

SKILL VS. MUSCLE IN FARMING.

"So you won't take the agricultural paper; you don't take any newspaper at all, I believe."

"No, I don't, I can't ever get time to read a paper, so there isn't any use to pay for one. I have all I can do to support my family without paying out my money for newspapers and spending my time reading them. I advise you to pay your money for flour and pork, and let the paper slide."

"Of course you can do as you like, I think that no man on a farm can afford to be without a reliable agricultural paper. Some men get rich by farming whilst others get poor; the principal cause of this is that some understand their business and others do not. By means of this paper you can learn how successful farmers have succeeded and how unsuccessful ones have failed; you can profit by the experience of both, you can also keep posted with regard to various improvements constantly effecting tillage, this, I consider very important."

"Well, well, there's my cows in the oats, and I must get 'em out."

This conversation took place between William Smith and Peter Jones on the occasion of the former calling on the latter to try to induce him to subscribe for a paper for which Smith was forming a club. These men were at this time in about equal circumstances in regard to worldly goods. Previous industry and economy had furnished each with means enough to buy a small farm. Each had been doing business for himself about two years, and so far their success had been about equal. Being almost entirely without experience in an occupation which they had probably chosen because they knew nothing about it, so far neither had done so well as to excite remark, still, a careful observer would notice that they had widely divergent ideas with respect to the proper way of doing their business. Whilst Smith believed that he could do much toward learning a correct theory of farming from books and papers, Jones considered such things entirely useless, his theory being that success only came of hard knocks and economy, and this he lived up to with scrupulous exactness.

As time passed away the difference of their opinions kept working on their surroundings, until their farm, buildings, stock, &c., hardly presented a remote similarity. Jones kept all the time hard at work, and never expended a cent unless to supply some manifest, bodily want. Sunday was his only holiday; this he usually spent the greater part of in bed, resting himself as he expressed it. Nature had kindly furnished him a hardy frame, and as he was perfectly temperate in his eating and drinking his health remained almost perfect, and he, as well as

his neighbors, thought himself doing very well.

Smith, in the mean time, had expended nearly all the profits of his farm in improving his stock, buying manures, getting his fences into proper order, improving his buildings, buying necessary farm machinery, and in doing a thousand and one things that appeared to him would eventually be remunerative. In making innovations he was more ahead of his neighbors than Jones was behind them, and as he spent considerable time, as they considered to no purpose, he received a smaller share of their approbation. At the expiration of six years from the commencement of their farming experience Jones had a quite a snug sum at interest, and his farm lacked much of being in a bad condition. True, his buildings were none the better for the length of time they had been in use, and the scanty repairs they had received; still, they were not so much worse than his neighbors as to attract attention. His stock was of the most primitive description; the pigs in his pen being direct descendants of an old sow that used to root up the grass in his grand father's door yard fifty years before; and no one could tell him anything about the pedigree of his cattle or horses. Some might think, whilst contemplating the slight amount of knowledge illustrated by his management, that the only marvel was, how he succeeded so well as he did, when, in fact, he did not succeed at all. Let him deduct a fair price for the amount of labor performed, and the interest on his invested capital, from the profits arising therefrom, and the minus balance will indicate not only the amount of his real profit, but that of a majority of farmers in the country, who, if they show a trifle more skill, lack much of being as industrious and economical.

Smith, at this time, had not a cent off of his farm, and, although he owned some very fine stock, as yet it had profited him but very little. Most of his neighbors, and Jones among them, had been very liberal in their words of advice and encouragement; still he persevered, feeling confident that in the end he should be successful. His fine crops were just beginning to attract attention, but they had not yet repaid him for bringing his fields to their present high state of cultivation.

As soon as his blooded stock, which had cost him much time and money, would increase so as to have some for sale, he had calculated to get an extra price for them on account of their blood qualities, but in this he was mistaken. His neighbors, many of who wished to buy, realized that he had very fine animals, and were willing to pay good prices for them as such, but, with them, Durhams, Deyons and dunghills were the same as to blood. Smith had determined in the beginning to have the direct produce of his farm consumed upon it, and

to let what surplus he might have to dispose of being in stock. He was so situated as to have to depend upon the horse market, and was somewhat discouraged to have it turn out as we have stated. Among the stock he wished to dispose of was a very fine two year old Durham bull. Three years before he had paid the \$250 for the bull's father, besides expending \$25 more in getting him home; still, he considered this a good investment, and thought that some one could afford to pay him near that for the one he had to turn off.

He and Jones, in spite of their difference of opinion, had always been on very friendly terms, and now he concluded that if he could sell this bull to Jones for \$200, it would be an excellent bargain for both; and he determined to make a special effort to accomplish it.

Going to that individual's house the next evening, he found himself and wife engaged paring apples by hand, to dry. After a few common place remarks, Smith made known his business.

"That's a very fine critter," said Jones, "how much do you want for him?"

"About three years ago," said Smith, "I paid \$250 for one no better, and it cost me considerable, both time and money, to get him home, I think this one should bring me \$200."

"Two hundred dollars!" Jones vociferated, "two hundred dollars, why man be you crazy, or do you think I'm a fool; because you have swindled away your money at that rate is no sign that any one else will. I heard that you had been asking outlandish prices for your critters, but I never thought you'd try me on. Why I've got a pair as big and nice as this one you want to sell, though they're four year old, and you may have 'em both for \$100."

"Well, Mr. Jones, if you think my price so far out of the way, I should like to know what you think him worth."

"As I told you before," said Jones, all the while busily at work on his flinty little apples, "he's a good one, and I'll give you \$40 for him."

"How much do you call your best two year old worth?"

"I wouldn't take a cent less than \$25 for that brindle heifer. You must have noticed her."

"Yes, she is very good. I suppose it has cost as much to raise her as it has the animal I wish to sell you."

"I shouldn't wonder if it had; she always eat a heap."

"Now," said Smith, "you are willing to pay me \$15 more for mine than you ask for yours; from this I conclude that I have received \$15 more for the same amount of feed than you have."

"I don't know about that," and Jones quitted knife and apples and began to scratch his head. His neighbors talk evidently annoyed him, but he was a man