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HOW MUCH GOOD MAY SOMETIMES BE DONE BY ONE ENTERPRISING MIND.

MR. MILLAR's late article entitled "George Ross, the Scotch Agent," which appeared in our 303d number, will have made, we believe, a strong impression on many of our readers, as showing how much good may sometimes be done by one enterprising mind. It is a great and important truth, that such a mind, tolerably well directed by moral feeling and good sense, may occasionally prove of vast service to a community. The late Sir J. Sinclair was an example of such a mind, so directed; and it would be difficult to over-estimate the good results that have flowed from his long-continued and most useful exertions, in diffusing sound views on the subject of agriculture, and in stimulating practical men to adopt them. There are many such minds operating in more obscure walks, but not relatively less deserving of praise. As an instance, we would put our readers in recollection of a certain Citizen Jaffray, of Stirling, who, by his enlightened zeal, was mainly instrumental in introducing the blessings of Dr Jenner's discovery in his native district. It is, indeed, at all times, and in all places, so possible to suggest and urge improvements of various kinds, that there is no necessity for a single superior mind throughout the whole world remaining unemployed. There is not any where a village but will afford a proper field for the exertions of a Jaffray, nor any where a county which may not be advantaged by the activity of a Sinclair. When one field of exercise is found too wide, a smaller one may be tried, but it is in reality much more easy for individuals to act for the benefit of an extensive circle, than is generally imagined. Many a thing has been done for a narrow circle, which has, without additional effort, proved useful for a wider one. The exertions of Mr John Wood in education were originally designed only for a few charity children; and the first infant school was intended as an economical and convenient means of tending the youngsters of a factory, during the work hours of their parents. It is a great matter to make a beginning in any improved system, and thus at least hold up an example. No superior mind, disposed to do good to those around, should ever despair; they should begin.

A remarkable instance of a community benefited by the better light and patriotic zeal of an unpretending member of its own body, occurred a few years ago, in our colony of Nova Scotia. During the last war, this colony, extending over a space of two hundred miles by about fifty, and containing a population of 70,000, was apparently in a thriving condition. Halifax being a station of the British marine force, there was a vast resort of strangers, and a large extra expenditure of money. The inferior husbandry of the district was unable to supply the required food, and consequently the farmers although extremely indolent and ignorant, and conducting their operations on a very small scale, obtained high prices for what they had to dispose of. They never thought of taking this opportunity to extend or improve their husbandry, but were content to see a large portion of the demand for domestic consumption supplied from the United States and from Britain. No wonder that our friend Samuel Sheik represents his countrymen as laughing at the simplicity of the Blue Noses, as the Nova Scotians are called. It is at the same time to be observed, that, from appearances in the climate and soil, it was generally supposed that Nova Scotia was not designed to be an agricultural country.

The conclusion of the war, when the artificial prosperity was withdrawn, seemed to condemn the province to ruin and despair. The value of land fell, trade declined, the currency became exhausted; prices were reduced; and a universal gloom settled on the minds of the Colonists. Up to this time, in consequence of the original poverty of the generality of the agricultural settlers, their penury and the ignorance, the business of a farmer was held in great contempt. "Whoever any of these," we are informed, "were so successful or so parsimonious as to amass a little wealth, they were sure to escape from the plough, and betake themselves to something else. The keeper of a tavern or a tipping house, the retailer of rum, sugar, and tea, the travelling chapman, the constable of the district, were far more important personages, whether in their own estimation or that of the public, than the farmer who cultivated his own lands. He was of the lowest caste in society, and gave place here to others, who, according to the European standard of rank and consequence, are confessedly inferior. This sense of degradation was perceptible among husbandmen themselves. Such of them as were under the necessity of working, sat about it with great reluctance, and always under a mortifying sense of shame. They would blush to be caught at the plough by their gentry acquaintance, as much as surprised in the commission of crime; and if they saw them approaching, many would skulk from the

field, and plunge into the neighbouring thicket. The children were easily infected with this humbling sense of inferiority, and the labours of the farm were to the young men objects of aversion, as those of the dairy were to the women. Hence the family was brought up with habits and feelings inconsistent with their station in life; and that respectable class of men, known in England as the ancient yeomanry of the country, who were the owners and cultivators of their own lands, had no footing in the Province. The profession was considered as abject, low, and debasing. The daughter of a farmer, the least above poverty, demeaned herself by milking a cow, and was never seen in the potatoe or turnip field. The sons, again, made little other use of the horses than to ride to church or market; and instead of being accustomed to ploughing, drilling, reaping, composting, and such like operations, they became country schoolmasters, crowded to the capital as clerks and shopboys, commenced petty dealers, and many of them turned smugglers.

When such views were predominant among a people, it is easy to infer the state of their agriculture. The principles of vegetation were so grossly misconceived, that few even of the farmers imagined that plants, like animals, stood in need of food; and manures of all kinds were either disregarded, or shamefully wasted and thrown away. The dung by many was suffered to accumulate about the barns, till it became a question of expediency, whether it was less expensive to shift the site of the building, or to remove such an intolerable nuisance; and several instances are on record where the former alternative was preferred. No sorts of compost were ever mixed together; peat earth was scarcely heard of; and limo, if known, lay unwrought in its native quarry, and was in no request.

Further, the agricultural machinery in use betrayed the same visible tokens of the degradation of the art. The ploughs were of unskilful construction; fags were rare; and a thrashing-mill did not exist in the Province. A machine for sowing turnips in rows; a weeding plough with moveable mouldboards, or with bent coulters to cut up and destroy whatever grew in the interval of the drills; a cultivator or a grubber, were implements, of which the names had hardly crossed the Atlantic. The state of the land was of a piece with all the other circumstances of agricultural debasement. As limo had never been supplied to subdue the stiffness of clay soils, they had all the defects of their original constitution; and the agricultural instruments were both few and imperfect, a complete pulverisation had seldom or never been attempted, and its benefits were hardly understood.

Now these and other equally lamentable features of the agriculture of Nova Scotia, were superseded by all the improvements of modern agriculture in a very few years, primarily through the enlightened exertions of one colonist. This was a gentleman named Young, a native of Falkirk, in Scotland, who, after pursuing a mercantile life for some years in Glasgow, emigrated to Halifax in 1815. He was a man of vigorous native powers of mind, which had been cultivated in early life by an education for the clerical profession. He had devoted particular attention to political science, and before leaving Glasgow, wrote a pamphlet on the rights of industry, which had a marked effect in tranquillising the minds of the workmen of that large city. He had also become versed in agriculture, both as a science and an art. While pursuing the business of an importer in Halifax, his attention was attracted to the dismal state of the provincial husbandry, and he conceived the bold idea of rousing the attention of the community and government to the possibility of improving it. He accordingly commenced the publication of a series of Letters in a Halifax newspaper, under the signature of Agricola. In one of the earliest of these publications, he pointed out the good which had been done in the mother country by the establishment of agricultural societies, and urged the formation of such a society in the province. He then proceeded to treat of the climate of the province, and showed that it was fitted for the production of every kind of bread corn. In other letters, he treated of soil, of agricultural implements, and the various other departments of rural economy. The series extended to thirteen parts. The first three, it is said, passed without notice. Before the tenth had appeared, they sold seven, scientific information, and a certain forcible eloquence which the author allowed himself to indulge in, the better to attract popular attention, had caused them to become the common object of talk throughout the province. So great was the impression they made, that the Governor, the Earl of Dalhousie, and the council of the province became eagerly interested in the subject of the discussion. The former personally corresponded with the unknown writer, and was induced to take an extensive journey through the province, in order to acquaint himself personally with the agricultural condition, and to see measures for its improvement. It soon became a general conviction, in accordance with the views put forth by Agricola,

that in the soil lay the chief resources of the Province; and immediately the business of the husbandman, from being deemed mean and sordid, became fashionable. Before the winter had passed, a Central Board of Agriculture was organised in Halifax, under the patronage of the legislature, and local ecclesiastics, connected with it immediately sprung up in all directions. There was a general feeling that Agricola should now make himself known, and allow himself to be placed at the head of this body; in consequence of which, Mr Young, though with considerable reluctance, did divulge his secret, and was immediately constituted secretary to the board, at first without salary, but afterwards at a fixed allowance. Not content with these exertions, he purchased a small estate in the neighbourhood, on which he proceeded to exemplify with success the doctrines he had laid down in his letters.

The effects were soon visible. In 1822, when the letters of Agricola were collected into a volume, the following was the state of Agriculture in the province: "In the history of no country has there ever been recorded a more radical and instantaneous change, than has been witnessed in Nova Scotia. Improvement has proceeded with such gigantic strides, that already the point is out of sight from which we started; and although the whole has been effected in little more than three years, it is with difficulty we can bring ourselves to the belief that the provincial husbandry was in such a state of barbarism at the commencement of the period. The present aspect of our rural situation is of a most consoling nature; and although we have not yet reached independence in broad corn, we are running to the goal with remarkable celerity. In some articles of produce, as potatoes and turnips, we have outstripped the demand, and produced a repletion in the market; in others, as oats and barley, we have raised enough for the home consumption; but we are still greatly deficient in wheat. Yet the well-directed attention now given to the collecting and preparing of putrescible manures and composts, to the extirpation of weeds by summer-fallow and the drilling of green crops, to the improved modes of ploughing, and the more perfect pulverisation of the soil, must shortly lead to an extended culture of the grain, fully equal to the wants of the community. Limo, too, has been pretty generally tried, and found so beneficial as to be sought for with much avidity, and applied in considerable quantities. Rotations on the best principles have been also introduced; and the benefits of white and green crops following each other in succession, have been studied, and are beginning to be justly appreciated. Oatmeal of native growth has, within this last year, been greatly consumed among the farming classes in the eastern and middle divisions of the province; and no less than 29 mills for grinding have been erected, partly, it is true, through the operation of the bounties offered by the Central Board, but chiefly from a sense of the great value of this article of subsistence.

The Scotch husbandry, in all its branches has been fairly transplanted into Nova Scotia; and although many still adhere to old prejudices, and to old modes, there are in every country zealous and intelligent cultivators, who are setting the very best example. A spirit of reform actuates the whole agricultural mass, and, provided the energy be sustained for a few years longer, we shall master the difficulties which have befallen us, and place the independence of the country on a fixed and immoveable ground. The foundations of this noble structure are already laid deep and solid, the masonry is in progress, the columns are raised on their pedestals, the workmen are plying their respective tasks with all the life and bustle of active industry and nothing is wanting to finish the building, but the continued superintendence of the architects, and an adequate supply of funds."

Now, all this was, in a certain sense, the work of one energetic and enlightened man—one standing in all external respects on a level with a mass of his fellow citizens, and who commenced operations without even the use of his own name. Mr Young afterwards distinguished himself as a member of the legislature, displaying in that situation great sagacity and public spirit, and supporting his views in the House of Assembly by a masterly strain of eloquence. He died in the beginning of October 1837, with the regrets of the entire body of his fellow-citizens. Such a man, we conceive, well deserves a more extensive commemoration than what the newspapers of his own province can give him. Services like his were what caused the dedication of the first forceful minds that rose in early Greece. How many countries are there even within the limits of the British empire—we have only to look across a narrow channel for one—in which one or two such men might effect similar revolutions, and confer similar benefits! It is evidently worthy of notice, in Mr Young's case; that without a knowledge of natural science, he could not have done what he did for Nova Scotia. There is a eminence of the same degree of talent throughout the