

PHENOMENA OF AN AMERICAN AUTUMN.

We take the following article from the February number of our cotemporary, the *Lower Canada Agricultural Journal*, with every word of which in reference to the late lamented Professor Norton, with whom we had the honour of a personal acquaintance, we most cordially agree. In his untimely removal, science has lost an indefatigable cultivator, and humanity a sincere and consistent friend.—EDITOR.

The following beautiful description of Autumn we copy from the Appendix of the late Professor Norton to Stephen's Book of the Farm. We admire this description for its truthfulness and simple beauty, and any resident of Canada will perceive that the description is as applicable to this country as the United States. The autumn is undoubtedly a most charming season in Canada during the months of September and October. In steamboat travelling, the view of the forests, and the country generally, at this season of the year is delightful. It is equally so in travelling on land, and particularly where elevated situations afford an extensive view. The scenery viewed from Quebec cannot be excelled, we believe, by anything in North America. Strangers to Canada have no idea of the grand scenery of our country, where our lakes, rivers and forests, are on such a grand and extensive scale compared with anything to be met with in our Island "Father Land." It would well repay the trouble of a journey to Canada to see the magnificence of the country, yet almost in its natural state. Professor Norton, we regret to say, did not long survive his notes to the American edition of Stephen's Book of the Farm; and the country of his adoption has sustained a great loss by his early death. Few men would have been able to add such useful notes to Mr. Stephens' book. We admire them particularly for the moderate spirit in which they are written, and their correctness generally. We had frequent opportunities of seeing letters and reports of Professor Norton, and they invariably afforded us unmixed satisfaction for their correctness, moderation, and candour. Yale College will not readily find a Professor of Agriculture to fill the place of Professor Norton; such men are not often to be found. We had not the pleasure of his acquaintance, though we did hope that pleasure would be afforded us, if his life had been spared. Professors of Scientific Agriculture are not numerous, and when we lose one of superior merit, we cannot but view it as a serious loss to the progress of agricultural improvement.

"In our Northern States, Autumn is the most uniformly delightful period of the whole year. August is generally too warm for enjoyment, the mildness of Spring is treacherous, and the heat of Summer oppressive; but in September the weather begins to moderate, and in October and the early part of November we gradually pass into one of the most charming climates that can be found, or even imagined, in any quarter of the

globe. The temperature is neither too cold nor too warm; it is neither the biting frost of winter nor the melting heat of summer, yet the air is inspiring and bracing.

Week often succeeds week of clear, mild weather; the air has not that brilliancy which we perceive at other seasons, but is pervaded by a softer glow; ripe fruits tempt one on every side, the full barns are odorous of hay, and the golden ears of Indian corn show themselves from among their loosened husks; all speaks distinctly of plenty and peace.

"After frosts have commenced, and cold chilling wintry winds have already prevailed, we usually experience a return of mild weather for two or three weeks; this period has been called the Indian summer. The sudden coming of our frosts changes the colour of leaves in a remarkable degree. If the early frosts are too severe, the change takes place at once, and the colours are consequently somewhat uniform; but when they begin gently, only a few of the more sensitive trees are at first touched.

"Thus, here and there, on an autumnal morning, we see the brilliant scarlet hue of the maple brightening the skirts or shining from the depths of yet unchanged verdure. Frost after frost succeeds, shade after shade starts out from the living tints of the forest, until at last all is one glowing field of mingled yellow and red, with faint, expiring traces of green. The richness of those broad masses of intense colour is beyond all description.

"Yet there is always a tinge of melancholy thrown over autumnal scenes; for all these mellowed and softened hues, these various and ripened crops, those bare stubble fields, remind us, in the silent but certain evidences which they present, of the approach of Nature's annual death, of our own uncertain tenure here, and of the inevitable fate that will sooner or later overtake all mortal forms of beauty.

"The altered verdure, the quiet fall of the leaf, the gathering of birds for their southern flight, a thousand nameless sights and sounds, tell us that the season of life and vigour in the material world has passed—that sleep, death, and decay, are at hand.

"This is especially apparent in the forest; those tints, often so brilliant, are not the hues of life, but of incipient decay. The leaves no longer absorb carbonic acid, the sun's rays have lost their power to vivify, to cause the internal decomposition and recombination which once went on so vigorously under their influence. We feel, as the leaves begin silently to wing their way with every breath of air towards the earth, that the tree has ceased to respire, that the functions of its external parts have, for a time at least, ended, and that we shall soon again see its bare arms tossing athwart a wintry sky."

ENGLAND AND ITS PROSPECTS.—England is a young country, not an old country, as some mistakenly assert. The energy in it at this moment is enormous; we are but commencing to move, and have a mighty future in store. Statesmen, as it seems to us, are beginning to have glimpses of their real duty—the welfare and advancement of the people committed to