

AGRICULTURAL.

[FOR THE BEE.]

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE STATE OF AGRICULTURE IN NOVA SCOTIA, AND THE MEANS OF ITS IMPROVEMENT.

Mr. Dawson,—Sir—I am glad to see that you take an interest in the Agricultural prosperity of the country. I think I have profited by the observations that have from time to time appeared in the *Bee*, particularly as to Fruit Trees, and from a wish that others may profit also, I intend if I can find time to communicate some observations on the Agricultural state of the country, pointing out where I think the system and practice defective, and suggesting the means of improvement. It seems to be a generally received opinion that Nova Scotia is not well adapted to the purposes of farming; but I hope to make the contrary appear. We hear a great deal about Upper Canada, the Ohio, &c., but I question much if Nova Scotia enjoyed the same advantages but it would equal either of them: In the former the capital and intelligence is chiefly directed to Agricultural pursuits, whereas in this country it is, with few exceptions, left to languish in the hands of those who are not well qualified to prosecute it to advantage: A great proportion of those called farmers here are mechanics from the old country, who are either unacquainted with the principles upon which it ought to be conducted or the practice which ought to be pursued to ensure success. If you could collect the evidence of the few scientific farmers that we have, you would find that their returns were about equal to their expectations. I am far from finding fault with the great body of our farmers; under existing circumstances they do as well as could be expected, but from the causes stated above and others that I may yet point out, there is need for renewed efforts to ameliorate not only the condition of the farmer but the country at large: There are great complaints about the scarcity of money, which I am doubtful will continue until we can raise a sufficiency of the necessaries of life; which might be done in a few years, if not a surplus to dispose of to recruit our empty pockets. We seem contented to drudge on in the lowest grades of society, whereas by proper management we might stand higher in the scale, and influence not only the motion of the plough and cart but the machine of the state, and turn some of its wheels to suit our own purpose. There are three things necessary to the success of any undertaking, namely—knowledge, industry, and care; as to the first of these, our farmers act as if it were not needful at all; if they give any of their sons education it is with a view to his being a lawyer, a merchant, or something, forsooth, that will make him a gentleman, and if they are disappointed and he turns farmer, they look upon it as so much money thrown away; whereas in nine cases out of ten there would be as much satisfaction both to father and son, were his education directed with a view to his becoming farmer or mechanic as any of the former—and even those who are past the time of going to school might soon acquire a great fund of knowledge, if they would turn their attention to it. I know not a more pleasant or perhaps a more profitable way of spending the long winter evenings, and even part of the long summer day, than reading. It is a common saying that Knowledge is power; if this be true, which I have no doubt of, the imbecility of us Nova Scotian farmers argues that our knowledge is very limited: I do not mean that physical power which is necessary to turn out a stump or unload a cart of hay, but that combination of intellectual power which if rightly directed might brighten our prospects in a political point

of view; but to our point—were farmers acquainted with the qualities of the component parts of their soil—the kind and quantity of manure best adapted to each, and the kinds of crop most suitable to different soils and situations, they could go on with much confidence and expedition, besides in the ordinary way by imitation, as well as less risk of failure—for instance the one who acts in the latter way may see his neighbour have a fine crop and think by pursuing the same course he will have a fine crop too; but for want of the requisite knowledge he may mistake in some point, and a failure ensue.

As to industry every one will allow that it is necessary, but how often is it misapplied? From the same quantum of labour well applied there would often be double the returns: a great many farmers aim at doing too much, it is better to have one acre under good cultivation than three in poor order—but I intend to say more upon this when I come to particulars in tillage. The character sustained through life is generally formed in early life; it is therefore of the utmost importance that proper habits be acquired early. I shall class these into active and indolent habits: It is supposed by a good many farmers and others engaged in hard labour that the best way to rest when tired is to go to bed; this is an indolent habit, and I think it will not be hard to prove that it is wrong from a case that has come under all our observations. When a boy at work seems tired, and gets useless, if he is told that he may have an hour to rest, he will not go to bed, but run away to play as fast as he can, and very likely exert himself as much as at his work, but at the hours' end he will resume his labour with more vigour than if he had gone to bed. Now, if parents and guardians of youth were careful to provide pleasing and useful amusement when these juvenile sports cease to please, it would do much to form active habits: nothing that I know is more likely to answer this purpose than to have useful and entertaining books accessible to them at all times; a habit of reading may thus be formed; whereas if this is neglected vicious habits may be fallen into, which may never be got over. I find from experience that when tired in the field, the physical powers of the body may be recruited and the mind fed at the same time, by going to the house and taking a book for say half an hour, three or four times a day, there is then matter to ruminate upon, time passes agreeably, and there is no lassitude or weariness. Those who may try this will find that habits of industry and the acquirement of knowledge go hand in hand; and that knowledge thus gained directs industry to the best purpose.

Care, is likewise needed to turn all to good account, the want of it may mar the whole: whatever knowledge there may be to direct or industry to execute, if there be no economy in the management, it will turn to little account. It would be hard to say what this proceeds from in many cases, but in ordinary it might be obviated by a proper arrangement of the business of the farm.

The foregoing remarks are applicable to the female part of the rural population in their own department. If the farmer's wife or daughter be ignorant, careless, or lazy, things will not prosper. It is a common saying that it is hard for a man to do well if his wife will not let him, as much perhaps depends upon a proper arrangement of the household affairs as the management of the fields, I would therefore beg leave of my rural friends to suggest a course to be pursued in the family, that I conceive will be found to answer well in general: let them start in the morning by five o'clock, and while the potatoes are boiling let the family be assembled and worship gone

about, so that after breakfast every one may be ready to go to their several employments; to divide the day fairly, dinner should be at twelve, and supper at five—when, if in the summer season, all hands may again turn to work for two hours, and then end the day as it was begun by assembling around the family altar and worshipping that God from whom we derive every blessing, and who is deserving of our thanks.

The plan I propose to follow is, after some further general remarks, to begin with the clearing of new land,—its management until fit for the plough,—most expeditious method of bringing it into a state of profitable cultivation,—crops most suitable for the different kinds of soil and situation,—draining and ditching—rotation or course of cropping on old arable farms,—different kinds of manure,—its application,—implements of husbandry,—ploughing,—harrowing,—horse and hand hoeing,—rolling,—sowing and planting the different kinds of seeds,—haymaking and harvesting,—thrashing and storing grain,—kind and situation of houses,—stock,—management of cows—rearing cattle,—feeding do.

I have no doubt but some may wish to know who this is that pretends to know so much about farming and who is to be so kind as to tell us all about it? Well I shall tell you: I am the son of a plain farmer who, from a wish to do the best he could for his family, sent me to school until I was fifteen years old, and who then gave me a choice of continuing at school with a view to making my living by education, or setting to work upon the farm; the latter I preferred, and have continued in the same line for the greater part till now that I am an old man: the means by which I gained my Agricultural knowledge was just what I recommend here, reading books upon the subject and practising what was there pointed out, as far as circumstances held out a fair prospect of success.—If any of your literary readers deign to review this, I shall take no notice of their criticism; but if any practical farmer point out any error that I may fall into in going over the system that I propose to point out, I shall thank him and profit by the correction. If from my observations the condition of any be ameliorated, or but one poor man enabled to give his son or daughter a half year's schooling I shall think myself rewarded.

Yours, &c.

OLD RUSTICUS.

BLANKS

FOR SALE AT THIS OFFICE:

BILLS OF EXCHANGE on Britain, U. States, and Canada—
 Bills Lading
 Seamen's Articles
 Indentures
 Deeds of Conveyance and Mortgage do.
 Magistrates' Summons, Capias and Executions
 Law do do and do
 Declarations and Subpoenas
 Cargo Manifests, Inwards and Outwards
 Arbitration Bonds
 Mortgage do
 Writs of Enquiry
 Recognizance, Warrants, and Affidavits.]
 [December 30:

NOTICE.

THE subscriber having left this Province, has appointed Messrs. D. & T. McCulloch as his Agents, to whom all Accounts must be paid, they having power to grant discharges for the same.

JAMES MALCOLM.

Pictou, 7th December 1835.

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MADEIRA WINE.

10 CASKS, of 15 gallons each, for sale
 by ROSS & PRINROSE.
 24th Nov. 18