

TRURO, Jan'y. 20th, 1874.

DEAR SIR,—Last Fall the Onslow Agricultural Society held a Ploughing Match soon after their Exhibition at Truro. While the latter was a decided success, nothing more special can be said of the former, than that some good sod-turning was done at it, if by the best plough-men of Onslow, certainly not by the best ploughs in the world, and it is gratifying to know that the lessons of that day, unimportant as they may appear, have already borne fruit, and are going to have a very decided bearing on the future husbandry, not only of Colchester, but of Nova Scotia. I look upon the Onslow ploughing match as one of those trivial circumstances that are always influencing the events of the world. By such a circumstance Mr. Jonas Webb's attention was called to the room for improver\* in the breed of Southdowns during the present generation. His grandfather was a breeder of Norfolk rams, and it was the amusement of the old gentleman at his annual sales to set his grandsons to ride on his tups, holding fast by their huge horns. It was during the races on these sharp-backed animals that Jonas determined, as soon as he was a man, to breed sheep with "better saddles of mutton." And who will say that it was not the great variety of home-made wooden ploughs at the ploughing match that suggested to a leading agriculturist the idea of asking the Onslow Society at its annual meeting to import this Spring, for sale to its members, a few of the best iron ploughs made in Great Britain—an idea I would like every society in the Province to entertain, and which, had the Onslow Society ignored, it would in my opinion have taken a retrograde step in the cause it so energetically endeavors to promote.

The time is fast approaching in the history of this Province, when capital and the soil shall become better acquainted, and Agricultural Societies are not fully cognizant of one of the main objects contemplated in their formation, should they fail to appropriate a portion of their funds occasionally for the purchase of the best farm implements, in whatever part of the world manufactured. It is because English implements are in keeping with the agriculture of that country, which has arrived at a stage of perfection far in advance of the one ours occupies, and which has not been attained by that of any other part of the world, that the Earl of Carlisle, in addressing an agricultural gathering of Yorkshiremen, was led to remark "I saw on the plains of Troy the clodcrushers of Crowskill, the drills, the horse-hoes of Garrett, and the ploughs of Howard and Ransome." And it is not matter for surprise that on the banks of the Danube, the Schedt, and the Po, of the Mississippi and the Amazon, on the shores of the Baltic and the Black Sea, on the conti-

ment of Australia, or in Flanders, the cradle of modern agriculture, English implements have the same preference as on the plains of Troy. And no good reason can be assigned why the farmers of Nova Scotia, in the matter of testing the superiority of English implements over those manufactured in the Province, should be prevented from following in the agricultural wake of the world.

In this connection permit me to add an extract from an admirable essay on "the progress of English Agriculture," as a fitting sequel to my desultory remarks on ploughs.

"But perhaps nothing illustrates better the change which has come over farming in the last few years than what has taken place with respect to so ancient and familiar an article of husbandry as the plough. Although an implement more than two thousand years old, it is only within the last thirty-two years that it has been reduced to an uniform shape and material. In engravings, to the eye of the casual observer there is now no difference between the ploughs manufactured for the same purpose by every one of the eminent makers; and, in fact, in general construction, they are alike, except where the "twinwrests of Kent and Sussex" are used, although some have a marked superiority in the details and in durability. They are fashioned entirely of iron and steel, of long graceful wave-like form, provided with a pair of wheels of unequal size, and drawn by a chain attached to the body of the plough. Iron screws and levers have replaced wooden wedges. A few seconds are sufficient to attach the share or adjust the coulter. It was quite otherwise in 1840. Out of six ploughs engraved in the *Journal of Agriculture* for that year, two are swing, two have two wheels, two have one wheel each, all are of wood, except the shares and breasts, all are drawn from the extremity of the beam, and the awkward inferiority of their respective shapes is perceptible at a glance. In 1840, Lincoln, Rutland, Bedfordshire, Berks, and almost every other county had its separate plough, and knew little of its form in the rest of the kingdom; the exceptions being among the customers of scientific makers, whose trade was restrained by the cost of conveyance, the want of publicity, and the want of intelligence. Mr. Pusey and Mr. Handley, who contributed articles on the plough to the first volume of the Royal Agricultural Society's Journal, were, as gentlemen farmers, far ahead of their time, but it is evident, from their observations, that they had every thing to learn in the science and practice of agricultural mechanics. Mr. Handley's acuteness led him to conclude that wheel ploughs were of lighter draught, "contrary to the opinions of the writers" whom he had consulted; but Mr. Pusey in his general report on Eng-

lish agriculture, evidently prefers the Scotch swing plough, not aware that the old Bedford wheel plough even in its unimproved state, was a better implement. After mentioning the instances in which the Scotch plough failed, he hesitatingly adds, "It is even doubted whether one wheel might not be advantageously restored." Another report on a trial of different kinds of ploughs in Berkshire showed how general was the ignorance of the simplest principles of mechanical knowledge, for he confesses that he had no idea that there would be any "difference of draught between a smooth share and one covered with tar or paint." These trials, valueless in themselves, were the commencement of investigations by well informed persons under the auspices of Mr. Pusey, and of a series of public competitions, which have placed ploughs constructed on the best principles and in the best manner, within the reach of every parish in England. The improvement is as great as the change from the old musket to the Minie rifle. Skilful manufacturers, each eager to command the market, study, with all the aids of mechanical knowledge and a wide experience, to secure excellence of design, durability of make, and economy of price, while the farmer in his turn has learnt that science is a better constructor than ignorance, and no longer prefers the clumsy efforts of a village artisan. The marvel is in the rapidity with which these changes have been effected, as if some magician of agriculture had waved his wand over our favored island."

Yours, &c.,

I. L.

WINDSOR, Dec. 27th, 1874.

MR. EDITOR,—I cannot refrain from making some remarks on Colonel Laurie's last letter in your journal, as it is so altogether at variance with my views published some time ago in the Journal, on the application of Farm Capital, that I should like to see some discussion on the subject, and also hear something of your opinion, particularly, as the promise you gave to follow me up, and show what had been accomplished in Scotland by these means, led me to believe that at least I was not altogether flying off at a tangent, I only wish to take up one or two points in Colonel Laurie's letter. He says that the farmer owns his own lands here and is not restricted by any conditions of a lease; in answer I would say that any of the old-fashioned and often silly leases, were better than allowing farmers to skin their farms until they became perfect barrens, and, if you read the article that Colonel Laurie quotes from carefully through, you will see that the author does not object to the leases and restrictions made in old times, for he calls them reasonable enough, but he simply com-