

cultivation, than which nothing can be more illfounded, as every day's experience most fully disproves it. In no one instance where skill and industry have been employed in improving or clearing the soil, have they failed amply to repay the cultivator. In opposition to the great obstacles, fine farms have been cleared and successfully cultivated in the neighbourhood of St. John's, in Conception Bay, and in several parts of the island; manure can be obtained in the country with very little trouble; the offal of the fish mixed with the earth, is found to answer for all the purposes of husbandry; at present, instead of its being used for that purpose, the greater part is thrown back into the sea. With proper attention, most of the natural productions of England can be brought to perfection in this country. It is only on the margin of the coast that cultivation has been attempted, the interior remains unexplored, and there can remain but very little doubt, that there are many parts of the interior more favourable to agriculture than the sea coast. It is found, that the soil at the head of the large bays, which run a considerable distance into the country, is much more luxuriant and productive than the soil on the sea coast. As a proof of the advantages of cultivation, the committee would only refer to the respective situations of the labouring classes, the few, who even in the present backward state of agriculture, attended to their little farms, are in a comfortable situation, *at least beyond want*; while those who exclusively turned their labour towards the fisheries, are very little removed from pauperism.

Persons most obstinately opposed to the possibility of advantageously employing the soil of Newfoundland for the purposes of husbandry, admit that it is particularly favourable to the growth of potatoes and other esculent roots; an increase from twelve to twenty fold is the usual produce from the cultivation of the potatoe, and the quality not inferior to that of any other country. With proper encouragement, a sufficient quantity could be raised, which, with the abundance of fish to be had on every part of the coast, would supply the labouring classes with a wholesome nutritious food, which being the produce of their own labour, would make them independent of foreign supplies, at least for the necessities of life.

The causes which operated in the early stages of the fishery, to prevent the cultivation of the soil, have long since passed away, and it is now as much the interest of the merchant, as it is of the more resident part of the community, that every just encouragement should be given to the improvement and cultivation of the soil. The interest of all classes are the same; the prosperity of the one naturally leads to the prosperity of the other.

If the great body of the people of Newfoundland remain in their present state of beggary and want, it is an illusion if the trading part of the community expect to be much better in their condition. To enable the people to buy and pay for their goods, a proportion of their labour must be turned into some more productive channels than the fisheries can afford. The experience of the last eight years ought to be sufficient to convince the few merchants who remain in the country, and who were able to stem the overwhelming torrent which brought destruction on so many respectable houses, that the trade and fisheries of the country are not alone adequate to the support of the people; and if they follow up the old system of supplying in the fishery, their ruin is equally certain.

To enable the merchants of Newfoundland to cope with their rivals in foreign markets, fish must be caught at much less expense than hitherto, which cannot be done as long as every thing necessary for the maintenance of the people must be imported from distant countries. By the more general cultivation of the soil, the people would be enabled to raise a great proportion of their food; it would afford profitable employment for that part of the population who cannot be employed in the fishery; and it would be far the most effectual and best auxiliary to it. It is well worth the trial.

The committee, therefore, recommend this most important subject to the consideration of your Lordship; and they again repeat, that it is by a more general cultivation of the soil alone, that the present population can be supported in the island.

The committee are aware, that many years must elapse, even with due encouragement, before Newfoundland can make much progress in agriculture. It is now a trading country, and the encouragement of its trade and fisheries must always be a paramount consideration; they are the great source of wealth, which if made available to the interest of the country, will lay the foundation of its future prosperity. It has been said, that the fisheries of Newfoundland are mines of national wealth, superior to those of Mexico and Peru; other countries have reaped the advantage of them, it yet remains for this country to participate in their benefits.

Owing to the right of fishing granted to the French at the close of the last war, and to the Americans, by the treaty of 1818, the advantages of these great fisheries, are, in a great degree, lost to the subjects of Great Britain. The French and American governments give bounties and other encouragements to their fisheries on this coast. The fish caught on this coast by the subjects of these powers, can be sold in every market on much lower terms than fish caught by British subjects. If they be not put on a footing with the subjects of these powers, the advantages they possess over the British, must have the effect of sapping the foundation of the trade, and subverting the fisheries altogether.