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OLD SERIES]

*Nec araneorum sane textus ideo melior, quia ex se fila gignunt, nec nostervilior quia ex alienis libamus ut apes.*

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## Agricultural Journal.

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PROFESSOR JOHNSTON.

At a recent meeting of the East of Berwickshire Farmer's Club, Professor Johnston, recently returned from America, at the request of his friend Mr Milne, of Milne-Garden, delivered the following address, which we have much pleasure in laying before our readers:—

I will briefly refer to some points which came under my observation in that part of the country which I visited. First of all, as to the state of agriculture in the Northern parts of America, in our own Provinces, and in New England, with which we are ourselves more familiar, when I tell you generally that the state of Agriculture in those parts of America is what the state of agriculture in Scotland probably was 80 or 90 years ago; and when I tell you that in some parts of New Brunswick they are very nearly in the precise condition in which Scotland was 120 years ago, you will have an idea of the state of agriculture in North America. The system of agriculture is no farther forward—it is exceedingly far behind. They are not even acquainted with the improved methods of farming, or the improved implements which are now in common use in this country; while the increased facilities with which Mr Milne would still farther introduce have never even been heard of by them. Now, in regard to this state of things in the whole of the northern part of America, go as far west as you like, and as far south as you like, the same general description applies to the whole. Now, the next question is, how has this state of things been brought about? You are not all so well acquainted with the state of agriculture in this country, 100 or 120 years ago as I have found it my duty to make myself, and at the time to which I refer, I allude not only to the state of great ignorance in regard to the cultivation of the soil, but to the state of exhaustion in the soil itself. So in referring to the present state of agriculture in America, I refer to two considerations—the condition of mind brought to bear upon the cultivation of the land, and the state of the land itself. In regard to the cultivation of land in America, its condition arises from a variety of causes, and very few considerations will enable you to understand how it has come about. If you ask yourself to what class does the majority of emigrants belong, you will have no difficulty in coming to a conclusion. Look at the great crowds of people who go from Ireland, from the Highlands from Scotland, and the hundreds of thousands proceeding from the great towns of England and Scotland—ask yourselves of what class they consist—what amount of intelligence and agricultural knowledge they possess; and in the answer to this you will at once find the key to the state of the land in the whole northern part of America. The people who first settled in America knew nothing of agriculture, and their descendants have generally copied the habits of their predecessors.—Thus it came that their sons knew nothing; out of the way of books—out of the way of instruction, supposing them to have even read books which gave instruction, they would have made very little progress; but we must suppose them not to have had an opportunity of gaining knowledge, and therefore instead of advancing they have retrograded in agricultural knowledge, and practice.—Now, what has been their procedure—by what kind of procedure have they brought about the state of exhaustion to which the soil has been reduced? Of course, in speaking of the exhausted soil, I do not refer to the virgin soil which has never received the plough or the spade, but the soil under their cultivation and which they are now exhausting. When I tell you how the land is cultivated, you will understand how this exhaustion has been produced. The forest is in the first place cut down and burnt, after which the ashes are scattered, and a crop of

wheat and oats is sown. When this crop is cut down another is sown; but they do not always remove the straw—they do not trouble themselves with any manure. The second year they sow it again and harrow it, and generally take three crops in succession. When they can take no more out of it, they either sow grass seeds, or as frequently let it seed itself. They will then sometimes cut hay for 12, 14, 16, 18, or 20 years in succession, in fact as long as they can even get half-a-ton an acre from it. And you may suppose what is the natural fertility of the land when they are able to obtain as much as three or four tons per acre at first, and go on cutting it for 12 years. They will probably have two tons an acre during all that length of time. The land is then broken up and the crop of oats taken—then potatoes, then a crop of wheat—and then hay for 12 years again, and so the same course is repeated. Now this is the way in which the land is treated—this is the way in which the exhaustion is brought about. This exhaustion exists in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Lower Canada, in Upper Canada to a considerable extent, over the whole of New England, and extends even into the state of New York. The next inquiry which you will make is, what steps are they taking to remedy this state of things? Are they doing anything to bring back the land to a productive condition? and in order to do this, are they taking steps to put any knowledge into the heads of those who cultivate it? Now, on those points I am happy to say that I can speak very favorably. They possess the spirit of their forefathers, and having become conscious of the state in which agriculture really is, they are endeavoring to improve it. But you will ask, what inducements have they to make these exertions? They grow corn enough—they have no want of agricultural produce as we have; but when I tell you what is the condition of New England in reference to the western States you will understand. All the new States—all the virgin land, when it is cultivated, yields a crop for little or nothing, but it cannot yield by any means a large crop. In the State of Michigan, between Lakes Superior and Erie, the average produce is not 12 bushels an acre, but it is got for nothing. In New Brunswick, which is very thinly populated, I was told that 10 bushels an acre paid well; but the produce is not large. In the Western States they are enabled to produce it very cheaply.

Mr Hay.—What was the value of a bushel of wheat?

Professor Johnston.—At the time I was there, the price varied from 60 to 80 cents, a bushel, i.e., 100 cents, being 4s. 4d. In the extensive western states, and part of New York, where it is shipped to England, the price varies according to the distance. Now, the condition of things in the western States in reference to England is precisely the same as the condition of England in reference to the wheat-producing countries of the Baltic. The condition of the farmers is exceedingly bad, and in Maine I was informed that they were all in a state of bankruptcy. The land is all mortgaged, which hangs like a mill-stone round their necks, and is worse even than the state of the farmers in this country. They are thus unable to compete with the western parts of New York or Lake Ontario. You have all heard of the famous wheat of Genesee, where the land is more fertile than in any part of Great Britain, and I learned there that they are laying the land down to grass because they cannot afford to grow wheat. As a remedy for this state of things, they are establishing agricultural societies in the different States, and the Legislature is providing funds to support these societies, and for the diffusion of knowledge. The central society is in Albany, and to it the different branches send reports. The Legislature publish these in one thick volume, and circulate 20,000 copies gratuitously throughout the States. This central society asked me to give their annual ad-

dress at Syracuse, and a course of lectures before the Legislature at Albany.—These lectures are to form part of this year's report; and the Legislature have resolved to print an additional 20,000 copies, making 40,000 altogether, and to circulate gratuitously through the different States. Let us now come to another point of great importance, and to which you would perhaps like me to advert, viz., what will be the effect of an improved condition of agriculture in America upon us—what influence will the growth of wheat in the States have upon us—or what influence is the progress in agriculture, consequent on this great desire for improvement, likely to have upon the state of agriculture in Great Britain? In New Brunswick, New England Vermont, New Hampshire, Connecticut and New York, the growth of wheat has almost ceased; and it is now gradually receding farther and farther westward. Now, when I tell you this you will see that what I believe to be the case is really the case—that it will not be very long before America will be unable—in fact the United States are unable now—to supply us with wheat in any large quantity. If we could bring Indian corn into general use we might get plenty of it; but I do not think the United States need be any bugbear to you. I believe the great source of competition you will have to contend with is the Baltic, and the countries on the borders of the Black Sea. Now, in regard to the other point, viz., what effect will the desire for improvement in agriculture have upon the agriculture of this country—it ought to stimulate us to still greater exertions. Sure I am, that with proper exertion we will always keep a-head of them. There is as good blood in this country as ever went out of it. I hope English and Scotch heads and hearts will not become languid and dull on a matter of such moment as this, but that we will continue to beat them, as I am sure, from what I have seen, that we are able. What the Americans can do well, we ought to be able to do better. (The learned Professor sat down amid great applause.)

From the Albany Cultivator.

## SETTING POSTS—FENCES—HARROWS.

Posts for fences or other purposes, set into the ground, will last double the length of time by being put into the middle of the hole. The space around the post filled with small stones instead of earth, the earth does not come in contact with the post, and air is also admitted into the hole, both of which probably tend to prevent decay. In constructing fences, the earth taken from the hole is placed directly under the line of the fence thus forming a ridge which is a saving equal to twelve feet of boards in four lengths of fence. The stones should be raised three or four inches around the post above the surface of the ground.—The posts will not be very firm at first but after standing through one winter their firmness will be much increased, and will continue to increase for several years.

A post and rail fence constructed in this way forty five years since, in the vicinity of Boston, is now standing, with the exception of one post, and will probably stand a dozen years more.

The common zig zag rail fence is much more durable with upright stakes than with cross stakes. My method is to connect the stakes before the top rail is put in, with iron wire, say one fourth of an inch in diameter, which is done after the stakes are set by bringing the tops of the stakes as near together as fence will admit; then take the measurement with a cord which will show the length to cut the wire, which is easily done with a cold chisel; the ends of the wire are then hooked around each stake; the top rail being then put in, completes the fence.—With an iron a foot or more in length, with a hole in one end to admit the end of the wire, the operation is quickly performed. This is a much cheaper method

of securing upright stakes than the usual way with a piece of scantling.

The Harrow, whether square or triangle, should be constructed entirely of iron, (except the points of the teeth which are steel); bars of iron of proper thickness, width and weight, are selected and welded together so as to form the desired shape for the frame; the tops of the teeth being rounded about an inch down, pass through the iron plate or frame, and are made fast on the upper side by a nut. The teeth in this way are always kept tight, which is very difficult in a wood framed harrow. With the exception of the teeth, a harrow thus constructed will endure a century without being housed.

From the same.

## DISEASE IN POTATOES.

From several sections we hear there are already symptoms of this disease.—B. P. Johnson, Esq., of Rome, writes us, July 18th:—

I have examined, within the last few days, a number of fields, and find indications of the disease in almost every field. The upper leaves first show indications of the disease—the leaves shrivel or curl up, and it soon extends to the entire stalk. In some instances when the potatoes have been dug, on cutting them open, a small black spot is found in the centre. In others the potatoe appears sound and healthy.

The disease is not confined so far as my observations extends, to any particular variety of potatoe, or to any special location. Seed procured from the west, where no defect was apparent last year, suffers equally with seed selected from the crop raised in this section last year. I planted some this year, and made a preparation of salt, plaster and house ashes, of nearly equal quantities, though of ashes the most, and put about a handful in each hill before covering. The vines look remarkably well, and as yet are free from the curl in the leaves.—Whether they will escape, a few days will determine.

I am led to believe, that this disease is somewhat analogous to smut in wheat. As it has made its appearance so early in the season, I hope careful observations will be made, in order if possible to aim at some definite conclusions in relation to the cause of the disease and remedy.

Dr Camp, of Windham Greene co., has sent us a couple of insects, of a kind which he thinks causes the rot in potatoes. He states that the blight which precedes the rot, has already attacked the crop, and that on all the affected stalks, he finds more or less of these insects. The healthy vines, he states have no insects on them.

## REMEDY FOR RINGBONE.

Take half a pint of the best whale oil, and half a pound of best box raisins.—Cut the raisins open and put them in the oil. Simmer both together (do not boil) till the raisins are hard and crispy. Apply the preparation to the ringbone once a day, rubbing it in well. It will last about two weeks, and one preparation will generally effect a cure. I tried this on a horse three years ago, that was quite lame; the bunch is still on his foot, but he has not been lame in the least degree since.

ADVANTAGES OF AGRICULTURAL PAPERS.—Mr John S. Yeomans, of Columbia Ct., says—'I have been a constant reader of the Cultivator from its commencement—took it for six years in company with a neighbor, working at that time as a mechanic and owning but a few acres of land. For the four years past have taken it myself—have purchased some more land, and am dabbling some at farming. I have always been prepossessed in favor of agricultural interests, and have often expressed the opinion that the intrinsic value of the real estate in our small town has been enhanced considerably in consequence of improvements in making manure and cultivating lands, which never would have been adopted but for the suggestions in the Cultivator.'