

AGRICULTURAL.

The following article may be thought out of season at present, but we considered it of sufficient importance to commit to our columns, lest it might be lost or mislaid before another reaping season arrives.

ON THE RIPENESS OF CORN.

It is a known fact that the uppermost grain in every ear of corn of the culmiferous crops is first ripe, whereas the undermost pod is first ripe in the leguminous crops. To ascertain when a corn crop is ripe, we have therefore only to examine the state of the uppermost grain in the ear. But on examination, we may observe the uppermost grain gone, and, besides, it is a tedious task to examine numerous ears of corn. Other marks which are more easily observed, are equally indicative of ripeness of corn. The state of the straw is a very observable mark. As the uppermost grain in the ear is ripe before any other of the grains in the same ear, so the whole ear is ripe before the straw. Ripe straw, then, indicates ripe grain in the ear. But if the corn is not reaped till the straw is wholly ripe, the grains will be more than ripe, they will be in danger of leaving the husk, and falling on the ground. In order to save the grains it will be necessary to reap the corn before the straw is wholly ripe. But in late seasons, the culmiferous crops die first at the root, and the straw becomes, of course, ripe before the ear. We thus see that there is greater difficulty in ascertaining when corn is ripe than at first sight appears. There is another difficulty of still greater magnitude connected with this subject. Whenever corn becomes ripe, the grain is ready to drop out of its husk. Agitating the straw will shake it out. This agitation may arise either from the wind, or in the act of reaping. The loss of grain occasioned by the wind is sometimes very great. In 1812, the wind shook out, throughout Scotland, about eighteen bushels of oats per Scotch acre. All the modes for reaping corn are attended with the danger of shaking out the grains. There are reapers with the sickle, who have a provoking habit of switching about every handful of corn which they cut, and scattering around them the grains in profusion. Such reapers are expensive servants, though they should reap without wages. Some mowers with the scythe sweep round the swath with a jerk, which whips out the grain, instead of carrying it steadily round on the scythe. Many handsters have a trick of throwing the sheaf which they have just bound up towards the stook, thereby thumping the grains out of it, to save themselves the trouble of bowing down, and carrying it afterwards to the stook. The best manner the reaping machines at present in existence can be managed, will not insure the safety of many of the grains. Grains of inferior quality, or those which have not become plump by bad weather, are not so easily detached from the husk or flower-stalk by the wind, or in the act of reaping, as those which have arrived at perfection. Hence the greatest shakes by wind or reaping, imply the loss of the finest, and, of course, the most valuable grain; and to a similar extent, the loss of the uppermost grain in the ear, is at the same time the loss of the finest grain in that ear; and the loss arising from the ordinary mode of reaping ripe corn, is greater in quantity, and of course in value, than one might, without reflection, suppose.

It is difficult to state the ripeness in which corn should be reaped, to avoid the shaking out of the grains. As a general rule for practice, it may be recommended, to reap the culmiferous crops before the uppermost grain can

be shaken out, either by the wind or in the act of reaping. When that period arrives may be learned by the state of straw. It is impossible to derive this knowledge from any written description, it must be acquired in the field from personal observation, and afterwards confirmed by experience. If attention is directed to the acquisition of this experience, it will be acquired as easily as experience, which a present directs us to forbear to reap till a certain prefixed day.

We know much loss of grain is incurred every year by permitting the crops to ripen as much as they do at present. That loss is incurred in the reaping, binding, and stooking—in forking both in fields and in the ear—in the leading down the stack again, and storing it in the thrashing barn. We cannot persuade ourselves to the belief that this loss is unavoidable. We are convinced that it may be altogether avoided by reaping the corn before it is thoroughly ripe; and should the preparation of it in the field for the stack inevitably cause a loss to be incurred in stacking, the loss in the process of reaping would still be avoided. When we considered that the loss of a single grain from each ear is more than an equivalent for the seed corn, which is one-seventh of the whole crop, when we learn the magnitude of this loss by reflecting that one-seventh of the produce of twelve million acres of corn, which are stated to be annually grown in the united kingdom, amounts to the astonishing quantity of seven million quarters of grain,—we shall not be thought too importunate by considerate people in enforcing on the attention of Agriculturists, the absolute necessity of using the only means in their power of lessening this national loss—that of reaping their crops at an earlier state of ripeness than they have hitherto been accustomed.—*English paper.*

From the Troy Whig.

THE HUSBANDMAN.

There is one prevailing error among this society, which ought to be eradicated and destroyed—it is more fatal to the business of agriculture than the growth of Canada thistles, or the destruction of May frosts—we mean the neglected education of the farmer's children. It is frequently remarked that education is of little use to the farmer; a very little science will do for him. Great knowledge is only beneficial in the professional man. Expressions of this sort are founded upon a false estimate of one of the most useful and elevated professions of life.

If the habitual business of the cultivator does not afford the mental powers a field for their most extended exercise; we know not where to look for such a field. The study of agriculture unites to the theory of science, the very essential material of its practical parts. It makes the study experimentally and truly learned.

Nearly every thing that is useful in our pilgrimage through life is drawn from the earth. The main use of science is to explore the minutiae of nature, to fathom its secret caverns and to bring forth the hidden possessions of the earth into comprehensible identity.—Where then is the occupation that so richly furnishes a perpetual supply of mental food as that of agriculture. In the constant exercise and every day labour of the farmer the business of his science is progressing, if his intellect has been set right in the education of his youth. The theory is all essential, for this constitutes the implement by which he is to prosecute the study of human nature to its practical utility.

A man cannot go forth upon the land with any good degree of promise in scientific experiment, without the light of past experience

upon his pathway, and this he can only obtain by a passage through the literary institutions of the country, where the results of the labors of the learned for ages are collected together and made accessible to the student. To attempt a persecution of the sciences independent of the past experience, as we sometimes incline to consider ourselves, would be vain. There is scarcely a valuable discovery of modern times, but has borrowed something of its proportions or utility from the mind of antiquity.

That the farmer by a scientific cultivation of his land, can increase to a very great extent its productions, there does not exist a rational doubt. And that the time is coming when there will be actual necessity for this increase of production, there is every appearance. It is therefore not only wise and expedient to commence or carry on now, but it is a high duty which is owed to posterity, in consideration of all the blessings which past ages have bequeathed us.

Permit us, therefore, in our humble way to impress upon the minds of the farmers the very great usefulness of education. Give your sons and daughters not the less education because you design them for rural life and agricultural pursuit. If you are able, educate them—they will find abundant employment for all their science though their farms be located in the deep wilderness of the west; though they be cast amid barren rocks and sterile sand plains, science will aid them there.

Not a blade of grass nor a spear of grain but will grow better under the cultivation of intellectual care. Not a flower, but will show beauties to the eye of science, which the vulgar world knows not of. Not a vine but rears finer, and produces more where educated hands superintend its growth. In short, all nature is beautified, improved and bettered, where the cultivator is no stranger to its properties, and the science of its developments.

Farmers give your children education. It is the only earthly inheritance you can bequeath them that is beyond the reach of accident. All other human property is constantly changing and transitory. Science is not transferable—not like the mutability of other goods, negotiable; firm and unshaken by human vicissitude. It will be the enduring companion of your children through life, it will support them in all the affliction of Providential chastisement, and prepare them for an inheritance in that undiscovered country beyond the land of death.

HINTS TO FARMERS.—Never feed potatoes to stock without boiling or steaming, as this increases their nutritive qualities.

One bushel flax-seed, ground with 8 bushels of oats, is better for horses than 16 bushels of oats alone, and will effectually destroy the bots.

Never burn all dry wood in your fire place, nor use a fire place when you can get a stove.

Cut your trees for rails in February, as they are then most durable.

Never dew-rot your flax, unless you wish to render it worthless.

Never select your seed corn from the crib, but from the stalk.

Never feed out your best potatoes and plant the refuse, nor sell your best sheep and keep the poorest.

A fat ox is worth more than a poor horse, and does not eat as much—a yoke and chain can be bought for less money than a wagon harness.

Horses that are confined in a stable never have the staggers.

Never leave your ground unploughed till spring, when it can be accomplished in the fall.