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OLD SERIES]

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

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REPORT

Of the Northumberland Agricultural Society,
For 1849-50.

BEFORE resigning those offices of trust to which your partiality promoted them, the retiring Board of Directors would be allowed to congratulate this Society, and the country at large, upon the abundant Harvest with which it has pleased a kind Providence to reward the labours of the husbandman. Sure, such manifestations of the loving kindness of the Creator, while they call forth the gratitude of the creature, should never fail to stimulate him to greater diligence in all time to come,—diligence not merely of a physical, but of a mental character. It is not enough that, encouraged by last year's success, we increase our efforts this year, in the way of ploughing, harrowing, and stumping our lands,—something more than this is necessary, if we wish to prosper as Farmers. We must endeavor to keep pace with the march of improvement going on in the world around us, for to loiter behind is to let slip our chance of success. We must therefore increase our mental efforts, that we may acquire, among other things at least, a rudimental knowledge of those Sciences without whose aid our success as Farmers is more the effect of good luck than of good management. To assert that this statement is not true, or, in other words, to assert that a man understands his business as a farmer, who is ignorant of the substances that constitute his soil, and of those with which he would enrich it, is neither more nor less than to assert that an individual unacquainted with the art of mixing colours, yet dubbing himself a painter, would be capable of producing as striking a likeness of us, as a Raphael, or a Lawrence; or that a man ignorant of the science of Chemistry, and the art of compounding medicines, yet styling himself a Physician, would be as likely to remove a malady, or cure a disease, as a Sir Astley Cooper or Sir Benjamin Brodie.

Not is this all. Farmers should be diligent in the acquisition of experimental knowledge. All the practical and useful arts are founded upon facts: Agriculture is pre-eminently so. All true science, in Agriculture, is the process of induction; that is, it consists of inferences drawn from well-authenticated facts. Theories in this case, however plausible, are of no real value, unless the application of them lead to some practical rule or result. Now, it may not require a large farm, or a great capital, or a vast amount of intellect, to make experiments, from which the greatest benefits may flow; many questions still involved in uncertainty, relating to crops, seeds, manures; modes of planting and cultivation; of harvesting, saving manure, &c., &c., are just as likely to be solved, in a farm of ten acres, as in one of a hundred. What, indeed, is every operation of the intelligent Farmer, but an experiment? In preparing, manuring, and sowing his fields, he may be said to be making an experiment; and if such farmers would carefully note every step in the process of cultivation, and the progress of vegetable growth, the facts thus collected, might prove not only beneficial to themselves, and the districts in which they live, but they might elicit truths—without the aid of Science—calculated to throw light upon subjects still involved in obscurity.

Lest, however, a detail of your Society's operations during the past year, should occupy the remaining portion of the space usually allotted to an Agricultural report, the Board shall at once proceed to lay before you a concise but faithful narrative of their doings during the period of their incumbency; and should time and space permit, they may subsequently offer some remarks regarding our present position, and prospects.

The first meeting of the Board took place on the 25th of January, 1849, being only a few days after their appointment to office. At this meeting the preliminary business of the year was disposed of: Committees were appointed to make arrangements for the Ploughing Match, Cattle Show, and General Exhibition; a few alterations were made in the list of Prizes awarded this day, and the sum of fifty pounds was placed at the disposal of the Committee appointed to purchase and import a quantity of Black Sea Wheat, at as early a date as possible in the spring.

The Board will here digress for a moment to state that the Seed Committee attended faithfully to the duty imposed upon them. But owing to the vessel in which it was shipped having had an exceedingly long passage, it did not reach this place till nearly every farmer in the County had completed his harvest. A few, however, more anxious to test the quality of this Wheat, did wait till it came.

Through the patience of these individuals an opportunity has been afforded of ascertaining correctly the properties of this kind of Wheat.

Of those gentlemen who made the trial last season, there are no doubt some present, who will favor the Society by stating their opinion of its merits.

The Board are not aware that any cases have occurred where it failed to resist disease, or yield a fair return.

A portion of the Wheat is still on hand, and members of the Society will do well to secure samples of it soon, which they may do by application to the Treasurer or Secretary.

The second meeting of the Board was held on Saturday, the 24th February. The only business of any importance

done at this meeting was the passing of a Resolution directing the Secretary to order twenty copies of the *Farmer and Mechanic*, and that every member of the Board be entitled to a copy of it *ex officio*. It would appear that this valuable little work has been discontinued, the Proprietor having failed to secure the pecuniary support necessary to its existence.

The third meeting of the Board was convened for Thursday, the 23rd August; when it was resolved unanimously, that this Society, hailing the contemplated visit of Professor J. W. Johnston, to this County, as an event calculated to promote its Agricultural and other interests, delegate a Committee of Members to wait upon the Professor on his arrival—make tender of their services to him—ascertain the method by which he purposes to render his visit most advantageous to the country, and make whatever arrangements may be found necessary to carry out fully the object contemplated by this Board.

At the fourth meeting of the Directors, it was Resolved, 1st, That this Board having seen in the public prints a series of queries propounded by Professor Johnston, agree to entertain the subject of these queries, with the view of replying to them.

2nd, That Committees for the several Districts of Napan, Newcastle and Douglstown, be appointed to reply *seriatim* to the Professor's questions; that the replies of each Committee have special reference to its particular District; and that their Reports be submitted to a subsequent meeting of this Board for approval.

This meeting adjourned till Saturday the 6th day of October, when, two Reports handed in by the above mentioned Committees, having been read and discussed, it was Resolved, that the reports now submitted be received, and that they be handed to Professor Johnston on his arrival at this place by the Secretary of the Society.

A Committee was appointed to wait upon the Professor on his arrival, in order to ascertain if he were disposed to favor the County by Lecturing, as he had previously consented to do. The Committee found that, although desirous to comply with the wishes of the Society, the objections urged against this were so many and potent, that Mr J. thought proper to negative the proposal.

At this meeting Committees were also appointed to obtain Subscriptions and Donations to enable the Treasurer of this Society to claim as large a share as possible of the bounty offered by the Government of the Province. The Treasurer's account, hereto annexed, however, shows but too plainly that little exertion has been made to promote this most desirable object; or at least, if the efforts of the Committee have been great, their success has been but small.

The Ploughing Match and Cattle Show for 1849, took place at Chatham on Thursday the 4th October, in the large lay field of the Hon. Joseph Cunard, South of the Wellington Road.

The former, if equalled, has certainly never been surpassed, by any preceding one in this County.

The Judges were Messrs. R. Caie, Chatham; Archibald Campbell, Napan; and John Porter, Esq., Douglstown.

The Prizes were awarded as follows:—

1st Prize to Alex. Dick, son of Mr A. Dick, Napan,	£1 17 6
2nd do. R. Johnston, Ploughman, W. Stothard, Douglstown,	1 15 0
3rd do. Jas. Galloway, son of Mr J. Galloway, Napan,	1 12 6
4th do. James Orr, Farmer, Napan,	1 10 0
5th do. James Johnston, son of Mr George Johnston,	1 7 6
6th do. Richard Colthard, Farmer, Newcastle,	1 5 0
	£9 7 6

The Board have here great pleasure in announcing a circumstance which cannot fail to be gratifying to all present, but doubly so to the competitors at the late Ploughing Match. Professor Johnston, during his late sojourn at this place, took occasion to visit the field of competition in company with Professor Robb, James Brown, Esq., M. P. P., the President of this Society, and other gentlemen. Having examined the quality of the Ploughing, and discussed freely the merits and demerits of each ridge, Professor Johnston emphatically pronounced it the best performance of the kind he had seen on this Continent. Mr Brown added he really thought it was the best he had ever seen. Mr. Brown, however, left Scotland at too early an age to recollect distinctly the superiority of like fetes in that country.

The Cattle Show was inferior in every respect even to that of last year. The turn out of Cattle was poor in point of numbers, and miserable in point of quality. It is evident, if we expect to improve our Cattle, we must adopt the common sense plan, of selecting with the greatest care, in infancy, such animals as bear the most striking resemblance to those parents which are most esteemed for a particular purpose; and not only select these, but rear and preserve them with the utmost solicitude. Unless this be attended to, obtaining the aid of imported animals will avail but little. To improve our breeds of Horses, Sheep and Swine, however, foreign aid is perhaps necessary, but if so, it would be equally necessary that stern precautionary measures should be taken to prevent the deterioration of an improved breed, by swarms of half-starved creatures, that are allowed to run at large.

The Judges of the Cattle Show were Messrs. John Hea,

of Chatham; Thomas Vanstone, of Newcastle; and Alex. Dick, of Napan.

The Prizes were awarded as follows:—

George Johnston, Napan, best 2 year old Bull,	£1 10 0
Chas. Marshall, Douglstown, best 2 year old Heifer,	1 0 0
Richard Coulthard, Douglstown, 2nd best do.,	0 10 0
William Hay, Blacksmith, best 1 year old do.,	0 15 0
George Johnston, Napan, 2nd best do.,	0 7 6
Richard Coulthard, Newcastle, best Ram, 1 year old,	0 10 0
Michael Searle, Napan, 2nd best do.,	0 5 0
Charles Marshall, Douglstown, best Ewe, 2 year old,	0 10 0
Richard Coulthard, Newcastle, 2nd best do.,	0 5 0
James Creighton, Napan, best Ewe, 1 year old,	0 10 0
George Johnston, Napan, 2nd best do.,	0 5 0
Do., Do., best 1 year old Sow,	0 10 0
James Galloway, Do., 2nd best do.,	0 5 0
Daniel Elkin, Do., best 3 year old Entire Horse,	2 0 0
Henry Cunard, Esq., Chatham, best Mare, 3 year old,	1 10 0
Dudley Perley, Esq., Do., 2nd best do.,	0 15 0
Michael Searle, Napan, best Mare, 2 year old,	1 0 0
Charles Marshall, Douglstown, 2nd best do.,	0 10 0
	£12 17 6

The Annual Exhibition took place at Chatham, on Wednesday the 16th January. A large concourse of respectable, and apparently deeply interested spectators—a beautiful day, and the numerous and diversified samples of Grains, Timothy and Garden Seeds, Buckwheat, Beans, Butter and Cheese—conspired to render the occasion one of a very unusual kind. It is to be regretted, however, that a better opportunity was not afforded the public of examining the various articles; or in other words, that the occasion did not partake more of the character of an Exhibition. To some method by which this omission may be remedied in future, the Board respectfully invite the attention of their successors in office.

Of Wheat there were exhibited 20 odd samples; weighing from 66½ lbs. the highest, to 61 lbs. the lowest; and of the whole 20 samples there was but one lot under 63 lbs.

Of Oats, there were exhibited 13 samples, of 2 bushels each; weighing per bushel from 44½ lbs. the highest, to 38½ the lowest; there being 11 samples of the 13 over 40 lbs.

Of Barley, there were exhibited 11 samples of 2 bushels each, weighing from 55 lbs. 14 oz., the highest, to 50 lbs. 14 oz. the lowest. One lot weighed 56 lbs., but being fire-dried, it was rejected as uneligible.

Of Pease, there were exhibited 7 samples; 3 of Green, and 4 of White Pease, weighing from 67½ to 66 lbs. a bushel. The prize article here was of a most superior quality, and merits public attention to its peculiar properties.

Of Beans, there were exhibited 12 samples, consisting of the Mixed Colored, White and Windsor kinds. The best samples of mixed colored Beans weighed 65½ lbs. Of the White Bean 61½ lbs., and of the Windsor Bean 59½ lbs.

Of Timothy Seed, there were 6 samples exhibited, weighing from 47 lbs. the highest, to 41½ lbs. the lowest.

Of Buckwheat only 3 samples were exhibited, the best of which weighed 52½ lbs.

There was but one sample of Hops, the inferiority of which induced the Judges to withhold the premium.

The utmost care was exercised in putting the Grains into the measures, before weighing. So scrupulous was Mr Wyse, one of the Judges, in performing this office, that the other Judges, although standing on a strong floor, were forbidden to move, lest they should shake the measure, and affect the quantity. Indeed, it is questionable if this method came up to what a purchaser would consider good measure. But nothing could possibly be more exact than the mode adopted, to do justice to every competitor.

The Judges of Domestic Manufactures and the Produce of the Dairy, were William Loch, John Mackie, and John Macdougall, Esquires; and of Grains, Seeds, &c., Messrs. Henry Wyse, Thomas Vanstone, and Daniel Weatherell.

The Prizes were awarded as follows:—

DOMESTIC MANUFACTURES.	
For the best Homespun Cloth, all wool, D. McKay, Esq.	£0 15 0
Second best Do., Alexander Dick,	0 10 0
For the best Homespun, Cotton and Wool, S. Hamilton,	0 15 0
Second best Do., Daniel Baldwin,	0 10 0
For the best piece of Flannel, all Wool, James Brown,	0 15 0
Second best Do., Alexander Goodfellow,	0 10 0
Best sample Woollen Socks, Alexander Goodfellow,	0 7 6
Best piece of Flannel, Cotton and Wool, Daniel Baldwin,	0 10 0
Second best Do., R. P. Whitney,	0 5 0
Best sample Mitts, James Brown,	0 7 6
Second best Do., R. P. Whitney,	0 5 0
Best Plaid Tartan, Cotton & Wool, special prize, T. McTavish,	0 12 6

PRODUCE OF THE DAIRY.	
For best sample of Butter, John Dixon, Newcastle,	£0 15 0
Second best Do., Tavish McTavish,	0 10 0
Third best Do., George Johnston, Napan,	0 7 6
For the best Cheese, George Johnston, Napan,	0 12 6
Second best Do., David Steele,	0 7 6