

EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT.

FARMING MADE PROFITABLE.



HE question is now asked by thousands, Does farming pay? It is discussed in newspapers, and at agricultural meetings. And in the minds of many it either remains unsettled, or else the business is pronounced unprofitable. They assert that it is continued hard work year in and year out, with a scanty subsistence at best. Intelligent men have asserted that two per cent. is the largest dividend that can be fully relied on from landed property. A hardworking owner of a small farm said, "It requires the hard labor of both me and my hired man through the whole season, to earn enough to pay the wages of the hired man." And it is by no means rare to find men who have received a good farm as a patrimony, that have run in debt and remained so throughout a long life, and left less to their children than they received.

But if farming is a bad business, why is it that three-fourths of our populations select it, or remain in it as a matter of choice, while trade and mechanical employments are open to every one? Why do so many voluntarily choose hard labor and misery?

Every business soon finds its level. If any occupation and scheme happens to prove every lucrative, great numbers rush into it, and it is soon overdone. If, on the contrary, it is found a losing business, a portion withdraw, and leave a better field for the rest. And now, after the lapse of thousands of years we find the great majority of all active men adhering to agriculture as the occupation of their choice. There must be a reason for it. It has indeed been asserted that farmers comprise all the dull intellects, who would be unfit for anything else, and that smart and vigorous men take hold of other kinds of business. Admitting this a moment for the sake of argument, what does it prove? That the most stupid portion of the community, as a body, are more successful in business than the smart and vigorous, for there are less failures among farmers by far, than in what are regarded the most lucrative trades.

AMOS LAWRENCE, of Boston, kept a record during a long life, of all his mercantile acquaintances, and found that out of every hundred who entered business, ninety-seven failed of success. A similar record, kept in the city of New-York, showed a result but little more favorable. Agriculture, while it does not produce such sudden occasional accumulations of wealth as trade, is not attended with the sudden dissipation of estates that trade often witnesses. A merchant may make a hundred thousand or more in a year; the same business reduces many, who are reputed wealthy, to poverty. A thousand young men

who engage in the cultivation of the soil, accumulate a larger aggregate property than a thousand who enter trade. If the thousand farmers are the most stupid, they are nevertheless more successful as a body. Then their business must be greatly superior, thus to outstrip their smarter competitors. Either admission, therefore, proves nothing against farming.

It may be laid down as an impregnable position, that no industrious farmer, who has studied his occupation well, and who exercised a medium share of judgment, ever failed in his business. If the farmer has fallen behind hand, it has been occasioned by extravagance in some other quarter; or by meddling with speculation; or by office seeking, or some neglect. Many instances are known where men have begun life with little or nothing, and who have accumulated, by farming exclusively, fifty to one hundred thousand dollars, and some even more. A young man in Western New-York, with a few hundred dollars to commence with, owned before he was forty a farm of 700 acres of fertile land, from which he made annually an average of about five thousand dollars. Men who have made twenty or thirty thousand by farming may be counted by thousands; and never, in a single instance, have any of them incurred any danger of becoming bankrupt. During the past season the writer of these remarks visited a number of farmers in one of our counties, none of whom presented their moderate estates, nor their management, as models; but who nevertheless showed that a continued and certain increase might be depended on, by a good use of very moderate capital. Some of these examples are the following:

Isaac N. Sexton, of Venice, Cayuga County, N. Y., occupied 100 acres, which he bought seven years ago at \$60 per acre making the farm cost \$6,000. He paid \$3,000 at the time of purchase; during the seven years, he has replaced poor fences with durable ones, added farm buildings, and paid the remaining \$3,000. Poor health has prevented much bodily labor, but his business has been vigilantly attended to. The annual net profit, besides supporting a family comfortably, was over \$500—which, placed continually at interest, with a similar yearly addition, would amount, in a life of forty years, to \$100,000.

Alvin Fresman, of Scipio, in the same county, began 35 years ago with \$100 as his whole estate. He has now 244 acres of excellent land, all paid for by farming. A young neighbor, FAYETTE VAN LIEW, who had \$1,000 five years ago, paid half this amount, or \$500, as the first payment towards an eighty acre farm costing \$5,200—the remaining \$500 was applied to purchase animals and implements. He has paid a yearly average of \$640 for the 80 acres in the 5 years, and reduced the debt to \$1,800.

George H. Chasz, of Springport, purchased a 150 acre farm, for \$50, per acre; and, after occupying three years