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AN ESSAY ON AGRICULTURE.

BY E. W. THOMSON, TOWNSHIP OF YORK,  
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE, TO WHICH  
A DIPLOMA WAS AWARDED BY THE DIRECTORS OF THE  
AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION OF UPPER CANADA.

Agriculture is doubtless one of the oldest, most honorable and important pursuits among civilized nations. Without it the food of man must have been limited to the flesh of wild animals, and the spontaneous productions of the earth. Commerce could not exist to any extent; the arts and sciences would be almost unknown; and society could not advance in improvement beyond a state of comparative barbarism. But the culture of the soil enables men to produce more of the necessary food than they require, so that a part only of the inhabitants of a country are required in this pursuit, while the remainder are enabled to turn their talents and ingenuity to other useful callings—the products of which are given to the agriculturist in exchange for food.

This is the origin of the division of labor, which is at the foundation of all political economy, and true governmental policy. This division and sub-division of labor is adopted more extensively the more a nation becomes enlightened and prosperous. Without such distribution of pursuits, little wealth could be accumulated by nations or individuals. In order that every man should be independent of the services of all others, he must manufacture and produce everything with his own hands, which in a social and civilized state of society he receives from them. This would so occupy his time and talents, that he could only produce the bare necessities of a primitive state of life; his food must be obtained by hunting, fishing and digging roots,—his clothing, the skins of animal; his shelter, a rude hut; and his only beverage—Water.

From this mode of living also, the earth must soon contain more inhabitants than could subsist

on its spontaneous food, and part must, therefore, die of starvation.

Agriculture became one of the sustaining arts of life as soon as man was ordained to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow. In the Garden of Eden, whose fertile soil and genial climate, appear to have combined in maturing a continual variety and unfailling succession of vegetable sustenance, agricultural operations were unknown, for that which came spontaneously to perfection required no assistance from human ingenuity; and where there is no deficiency, there can be no inducement to strive for improvement. That period of perfection, however, was but transitory; and the Deity who had placed man in the garden to dress it and keep it, eventually drove him thence,—to till the earth from whence he was taken. From that time to the present Agriculture has been an improving art, and there is no reason to doubt, but that it will go on advancing as mankind continued to increase.

Man in his greatest state of ignorance is always found dependant for sustenance upon the produce of the chase; but as their number increase in proportion to the extent of territory they occupy, it becomes necessary to resort to other means in order to secure the necessaries of life: and although flocks and herds will produce the means of subsistence, yet it becomes essential to resort to improved modes of husbandry, in order to produce the necessary food for those flocks and herds; and man in a state of civilization soon resorts to a different mode of living; for while he finds it incumbent upon him to provide for the sustenance of his cattle, he also finds that a portion of the produce of the soil is necessary for his own comfortable subsistence.

Thus circumstanced, experience and observation soon teach the importance of employing manures, the proper time to commit the seed to the soil, and other necessary operations; and in northern climates where art and industry have to compensate for deficiency of natural advantages, increase of numbers induces increased ex-