

## GLOUCESTER AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY.

*Extract from the Report for 1843.*

Kindred Institutions to this are now rapidly multiplying throughout the world, and their exertions in the cause of Agricultural improvement are attended with astonishing success.

The cultivation of the soil is no longer ranked as a base or plebeian occupation. The taste and disposition to develop and diffuse the science and practice of Agriculture, would seem to have become almost universal; for every people in every clime, the great and the humble, the peer, the peasant, and the philosopher, are now engaged in prosecuting this great work—a work as essentially conducive to the true happiness of man, as it is pleasing to the God of nature, “who gives to the earth its increase”—who designed the tilling of the soil as the first employment for his creatures—and who alone understands and directs the process, to man mysterious, by which the earth returns the hidden grain from its bosom, “multiplied seventy, eighty, and sometimes one hundred fold.”

Through the medium of the press, in the shape of Agricultural Journals and Periodicals, those powerful and necessary auxiliaries to Agricultural Societies, we are now almost daily put in possession of information invaluable to the farmer; every improved process—every successful experiment—every accidental discovery—is thus brought to our knowledge; and it would be highly culpable in us, with our soil and other local advantages, to disregard the lessons they contain. Rather let us, with a laudable ambition, endeavour to imbibe a portion of the zeal and industry they record—call into free and active vigour our own capabilities, and let us become contributors in return to the stock of Agricultural knowledge which others have hitherto been acquiring for our profit.

That this is not a chimerical idea, but that it may be accomplished with little more than ordinary perseverance and attention, is fully borne out by the observation of your Committee the past season; for notwithstanding the severe frosts and heavy rains experienced immediately before last harvest, which caused very general apprehension for the safety of the crops, and indeed occasioned much loss in the low lands, and up the rivers, a far more valuable return was obtained, greater in quantity, and infinitely better in quality, than was obtained in any former year. And this result your Committee do not attribute alone to the increase of cultivation, but in a great degree to the improved system of husbandry, which is now being observed through the efforts of the Society.

In the last Annual Report, your Committee recommended that the best description of grain raised in the County, should be purchased by the Society for distribution, in preference to importing from Prince Edward's Island and Canada, as has formerly been our practice; and this recommendation was acted upon. A very high price was paid for sixty bushels of wheat, forty bushels of barley, and one hundred and fifty bushels of oats, selected from the best samples the County afforded. These were sold to members in the customary manner for seed, and the result of this experiment, as disclosed at the late Grain Exhibition, amply bore out the propriety of the recommendation of your Committee; for excellent as the grain of 1842 certainly was, the grain of last year's crop infinitely surpassed it in weight and appearance; and proof was thus afforded, that simply shifting the seed grain from one locality to another, within the County, is sufficient to keep it in vigour and a state of improvement, without having recourse to a change of seed

to other Colonies, where it is of a much inferior description.

It has been reported that wheat of the weight of seventy pounds per bushel, was raised in York and in Kent Counties, some time since; but your Committee have reason to think, that if such was the case, and it was measured by the correct Winchester bushel, the instances were very rare, for this weight, or any thing approaching to it, has not been maintained in either of these Counties. On hearing of the superiority of the wheat in the latter County, your Committee attempted to procure some for trial; but after diligent enquiries, they could find none of a desirable appearance or character. On the other hand, we have here since the establishment of the Society, been gradually, but steadily advancing; every succeeding year's exhibition showing a manifest improvement in the weight and quality of all descriptions of grain, until the present one, when we have numerous stocks of wheat weighing sixty-eight pounds to the bushel, and may safely state the average weight of wheat and barley throughout the northern part of the County, to be about sixty-four and one-half pounds for the former, and fifty-three pounds for the latter, an average not surpassed perhaps in the Province. The increasing quantity grown of late years, also affords cause of gratulation. From statistics collected by the Secretary, but not yet complete, it appears that all the grain raised in the Parish of Bathurst in the year 1833, did not exceed six hundred bushels; while the quantity already ascertained of the crop of 1843, is beyond seven thousand bushels. But notwithstanding this gratifying state of things, your Committee must not be deemed unreasonable in stating that they anticipate much more rapid progress yet for a few years to come. Settlers will multiply, for the excellence of our soil is becoming known and appreciated; cultivation will extend, and in corn at least, improvement must continue through assiduity and skill, until the weight of our wheat reaches seventy pounds per bushel, our barley fifty-eight to sixty pounds, and our oats forty-eight to fifty, and this may be considered perfection, for it is improbable that grain by any process can be raised to approach nearer the density of water than wheat at the above standard—a weight too, it has not yet attained in any country except in some rare and solitary instances. Let us then profit by our present experience, and pursue this object with a determined perseverance, as the success we have hitherto met with affords fair hope of its accomplishment; and then in one department of Agricultural industry at least, we can step into the foreground and contribute by example and instruction to the improvement of our seniors in the science, as a return for the very many useful lessons obtained from them in our infancy.

With regard to live stock, your Committee cannot speak with such satisfaction. The Horned Cattle that have come under the notice of your Committee, are of a very inferior description generally, although a few specimens of a good breed are here and there scattered through the County. Sheep also of a good description require to be introduced; and your Committee regret that they have again been disappointed in not obtaining the Sheep ordered in 1842. The breed of Hogs noticed in a former report, as introduced by Mr. Ferguson, are now beginning to be sought after by the farmers, and the experience of your Committee fully confirms the good opinion they formerly expressed of this breed, as well adapted to our climate and condition. The following are the weight