

report from such Superintendent, showing the condition and operations of these Societies, shall be submitted to the Legislature at its next Session."

I may state that I consented to discharge the duties involved in the above Resolution entirely in the hope that the present organization of the Societies might be upheld, and that, through the columns of the *Journal of Education and Agriculture*, the proceedings of these Societies might be more widely diffused through the Province; and still more that an opportunity might be furnished, through the record of these proceedings, of presenting and pressing the claims of this important branch of the public industry upon the attention of the Legislature. With these objects in view, and as no formal report was made last year of the condition of the Agricultural Societies or of the cause of Agriculture generally, might I ask you to forward me, at your earliest convenience, a reply to the following queries:—

1. What is the present condition of Agriculture in your district—state whether you consider it stationary or progressive during the last few years, and what causes have mainly operated in the case of the one or the other?

2. Is there anything like general attention paid to the Rotation of Crops?

3. Are any artificial fertilizers used, or any attention given to the manufacture of Compost Beds?

4. What is the average amount of Arable Land cultivated by each Farmer, and what may be the proportion of Grain and Root Crops?

5. Do the Farmers generally possess a copy of *Dawson's Agriculture of Nova Scotia*?

6. Is there any Periodical on Agriculture circulated in the District?

7. From your own observation, do you think that the Agricultural Societies, as at present managed, have been productive of benefit to the cause of Agriculture? Please make any suggestions calculated, in your opinion, to render them still more beneficial.

8. State what you believe to be the grand desideratum for imparting an impulse to this important branch of industry.

I am, Yours truly,

ALEXANDER FORRESTER.

## SCIENTIFIC.

ALEXANDER VON HUMBOLDT.

(Abridged from the Daily News.)

Alexander Von Humboldt died on the afternoon of Friday last.

The remarkable brothers, William and Alexander Von Humboldt, were descendants of a Pomeranian family. William made himself a memorable name in Germany, and Alexander in the whole civilised world. William, the elder by rather more than two years, was a philosopher in the realms of literature and art, while Alexander devoted himself, not to the study of the human mind or its productions, but to the medium, or movement in which it lives. William was frankly told by his friend Schiller that his mind was of too ratiocinative and critical a cast to permit him to produce works of art, in literature or otherwise; and his highest achievements were accordingly in the department of philology. He died, honoured and beloved, in the seventieth year of his age, in 1835. He had signed the Treaty of Chatillon, and attended the Vienna Congress as the representative of his country. His brother attended the Congress of Verona in the King's suite. The elder incurred the royal displeasure by his liberal tendencies; but the younger enjoyed grace and distinction at Court to the end; patronage being showered upon him, without too close an inquiry on the one hand, or

too frank an explanation on the other, in regard to the principles and practice of government.

William was born at Potsdam in 1767; and Alexander—or, as name stands at full length, Frederick Henry Alexander Von Humboldt—was born at Berlin in 1769, on the 14th September. Their father died when they were twelve and ten years old; but their mother, and a cousin of the Princess Blucher, was a woman of fine capacity and cultivation, and the family fortunes were good, so that the boys had every educational advantage. Alexander received his academic training at Gottingen and Frankfort on the Oder, and a part of his scientific instructions at the Mining School of Freiburg. Nothing could be more marked than his early determination towards natural science, and towards travel in pursuit of his researches. The more he was thwarted and hemmed in by the obstruction of war, the intenser grew his desire to explore the heights, depths, and expanses of the earth, in order to extort the secrets of nature. Geology did not exist; and for want of the generalisations with which he more than any other man has since furnished us, natural science was fragmentary and confused to a degree scarcely conceivable to students now entering on that vast field. His investigation and arrangement of details was perfectly marvelous from its scope and equality of treatment; his generalisations were so splendid, and so fruitful beyond all estimate, that it is a reluctant judgment which ranks them below his more concrete studies, in regard to quality; but there can be no difference of opinion about his failure in his highest effort, as exhibited in his "Kosmos."

Humboldt's preparation for this, which he considered his crowning work, may be said to have begun when he became the pupil of Werner, the first geologist, at Freiburg, when he was two-and-twenty. He had already travelled in Holland and England, and even published a scientific book—on the Basalts of the Rhine. He was employed as a director of the Government mines; and in the course of his travels to explore the mineral districts of various countries, he lighted upon Galvani in Italy, and became devoted for a time to the study of animal electricity, and to the observation of some of the phenomena of the animal frame which were supremely interesting to him in his latest days. In 1849 he verified, to his own entire satisfaction, and that of his philosophical condutors, the fact of the deflection of the needle as a result of human volition, through the medium of muscular contraction. "The fact," he said in his letter to Arago, the next year, "is established beyond all question of doubt." "Occupied myself for more than half a century in this class of physiological researches, the discovery which I have announced has for me a vital interest. It is a phenomenon of Life, rendered sensible by a physical instrument." Thus were his earliest and latest scientific interests linked by the discoveries of the remarkable age in which he lived; but what an experience had he undergone meantime! He had stood on higher ground than human foot had till then attained. He climbed Chimborazo to the height of 19,300 feet, an elevation since then surpassed, but never attained till that June day of 1802. He went down into the deepest mines, in pursuit of his geological researches. He not only visited three of the four quarters of the world, but explored parts of them which were then completely savage in the eyes of the civilised world. It was through no remissness of his own that he did not travel in Africa. He was at Marseilles, on his way to Algiers and to the top of Atlas, whence he meant to go to Egypt, when the war, which seemed to stop him at every outlet, turned him back. While chafing under his confinement in Europe, he did the best he could within that prison. When the war raged in Italy, he travelled with Von Bach in Styria, examining the mountains and their productions. When London was inaccessible, he went to Paris, where he made the acquaintance of his future comrade, Bonpland. When the war came to Germany, he was off to Spain; and there, at last, he met his opportunity. He obtained a passage to South America, and narrowly escaped imposing upon us the honour or disgrace, whichever it might be, of having Alexander Humboldt for