

NORTH DATON, WETHERBY,
YORKSHIRE, ENGLAND April 3, 1842.

To the Editor of The British American Cultivator.

DEAR SIR,

I beg to offer you my best thanks for your courteous attention in sending me the two first numbers of your new Periodical. There advent has been a source of much gratification to me. This pleasure, however, has not been merely that which spring more or less from every courtesy received, but one of a higher nature—pleasure as an humble votary of that science which Johnson has said, "not only gives riches to a nation but the only riches she can call her own"—pleasure I say to find that the impulse which has induced us within the last few years to endeavour to develop more fully the treasures which the Almighty has hid in the earth; and to render more available the blessings which His powers upon us, in the sunbeam and the shower, is not confined to this country; but still greater pleasure, as an Englishman, to find that this impulse is now felt in British America. That I am judging hastily in concluding that the spirit of Agricultural improvement is at work amongst you, I cannot for a moment entertain, when I see before me one of its *ridettes*—for such I have no hesitation in saying is "The British American Cultivator." Indeed it is absolutely necessary that the ground should be looked over before an Army can take up a position, and that the enemy can be observed before he can be attacked. So in Agriculture, the spade must be applied to the ground, the rank weeds of prejudice rooted up, and the mind followed for the seed of improvement, before we can anticipate a flourishing crop. Why, indeed, was it that century after century passed away and found the English Agriculturist stationary in some branches of his Art, and declining in others, but because the soil was not fit for the reception of the seeds of progressive knowledge. He thought he knew enough, *whatsoever was, was right*. The practice of his fathers could not be invalidated by any testimony, and therefore if ever an unwitting son of chance stumbled upon a valuable truth, it perished with its discoverer. The public mind was as I have already said, too much occupied to receive it. But *tempora mutantur*—it has been for popular education—the Press, and particularly such works as yours, to denounce error and trumpet forth truth,—till the Agriculturists of England have become capable of thinking for themselves. That is they do not follow a path without knowing where it leads to. The mind is trained to examine things, both old and new, and to take nothing upon mere opinions without a reason. The result is, some things that have been long trusted, are now rejected, and many that have been long neglected are now employed. But in this search the mind is improved as well as the soil, and the Agriculturist who pursues it, frequently in searching for *silver* finds *gold*. Will not a similar result arrive in some degree from The "British American Cultivator" in its sphere of circulation?

If I wanted any corroborating evidence that such will be the result, and to bear me out in considering it the harbinger of an Agricultural movement in British America, I would refer to the rapid strides of your prototype of the United States, "The Albany Cultivator." A work which, with the same object in view as your own, has already, if I am rightly informed, by pointing out prejudices, exposing fallacies and proclaiming facts, planted the germ of improvement in the bosoms of thousands of farmers who would otherwise have remained,

"By knowing evil, strangers to the good,"

That your Journal is upon the same plan as the one I allude to is far from being a disadvantage, for I can conscientiously hold that we have not in England a work of any description conducted in a manner better suited to the wants of its readers, nor indeed, have we an Agricultural Periodical at all to compare with it, as a medium of communicating information to the great *bulk of small farmers*, who are not prepared by pause or education to make use of a more expensive and more scientific magazine.

Conducted upon the plan and with the same object in view as its namesake of the States, the effects of the British American Cultivator must be similar, and I am therefore not too sanguine in regarding its appearance as an outward visible sign of the working of an inward spirit of improvement, nor too hasty in taking the two first numbers as a pledge to assure us "that, that spirit will be extensively diffused. But tho' gratified at observing these symptoms, I have said that I was peculiarly so at beholding them in British America. And I am not ashamed to repeat it, for I am not one of those Englishmen who are willing to acknowledge our Colonial possessions as long as they bring honour or profit, and yet who refuse their sympathies or assistance in the time of need, to every portion of the empire of Great Britain except the very "land they live in." Indeed it has been in my humble opinion a serious error in our policy that the work of Legislation went on with too little regard to the well being of our transmarine possessions.

Of what consequence is it that a wall of water is between the mother Country and the Colony. Is the hand or the foot to be neglected, because it is at the extremity of the body? Is the bosom to be clothed and the arms to be exposed to the weather? No. The part cannot be injured but at the expense of the whole. And it is with an Empire as with an individual. All that is of England, is not in England—Her empire is a giant body a system composed of many bodies and forming one complete whole. Every shock, then received by one part is felt by all for as the blood which tingles at the fingers end is the blood which flows from the heart, the loss of a drop is a loss to the whole system, and as it is British energy and British Capital which have subdued the waves of the pathless ocean, peopled the wilds of the far west, opened the pleasure house of the East and planted the lion of England on the icy poles—so it is British interests and British subjects that suffer, it, while relying upon the mother country for protection and for justice our colonies receive oppression or neglect.

This is, however, an abstract view of the question, if however we look upon it in a more practical manner we shall see that locality has but little to do with nationality and ought to have influence over justice in the government of our most remote dependencies. Thus within the last fifty years the increased facilities produced by locomotion have reduced the distance of our colonies from the mother country fall 50 per cent. and we may reasonably conclude that in a very short time it will be still farther lessened. As it is however, a voyage across the Atlantic is no more thought of than a voyage across the Irish Channel was, while a journey from London to Toronto is made with a less amount of trouble than one from "Lands end" to "John O'Gats" was, in the days of our grand fathers. Yet these two places were not thought too far a part to our government. The argument then for divided interests founded upon the mere fact of distance, is most untenable. Is the Thames considered an officious meddler

which deprives the demizen of Surry of the riches of Middlesex or vice versa? Is it not rather a visitor which mingles on its bosom the milk and honey of both counties, and leaves on each coast golden traces of its ebb and its flow? and so to England whose empire is on the ocean, whose national greatness was cradled on the world of waters, the sea must ever be rather a bond of union than a line of demarcation.

That the difference of climate, productions and local features of England and her colonies should prevent this union, is still more absurd, for it is this very variety that is the best guarantee of such an union, being beneficial to both countries, since it is upon *this ground only* that that system of commercial reciprocity which *enriches both and robs neither*, can be erected. Indeed, were there staple riches of our various dependencies, fairly developed, Great Britain might establish within herself a complete circle of trade which would enable her to become independent of every other nation for the elements of prosperity. Aye, were labour and capital plentifully supplied to the wide spread possessions of England, so that the productions of each might be fairly brought to light, were every foreign port shut to her commerce, she would be able to maintain her wealth and greatness; and *if such were her policy* to look with silent scorn on the efforts of her enemies.

For these reasons, then, is it that as an Englishman, I am especially proud to see the efforts made to improve the Agriculture of British America, and I trust the time will come when every subject of the British Crown will think and act upon the principle that

"Membrum eget numero. Amicus eget amico"

The differential duties in favour of the colonies, proposed, I may say carried, for such they will be before you receive this,—by Sir R. Peel in his new Tariff; and the avowed opinions of Lord Stanley upon Colonial Emigration. I think warrant the assumption "that the powers that be" are beginning to feel that the branches of the national tree will not produce fruit unless she receive the support of the stem.

But be this as it may our colonists have a duty to themselves to perform. They must be up and doing whatever the animus of the parent country may be. They must neither be discouraged by legislative neglect, nor soothed into apathy by political promises, if they would forward the prosperity of their country. Applying this argument to your case I can only say to you and every British American who has the cause at heart, continue to labour on "come what will." Look to government for assistance not for support, use its influence as a *stick*, but your own energies as a *carrot*; and if I have any knowledge of the subject I will risk it, by venturing to predict that in the course of a few years British America will take no contemptible position in the annals of agriculture, "the gods help those who help themselves."

While upon this subject I would offer one hint, which if worked out would tend more than anything else you can do to give a stimulus to that spirit of improvement of which your Journal is the evidence. That I would suggest is the establishment of a central Agricultural Association. To speak of the importance of Agricultural Societies is unnecessary. Their advantages are as well known on one side of the Atlantic as the other. A leading association of the sort I would suggest would be a rallying point round which many would arise and the focus through which information would be diffused from society to society. I need only refer you to the leading societies of England and Scotland as models what such societies