

nostic of the weather; now, every day's weather is announced in the daily journals, and with such a measure of accuracy, that, were this a "catching" climate, as Great Britain is, the farmer might to a considerable extent guide his operations by what he would see in the morning paper. And it is not unreasonable to expect, from the progress made in meteorological science, that even the probabilities of the season in regard to rainfall may come to be anticipated with tolerable accuracy.

There are certain lands especially where a proper preparation for a wet season or the reverse, or even a rational presumption on the question, would be of inestimable advantage. We remember in particular a certain farm in England where this foreknowledge would have saved the tenants from ruinous failure. This farm, situated in the south of England, contained between 600 and 700 acres, and was called "Ashey Farm." It consisted of a proportion of poor hill pastureland, some few rich fields of intermediate land, and about three-fourths of extensive flat fields of heavy clay, lying nearly on a level, but nevertheless with sufficient fall to get off the water more or less. This land was of strong yellow clay, which, if ploughed at a wrong period, baked with the sun into such hard masses that the ordinary implements of the farm were comparatively powerless on them, and "spiked" rollers were not then to be had. The farm was notorious for two things: it almost universally ruined the tenant who occupied it; and once in about every ten years, but at uncertain periods, it bore an enormous crop. If this crop happened to come on the last year of the lease, the tenant might retire from the farm with his original capital not much injured; but if it happened to come at the beginning of the lease, certain ruin was the consequence; for such a splendid crop was sure to lead to greatly increased expenditure, in permanent improvements, under the idea that the farm had been belied, and that it was some excellence in the management of the tenant that produced the extra crop. The land which was intermediate between the high and the low parts of the farm, and which lay sufficiently high to get the water off, but the soil of which was the same as the wetter clay flats, was what is known there as "wheat bean" land—that is, it would bear cropping with wheat one year and beans the next, then wheat and beans again, for any length of time.

The past season in Canada very forcibly recalls the history of the estate just alluded to. Farm on it as you would (according to the lights of fifty years ago), the result was the same—namely, poor crops year after year, and then suddenly, without apparent reason or notice, but merely because "the season" seemed to suit it, it would produce the most glorious crop that could be imagined.

An early friend of ours took that farm; he had good capital, and was a man rather in advance of the age. When he had attained the fifth year of his lease he happened to have all the land that could possibly be so appropriated sown to wheat. The remainder of the low land was in beans; he did not know it was going to be a good year; nobody did or could, but it was; and he harvested the heaviest grain crop that was ever known in that part of the country. Prices were good, and he determined to take advantage of them. In moist England, grain generally has to "sweat," and "dry" in the mow or stack before it can be thrashed, and it was more so at the period referred to than now, as the weeds cut with the grain had to be dried, as well as the straw and grain itself. Our friend reaped his wheat so high that he left the weeds in the field and the stubble knee high. As he intended to sell at once, and either throw up his lease or sub-let, time was an object, and he considered that the stubble would be the best guarantee of quality he could have. He thrashed, and got his lease taken off his hands, and was the first man that ever retired from that farm with his capital rather increased than diminished. He has often since remarked that he trembled whenever he thought how near he was to ruin. All that farm wanted was draining and the modern improvements, such as every man can now get capital for in England. The rent now yielded by that estate is far greater than it used to be, and no doubt all the modern improvements have been made. So level was the land that we have seen a ditch a quarter of a mile long, with the water standing in it to the same depth at both ends, and the surface of the adjoining soil equally level, and yet there was quite a sufficient outlet if proper drainage appliances had been made use of.

The season was everything to that farm, as it has been to Canada this last year. But drainage and manure have since compelled the season to be favourable to the place, and we must by good management and good farming in like manner compel the season, if we mean to succeed and become a wealthy agricultural population.

Co-operation of Farmers.

In towns and cities and densely populated centres the principle of union for mutual advantage has been carefully cultivated and carried to important and practical issues. There the several trades have united to protect one another from fraud and from any attempts to deal unfairly with any of their numbers. Although these unions have been at times carried to such ridiculous excesses, that they have caused very serious disturbances, yet the principles upon which they rest are sound and well worthy of imitation.

Farmers, probably owing to their being more isolated and living so independently as not to perceive the advantages of mutual co-operation as readily as townspeople, have done but little in the way of union.

Our agricultural shows have been a step in this direction, and it is very satisfactory to see with what rapid strides our exhibitions have become of great national interest.

These exhibitions have been the means of diffusing a great amount of information amongst farmers, and have proved a great incentive both to the country and to the individual to excel in produce.

In order, however, to raise such animals and such crops as shall compete with those shown by the farmer of large capital, it is necessary that costly seed and valuable stock be obtained. Now both these are entirely out of the reach of the ordinary farmer, and the only plan by which he can hope to obtain them is by union with his brother farmers.

It is very observable that certain counties are noted for superior stock of certain classes. For instance, the county of Waterloo is noted for its superior class of farm horses; and if a farmer requires a few good breeding ewes or some good cattle, ten to one he goes towards the county of Wellington. This good report is in every case traceable to the possession in these counties at some time or another of some individual horses or other stock of very superior quality. The influence which one good stallion has upon the future class of horses in that part in which he is travelled is very general.

Now, there are very few of us who can import horses or cattle from the great stock breeders, or even when such imported stock only consists of a thorough-bred Cochin cock. By union, we may, however, attain that which we cannot compass individually. There are very few farmers who are not convinced that some certain breed of cattle, pigs, poultry, &c., would be a great improvement to their stock. Where such is the case, let a few farmers unite, and clubbing together, buy the animal required. Say it is a bull; let the farmer who has each year the best accommodation keep it, and be paid so much a month by the others for so doing; or let each keep it in turn. Surely our farmers are not so un-neighbourly that they cannot arrange and carry out agreeably such a plan.

The question is sometimes asked whether it would be advisable for agricultural societies to employ their funds in importing first-class male stock for the use of the members, upon certain conditions. Such a plan would be productive of immense benefit to a township, as the society would be able to buy the very best, such as would be far above the reach of individual purses.

This is union, with a tangible end in view, having for its avowed object the benefit of all connected, without usurping the rights or privileges of any other class.