

AGRICULTURE AND ITS PURSUITS.

From the Boston Cultivator.

Permit me, Mr. Editor, to introduce myself to you as the travelling partner of a Lowell house. As such, I am much abroad in my business, which, although seemingly far enough removed from agriculture and its pursuits, yet having been endowed, I verily believe, by the hand of nature with a talent for that employment, nothing relating thereto escapes me. I often find myself measuring a field as well as calicoes, and valuing it, as domestics, by the yard—which is also an old fashioned measure of land. My avocations afford me occasional relaxation also; and as I have always praisured as well as preached the fine sentiment of that best code of laws for our government and guidance,—“It is more blessed to give than to receive;”—on the principle, that it is money put out to interest at about 50 cent. per annum, if you will pardon an allusion, smelling strongly of the counting-house—I am led to present at the shrine of public good whatever I may meet with in my travels, which may be considered worthy of record, in the shape of observation and reflection; constituting, by your leave, the pages of the Boston Cultivator as the altar upon which to offer my best and willing sacrifice—relying upon the promise, that the bread which is thus “cast upon the waters shall return after many days,” an allusion, no doubt, to the sowing of rice in the East, where it is cast upon the receding waters of the Nile, and trodden in by cattle, from whence, on the draining of these overflowsings, it springs up with astonishing vigour, “flooding bread to the inhabitants “after many days.” This is beautiful, harmonious, to our perceptions, and quite in keeping with the business I have in contemplation—namely, the offer of my best services in the cause of agriculture and its pursuits.

And first, to begin at the beginning, allow me to relate a very agreeable conversation that passed between me and an enlightened tiller of the soil, whom I casually visited at his farm near Saratoga, late in the autumn, and found him busily engaged in turning over an old sward, preparatory to planting corn the next spring. I observed to him I considered he was right in so doing, as no doubt he would escape the ravages of the grubs in the spring, as well as expedite his labors at that busy season of the year, thus “killing two birds with one stone,” to which he replied—

D. Why, you seem to know a thing or two. It is not often that persons of your persuasion condescend to think of us “clogs of the valley;” and seldom still, are you able to make an observation, which does not show at once, that the cart is put where the horse ought to be. I like to meet with one in your way who can understand me, and will therefore, with pleasure, point out the why and the wherefore of my practice, which is not, I admit, preferred by every one, for reasons more than one. But to our purpose. You perceive that I plough deep, and by so doing, I bring up about an inch of the sub-soil; in some places much more than others. And as you appear a man of observation, I will point out to you how it is that I turn up more of the sub-soil in one place than another. You must know, this is the first year that I have used a plough with a wheel, having to confess a strong prejudice in favor of the swing plough, after observing if the plough is right, a good ploughman needs not the assistance of a wheel, it is a libel on his profession. But I have overcome my bigotry, and now perceive the difference between the working of the wheel and the swing plough, in a doubling it is at least equal to the rent of the land, in favour of the former. Now, we are coming to a very hard spot of ground, and you will per-

ceive that I shall turn up a greater portion of the sub-soil: here the land has never before been removed to that depth, for the swing plough would always rise against it, and when I lifted up the handles so as to set the point deeper into the sub-soil, the very act raised the mould plate so high as to place it out of proper position for turning the furrow properly; it was therefore only grubbed at best, and remained the whole year after, as you now see it, hard and impenetrable. There, what do you think of that? two inches or more of clay gravel!

E. Why, I should think, although I am an advocate for deep ploughing, that you have now too much of a good thing. I fear your crop will suffer from so large a mixture of sterile sub-soil with the surface earth. I see, however, very clearly, that the addition of a wheel is not a libel on the ploughman, but a great assistance to the plough, for it no longer rises at obstacles, but is enabled to overcome them;—throwing the furrows even, and equal in elevation, because of equal depth, which is by no means the case when the swing plough is used in rough and unequal land.

D. Your suspicion, that I have turned too much of the sub-soil, is rational, and were it not that my after management will be peculiar, I should no doubt differ in the way you surmise. I would therefore say, so soon as the land is ploughed, I shall put a roller over it the way it has been turned, without fear that it will lie so flat as to prevent the winter rains from passing through it—for it has been turned with the centre draught-plough, whose peculiarity it is to break up the land after the manner of the spade, a system which is beginning at length to obtain the favor of all enlightened husbandmen, their motto being, “spade labor, the motto of good husbandry.”

E. But will not the rolling of the ploughed land place it in the condition of that which is turned with too wide and flat a furrow?

D. By no means; the thorough pulverization of the soil, and the furrow-slice, lying in part resting on the edge of that last turned, is just sufficient to prevent the roller from operating otherwise, than to close every inequality that might oppose in the laying of the furrows; and thus to expedite the decomposition of the vegetable matter that is turned down by the plough, will either die or live—just the difference between profit and loss, in favor with the plough that will completely bury all, without laying the land too flat. Then, in early spring, or perhaps during winter, I shall spread about 30 bushels of lime per acre on the surface; and so soon as the land will work, incorporate it well with the frost-shaken earth, by means of the cultivator, going about three inches deep, without fear of disturbing the sod, that being effectually turned to the bottom of the furrow, by this admirable plough. And I may perhaps go over it again before planting, but at the time of planting, I shall strike out the furrows pretty deep with the same plough, and place at proper intervals the dung of my compost heap, planting upon this the seed, and covering it by drawing over it full three inches thick of the limed and pulverized earth of the surface. Now what do you think of my plan for sweetening the upturned sub-soil, of which you express such fear, by means of such exposure and repeated workings?

E. I have no longer fear or hope—for such management will, assuredly, come out right. But when do you again bring up the turf, which you are now burying to the depth of eight or nine inches?

D. Possibly, not until the spring after, when it will be completely decomposed, and rendered a fit pabulum for the nourishment of any plants that may be placed in the earth; the acidity,

which is always gendered by decomposition, being neutralized by the percolation of lime-water through the pulverized soil, the only state, by the bye, in which lime can be taken up by the plants. I shall, however, sow turnip-seed among my corn at its last working, say a pound of seed to the acre; and thus, for fifty cents, realize a profit twenty times its cost.

E. But do you not intend to cultivate your corn by ploughing the intervals?

D. On no consideration; it being my plan to do all with the cultivator, working three inches deep; and I am quite satisfied that this will do all that is sufficient.

E. But is not three inches a great depth to plant corn; and is there no fear that it will rot, instead of sprout?

D. None in the least, if the land is dry and well ploughed, and has not been turned over so flat as to have imbibed and retained the winter rains, but where the furrows have been thrown flat and in wide masses, as is customary—nay, fashionable in some places—I should not know how to proceed. To this error in judgment, is to be attributed the objection, some times made to autumnal ploughing; the complaint being, the land turns up wet and cold in the spring; and so indeed it then must; the old sod holding water like a sponge, and preventing it from passing away by the sub-soil. Nor should I know how to remedy the evil, seeing it would be necessary to turn it back—undecomposed, as it must be, water having a tendency to prevent decomposition; that process only taking place after termination—for the purpose of exposing it to the atmosphere and the teeth of the drag; and requiring the summer's working, to bring about a state of things that might far better have been accomplished at the bottom of the furrow, without the labor or intervention of men. But it is noon; I hear the horn, and so do the horses. Accompany me to the house, and enjoy with me the fruits of our labour. It will afford me pleasure to introduce you to my household establishment, who are as competent as myself to judge of characters at sight, and who, as well as myself, will be gratified with a renewal of your visit at some future time.

The above, Mr. Editor, is presented as My first offering, should it be acceptable, I may again be tempted to glean another harvest.

LOWELL.

BOSTON CULTIVATOR.

SIXTH AGRICULTURAL MEETING AT THE STATE HOUSE.

Hon. Josiah Quincy in the chair. Subject—*Root-Crops.* Mr. Buck, Editor of the *New England Farmer*, opened the discussion.

Carrots.—The long Orange, Altringham, and White Belgium Carrots, are used in field culture. The last is a new variety and yields the most, but is considered deficient in quality. The Altringham yields more than the Orange, but is inferior in richness. Horses fed on them require much less grain. About one peck should be given to each horse per day. They give the hair a smooth and glossy appearance. They have a good effect on a horse that is addicted to stumbling, remedying the evil. Carrots can be raised with less expense than potatoes, and they are worth considerably more for horses and other animals. He raised 300 bushels on one-third of an acre. He preferred sowing in drills 18 inches apart, and the first of May was the best time for sowing, so that the plants may get established before warm dry weather, which is liable to destroy them. The best soil for Carrots is a deep rich loam, free from gravel. The scruffer or Dutch hoe is a good implement for weeding, and may be worked very near the plants.