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The Field and Farm Yard.

THE COMMON FIELD BEAN.

The Hon. Mr. MACFARLANE, President of the Board of Agriculture, has called our attention to a field crop that is of great value in Britain, but which has hitherto been neglected in Nova Scotia, and is we may say, practically unknown on the American continent. The Common Field Bean of England is a totally different plant from our common American "Beans", (which are in England called Kidney Beans or French Beans), and is in fact nearly related to the Broad Windsor and Long-pod Beans of the gardens.

As it is not improbable that the Board of Agriculture may import a quantity of Beans this season, should any of our farmers indicate a disposition to give the crop a fair trial, we beg to call attention to some of the leading facts in the history of the crop, and to the methods of culture adopted in those countries where it is a mainstay of the farmer.

In the dry hot summer of Upper Canada and the Western States, the Bean cannot be cultivated with success, but in Halifax County it was tried long ago,

and is found to be well suited to our soil and climate.

HISTORY.

The Bean is an important agricultural crop; but has received comparatively little attention from agricultural writers. The gorgeous appearance which the crop presents when in full blossom, and the delicious perfume which it emits, has however arrested the attention of even the most unobserving of Englishmen, and the Poet of the Seasons has expressed his admiration of the bean fields in unequivocal terms:—

"Long let us walk
Where the breeze blows from yon extended field,
Of blossom'd beans. Arabia cannot boast
A fuller gale of joy than liberal thence
Breathes through the sense, and takes the ravished soul."

The Bean has been long in cultivation; even in East Lothian, the old chronicles tell us that in 1296, the invading army of Edward I subsisted on the beans they gathered in its fields. Prof. Rogers, of Oxford, in his new work on Medieval Agriculture, describes the process of women dibbling beans in the thirteenth century, in England. Various opinions have in different ages been entertained respecting the applicability of the bean as an article of human food. Modern chemists tell us that it is very rich in

gluten, and therefore highly valuable for its feeding properties; in this however, they have made no advance on the practical knowledge of the Romans, who considered it a strong food; but thought it apt to dull the senses and understanding, and to cause troublesome dreams, on account of all which it was seldom used, except when bruised and mixed with other corn. Some ancient authors believed the use of beans to occasion sterility, whilst others read in the dark characters or pencillings of their flowers "signs of heaviness and death." Cicero thought them enemies to tranquility of mind, and another "abstained from them that he might enjoy a clearer divination by his dreams."

It is difficult, however, to trace the early history of the Bean with certainty, as the same name has been applied to several plants quite distinct from each other, particularly the Lotus or Sacred Bean of Egypt (Nelumbium), an aquatic plant of great beauty, which was highly regarded by the ancient Egyptians, and which, like other characteristic plants of the Nile, enters into the ornament of their architecture. There is reason to believe that Phillips (whose usual veracity has led succeeding authors to follow him implicitly in this as in other matters of his-