

mercial pursuits, have acquired much wealth; but its Inhabitants, in general, are indigent and embarrassed. Scarcely a year elapses, without at one period or other, in some of the settlements, extreme hardships are experienced, from the want of some of the chief necessaries of life. The prices of these have, in general, been so high as to have prevented the great majority of those engaged in the pursuits, there carried on, from improving their circumstances. It is, surely, unnecessary to adduce any more instances, to show the ill consequences which a Country must experience, from neglecting agricultural occupations, or from its not being favourable to their pursuit.

On a brief review, it will appear, that during the far greater portion of the history of this Province, comparatively little attention was bestowed upon Agriculture, either with reference to the acquisition of skill in the science, or improvement in practical operations. A variety of causes concurred to produce and continue that neglect, some of which it may be profitable to investigate, before attempting to exhibit and explain the means by which that most valuable source of our prosperity may most surely and speedily be improved. In the first place, it is perfectly obvious, that in this, as in every other Country of comparatively recent settlement, there are numerous difficulties to be overcome, with regard to the clearing and first cultivation of the soil, and which of necessity occasion much discouragement and delay. Next, with reference to the farming population, generally, the greater portion of it has never been composed of persons who, in immigrating to the Province, were in either indigent or limited circumstances; and moreover, the most of them were extremely deficient in agricultural skill. As to those who had been longer in the Country, and inhabited the parts of it which were much longer and further improved, as in this highly favored and valuable county among others: not even they also, generally, were deficient in that skill, and, as might be supposed, but slowly acquired it, not having immediately before them the advantage which the farmers in the parent countries possess, of stimulating examples, and instances of scientific skill, and extensive improvements. Even in those Countries, indeed, it is only within about the last forty years that those astonishing and most valuable improvements have been made in the operations and implements of husbandry, which have carried both the science and the practice to nearly a state of perfection. This further cause of the slow progress of our agricultural interests has constantly existed, that very few persons having extensive pecuniary means have employed any considerable portion of them, or even of their influence, towards its advancement. The extreme prevalence of commercial pursuits has been another and one of the principal causes which operated to retard that important interest. Those pursuits for a very considerable time held forth such numerous advantages, and such prospects of the speedy acquisition of gain, that numbers of persons, even from the agricultural class, ardently engaged in them, and a still greater number from the most laborious orders were drawn to assist in conducting them. In some parts of the Province, also, the time and attention which have so generally been employed in carrying on the trade in Plaister of Paris, and Amber, have occasioned injurious effects on our husbandry. Again, our farmers, in many parts of the Country, have ever labored under serious disadvantages, with regard to the convenient and profitable sale of their produce; and from the defective state of the roads, or other difficult and hazardous circumstances, have experienced much inconvenience and loss, in the conveyance of their produce to market. There were, also, formerly, in our farming population, as in other classes, several particulars in their ha-

bits, extremely adverse to agricultural advancement, but which, happily, do not now quite so generally prevail. During the seasons of commercial prosperity, many acquired considerable wealth, and in the ardor of enjoying it, indulged in various modes and scenes of dissipation and luxury. The influence of this evil example spread and prevailed among our farming class, as it did in all others; and a larger portion of the profits of their industry was annually exhausted, in ministering to extravagance in apparel and equipage, and in the luxury and profusion of festive entertainments. That season of prosperity came to an end, and the consequences which followed from those expensive and improvident habits, were too fully disclosed, and are too universally known, to require any particular description. Another indulgence which almost universally prevailed, and still in most places extensively remains, was even still more injurious to our agricultural interest. It will readily be supposed that I allude to the free and excessive use of intoxicating liquors. Independent of the time exhausted in this pernicious habit, the expense attending it consumed a large portion of the profits of the Husbandman. There were not a few, who, even during the most precious seasons of the year, while they should have been employed in depositing the seed in the earth, or in securing the harvest, or in other labors of the field, were found engaged in that vicious and injurious indulgence. The farming population are, for a variety of reasons, the most truly important, and valuable description of persons, any Country contains. On their general habits and character, its welfare must ever be chiefly dependent. Temperance, industry and economy, among them, will obviate or overcome nearly every natural or political disadvantage. Even under the most arbitrary systems of government, and with the greatest hardships and difficulties to encounter, possessing those estimable qualities, they will render the Country they inhabit in some degree prosperous and powerful. On the other hand, if the opposite characteristics belong to them, the wisest Institutions and Laws will be quite unavailing towards producing those beneficial results, and all the bounties of nature such a people possess, will be lavished in vain.

In further observing on the tardy progress of our agricultural improvement, it may be remarked, that formerly, and during a considerable period, an erroneous and discouraging impression prevailed with many, that the climate of this Province, and its soil, in general, were quite unfavourable to that object. As to our climate, it must surely be conceded, that it is rather an uncommonly healthy one; and although the season of vegetation is not in general of long continuance, it is superior, in several respects, to that of a number of Countries which, through skill and industry, have carried agricultural pursuits to the greatest perfection. The scantiness of our crops, which at times has occurred, and indeed some of the general failures of them, which in a few instances have happened, may very justly be attributed as much if not more to the neglect of making a proper use of the earliest part of the season of vegetation, as to the shortness of its duration, or any other cause. In many parts of the Province the attention of the greater number of farmers has been so extensively directed to other pursuits, during almost every part of the year, that they have neglected, at the proper period, to place their ground in that state of preparation which would enable them to put in their seeds as early as skill and experience in their occupation require. They have therefore been obliged to make a hurried and defective preparation of the soil, at a time when the seed should have been in its bosom, or rising above it. The consequence has frequently been, that a frost in the autumn has rendered all their labors unavailing; by destroying in