

In my next, following up this subject, I shall give some account of the rotation of crops as practiced in the different districts.

JOHN GIRDWOOD.

Featherhall, Mid-Lothian.
—*Alb. Cult.*

Sir Humphrey Davy supposed that lime rendered inert and insoluble vegetable matter soluble, and almost all writers since have repeated the same opinion, till Leibeg brought forward facts which rendered it doubtful. Mr. Rowlandson has brought forward additional facts to support Leibeg's ideas on this subject, but we are obliged to omit the greater part of his reasoning, because it could not be understood by those who have no knowledge of chemistry. He has however made his own theory appear very probable, and it would be prudent before incurring much expense in applying lime or marl to land, to apply his simple test to the soil, viz: to put a small quantity into a wine glass and cover it with water of ammonia (spirits of Hartshorn), and if in a day or two it became brown like bog water it would prove that lime would be useful; but otherwise if the water remained clear and transparent.

THE FORCE OF HABIT.

My experience teaches me that I fail much oftener from inattention to little matters, than for want of general knowledge in the practice of farming. And this inattention in nine cases out of ten is the legitimate offspring of habit; and the reason why habit takes such an erroneous direction arises from the fact that our minds are naturally attracted by the magnitude of objects, without considering that this magnitude is only attained by the accumulation of single atoms.

To illustrate the importance of this idea, we will suppose two farmers, A, and B, start at once in the business of farming with \$1000 capital each. A, saves six per cent. a year by exact economy, whilst B, sinks property at the same rate. For a time, perhaps, we shall hardly be able to notice any difference in their thrift; but in the course of a few years we find A, a wealthy farmer, and B, fast sinking to poverty. A fraction short of twelve years would suffice, at compound interest, to place A, in possession of \$2000, and B, \$500. Twelve years more would give A, \$4000, and B, \$250. Another twelve years would give A, \$8090, and B, 125. Thus we see the result of habit in these two men in the important results produced, supposing providence favored both alike. But this is not all: habits generally require strength with the lapse of time. The man who sinks in the ratio of six per cent. at first, would soon reach twelve, and so on, until

his accelerated speed dashed his fortunes in the irretrievable gulf of ruin.

Suppose now we look at the practice of these men a little in detail. They neither of them are dissipated men in their general habits, and as to integrity and common sagacity are good at work. But A, has learned to calculate a little closer. He knows it requires no more to keep a good cow than a bad one. Hence, then, we find him in possession of a little better stock. His cows give at least a quart of milk more a day than B's; his sheep yield a little more wool, and a little finer. Here then he saves a few dollars. A, also seizes with avidity a few leisure hours to haul his muck, etc., for manure; whilst B, feeling a little tired, or the oxen being in the pasture at some distance, thinks it best to omit it until he can hire a hand a day and get a good lot of it. Thus A, has a little more manure, and of course a little better crop. So we see A, not only producing more, but the foundation of his prosperity widen in every direction.

But perhaps some one will say we can't help habit—it's second nature. Asking your pardon, sirs, I demur to this statement. You have the powers of reason, and the faculty of judging given you by your Creator, and no earthly power can hinder your exercising it. Accustom yourselves then, in every branch of your business, to ask this one question: is the method I propose the best, all things considered? Make a calculation of the profit or loss of every crop, and increase or diminish each kind as more or less profitable; having a reference to the permanent improvement of the soil. I have frequently been surprised at the results I have obtained in such calculations, and frequently altered my course very much to my advantage.

But you may not only improve your own habits by the discreet use of your judgement, but you have to do with creatures of habit. Even your domestic animals have habits which may gradually be moulded to your advantage. Seize every opportunity, then, to make them subservient to the great business of life. I will illustrate this by one very simple incident. I have a considerable range of woodland pasture, and I find by giving my cattle their salt at night near the outlet of the pasture, they soon learn to resort to that spot at that time of day. Another incident may be worth relating. I had come to the conclusion that a small lot of hens would more than pay for their keeping in destroying worms, &c., without any reference to their eggs or chickens, provided I could learn them to keep out of the grain. Now for two years past I have not had a mite of trouble with them, though running at large all the time, and grain within ten rods of the house and barn. The simple and effectual remedy is to turn down a lot of corn or grain for them to go to as they please. And the way they turned out the eggs in consequence was a caution to those who neglect to feed their biddies.

Peru, Me., June, 1845.

J. H. JENNE.