

ABSTRACT OF ANNUAL REPORTS OF COUNTY AND DISTRICT SOCIETIES ORGANIZED UNDER THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE.

(Continued.)

HALIFAX COUNTY.

LOWER MUSQUODOBOIT AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY.

Total amount of receipts for the year including subscriptions, Provincial grant, balance on hand and sale of stock, \$395.23. Amount of expenditure for stock, &c., \$193.48. Balance in the Treasurer's hands to date, \$201.75.

Last season has been an unusually dry one. The hay crop is less than the average, but of the very best quality.

Oats and wheat less than the average in quantity, but good in quality. Potatoes more than the average and keeping sound in the cellars. Turnips a light crop. In this part of the country raising stock is our main dependence. Our river for over 30 miles abounds with hay, much of it taken off year after year without manure. We need very much an improved breed of cattle. When there is stock imported into the province we are not able to compete with the wealthy farmers about Halifax or Windsor. If some of the improved breed were sent to this settlement it would be a great benefit to it; they might not bring the high prices they would in other parts, but we think it would be a more general benefit, with a population of two thousand persons, mostly farmers, and two Agricultural Societies in a flourishing state. This society has been a great benefit to the settlement, and we trust with the new Agricultural Act and increased Provincial aid, it may do more than it ever has done.

ROBERT A. LOGAN, *Pres.*
C. N. SPROTT, *Sec.*

[A full list of office-bearers should have accompanied this Report, and the statement of accounts should have been more detailed.]

PORTABLE FENCE.—Four boards seven inches wide and twelve feet long, spread four feet wide, with two battens across each end, one across the middle, six inches wide, put together with tenpenny clinch nails, makes a length of this fence. In putting it up it requires two stakes for the first length, and one for each additional length. The fence may be fastened to the stakes with wire or withes at the top. This fence runs in a straight line, and the joints or lengths are fastened together with a piece of board twelve inches long passing between the battens of two lengths at the top and bottom spaces, and fastened with a nail. The ends should rest on a flat stone to prevent decay. This fence is easily put up or moved without injury. Forty feet of hemlock boards and half a pound of nails, with one stake, will make a length of fence. This fence is patented.

MANGOLD WURZEL OR FIELD BEET;

ITS HISTORY, CULTIVATION, AND USES, AS A DAIRY, FEEDING, AND SUGAR PLANT.

Introductory Remarks.—Mangold Wurzel or Field Beet will probably prove itself one of the most valuable agricultural plants that have been introduced to modern agriculture. It is already cultivated to a considerable extent on the continent of Europe, and has indeed for many years been grown in England and Ireland, and even in the colder climate of Scotland; but our experience of its peculiarities and adaptations to farm purposes, have scarcely been sufficient to enable us to correctly compare its merits with the potato, the turnip, and the carrot, and other plants of almost universal cultivation with which it is naturally associated in the public mind.

In estimating the agricultural and commercial values of a new crop, we are apt to put the question in a shape that ill accords with the avowed bent of enlightened farming. If the plant is a forage one (as in the present instance), we ask:—Will it produce a larger return of more nutritious food than any other plant known? And if the question be answered in the negative, or with qualifications, we are apt to throw aside the novelty as no improvement upon crops already in cultivation. But although this question of actual bulk of produce be a just one by which to decide the respective merits of certain crops, *when all other things are equal*, it must be kept in view that no such case of precise equality is possible in practice. Undoubtedly the strong tendency which obtains to introduce all new crops of value under exaggerated colors, has its rise in the want of just appreciation of this view, which, if it were fully acknowledged by the public, would lead to a more just and candid investigation of the claims of new crops, and would moreover effectually prevent the profligate waste of labour and capital upon worthless discoveries that suddenly rise into notoriety.

Keeping this view before us, let us candidly enquire into the nature of the crop now specially under consideration, and detail its method of cultivation, and what it is really good for after being grown. Quite recently attention has been called to it by many agriculturists as one of the best feeding and dairy plants in existence, and it is therefore desirable that we should specially regard the plant from that point of view.

Origin and Botanical History.—Beet and Mangold Wurzel in their numerous varieties are cultivated forms of a plant called *Beta vulgaris*, which grows in a

wild state on the shores of the Mediterranean, and according to Koch, in Western Germany, &c.

In De Candolle's recent work, "Geographie Botanique," the origin of Mangold Wurzel is thus spoken of:—

The type (or original) of the white and red Beet, which has a fusiform root of small size, is found in sandy soil in the Canaries, around the Mediterranean, and in Persia, and even in those parts bordering upon India. It is said that in India proper it is cultivated for its leaves, but not for the roots, and has no Sanskrit name. The Greeks as well as the Romans were wont to use extensively the leaves of Beet. They distinguished two varieties, the red and white. Since that time the kinds have become much more numerous. C. Bauhin enumerated most of those which were cultivated in his time, in particular the large rooted white and red kinds. Oliver de Serres describes also very fully the red Beet now cultivated on the great scale for cattle. If, as M. Moquin thinks, all the kinds of Beet, white and red, have proceeded from a single species, long cultivation has certainly made great variations on this species, although the specific identity has been maintained. If the red Beet were distinct species, it could not have come originally from the middle of Europe, nor the immediate neighboring regions; these have been well explored, but it has not been found wild, consequently the derivation from another country is more probable. The numerous transitions of color and form are in favor of unity of species. De Candolle believes that the red Beet is one of the most flexible of plants, one of those whose modifications quickly become hereditary, which is well borne out by the experience of M. L. Vilmorin.—De Candolle. [Geographie Botanique, ii., 831-2.]

Beet is said to take its name from the shape of its seed vessel, which when it swells with seed has the form of the letter beta in the Greek Alphabet; and the Grecians held it in great esteem.

Introduction to Britain.—Beet appears to have been first cultivated in Britain (the garden kind) in the year 1548, but it was not till the present century that its cultivation extended much to the fields. The Mangold Wurzel, properly so called, and the field Beet were long known in Germany, the name Mangold Wurzel being indeed of German derivation, and meaning Scarcity root. The French show a more lively verbal appreciation of its value by calling it *racine d'abondance*, or the root of plenty, but the German famine-name is again reproduced in a French synonym *racine de disette*. It was at the latter end of the eighteenth century that field Beet was first introduced to England, chiefly through the exertions of Dr. Lettsom, a Quaker. Of late years improved