend a few days at the house of each of our Farmers;—with what astonishment would these farmers listen to the many startling defects which the stranger would point out in every department of their now antiquated method of Farming. He would be able to show them that for little more than half the expense—half the labour—or half the time now employed, their lands under the new mode of treatment, could be made to yield far more than their present products.

He would do this by explaining the present theory, operations and effects, of Draining and proper Ploughing. The method of saving and