

The capabilities of Nova Scotia as an agricultural country is not a theme of yesterday. From times prior to its English occupation up to the delivery of Prof. Sheldon's address to the English farmers in November, 1884, its soils and climate have been heralded to the world as presenting a most promising field for agricultural industry.

In Charlevoix's History of New France, published in Paris before the middle of last century, it is stated that "There is not a country in the world of its extent that more abundantly produceth all the conveniences of life." "Near the harbor of La Haive one single grain of wheat produced 150 pretty long ears of corn, and each of them so loaded with grain that they were forced to enclose all the ears in a ring of iron, and support them by a pole; and that near the same place there was a field of wheat where every grain of the seed, even those that produced the least, put forth eight stalks, every one of which had an ear of at least half a foot long."

The promises given by the results obtained by the early farming of the French peasants; by the eloquent proclamations of the promoters of the country's settlement in the middle of last century; by the stirring appeals of John Young, in the classic letters of Agricola; and by the annual addresses of Lieutenant Governors, English Admirals and Generals, Provincial Secretaries, Members of our Legislature, Mayors of Halifax, and many minor dignitaries, at the annual exhibitions of the last twenty years; all these promises are full of encouragement,—and yet we are still in a plight that is not creditable to the people, ruled or rulers of the country. The cultivated land bears but a meagre proportion to the profitless woods and wastes, and the annual amount of actual produce falls immeasurably short of the potentiality of teeming agricultural wealth with which all believe our Province to be naturally endowed. The kind of crops for which our country is adapted have been again and again discussed; the methods of culture best suited to our soils and climate have received the attention of thousands of practical men, and have been commented upon by careful students of agricultural science; the preparation of composts has been an experimental and theoretical study for more than half a century; the application of marsh mud has been a constant practice engaged in by intelligent cultivators for a period much larger; every likely kind of live stock has been imported and placed on trial on our farms; even agricultural classes have been formed in some of our schools and colleges, and young farmers have analyzed soils and manures and feeding materials;

practical farmers of mature age and experience have, year after year, in the exhibition hall and prize ring, on the trotting course, in the farmers' club, and at the grange picnic, met to compare their live stock and the produce of their farm fields, and of their own fertile brains: to discuss the effects of drainage, and of almost every kind of land improvement, of stock crossing, of butter and cheese making, of packing apple barrels, and methods of marketing the varied fruits of the soil;—and yet Nova Scotia is still, over large areas, an unproductive country in the agricultural sense.

We do not stop to inquire now what are the causes of this deplorable result. Such an enquiry might even lead to issues that cannot be discussed in the JOURNAL OF AGRICULTURE. But we hope at least to speak of some of them before long.

The question of far greater importance, of immediate importance, as being of practical utility, is: What new leaf has to be turned over to secure a more profitable result?

The answer to this question does not admit of question. We must revert to the commercial principle as the basis of all agricultural improvement.

It is needless to show that drainage, perfect cultivation, superphosphates, composts, guano, nitrate of soda, ammonia salts, mowing machines, tedders, horse forks, combined reapers and binders, steam threshers, pedigree wheat, smut killers, and eternal vigilance, will increase the grain crop,—if grain will not pay its way.

Ensilage may be better than hay or roots or grain, or any other feed, but what is the use of ensilage if it cannot be sold at a profit in some marketable form?

Potash may yield a larger increase of potatoes, and improve their quality very much, but why use potash salts if potatoes at 20 cents a bushel will not pay for the potash?

Brewers' grains, mangels, and mill feed will promote the flow of milk, but if the butter and cheese cost more to produce than they can be sold for, why buy brewers' grains and mill feed, or grow mangels?

Oil cake will fatten oxen, but if the butcher will not pay enough to meet the oil-cake merchant's bill, why should the farmer be expected to feed oil cake? It is no doubt wrong not to fatten the ox, but, then, when the alternative presents itself of starving the farmer's wife and children (not to speak of himself), the dilemma is apt to crumple the judgment of even a sound scientific agriculturist.

The question that is now really presented to our Nova Scotian agriculturists

is—WHAT PRODUCE CAN WE MARKET AT A PROFIT?

To answer this question we require the combined experience of all the agriculturists of the Province. If they all sincerely desire that the question should be answered, they will, of course, every one of them, send us a memo. of the results of their experience.

What crops should be grown, what kind of cattle raised, in what forms their values are to be realized, whether as milk, or butter, or cheese, or beef, or store cattle,—these are questions we reserve until we shall hear from men of experience. Meantime we desire to bring under notice of our readers some very suggestive remarks by Professor Brown, of Guelph, recently published in the London *Agricultural Gazette*:—

"I think that there has not been any practical business response to the many inquiries from England and Scotland with reference to store cattle from Canada. Every week the question is touched upon in the British press, and as yet cautious colonists have neither said "come" nor "we are coming." Were the United States in a position to open the field, there would not only have been immediate paper reciprocation, but immediate practical action.

"On discussing the various features of this question with the second year and special students here, in the course of our study of some of the aspects of the live stock business, we concluded to let both sides know what we think of the proposal to send cattle to be finished by the British farmer.

"The first thought is the reliability of the market. Is such stock wanted, or is it but a temporary view of men who are known to be seeking everything or anything to relieve a distressed profession? Is it to be the more pasture, or live stock, or ensilage, or equal division of landed property in Britain? We will assume that the demand is both genuine and well founded, however.

"The next position is the price the British farmer is prepared to give for the animal he wants, as without a clear understanding on this point, Canadian breeders are justified in the slowness already imputed, if not in not asking. We understand the want is 1,000 or 1,100 lbs. graded Shorthorn, Hereford, Aberdeen Poll, or Galloway steer of the right type for fattening off in six months—let us say 1,050 lbs. for a standard, delivered at Liverpool or Glasgow. Now, as regards prices there, what are we to believe? Shippers tell us that 80 dols. are freely given for this standard, other market quotations say 100 dols., and just the other day Mr. Muntz of Umberslade, in England, sold 90 head of good stores by weight at public auc-