

# AMERICAN FARMER.

RURAL ECONOMY, INTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS, PRICE CURRENT.

"O fortunatos nimium sua si bona norint  
"Agricolos." . . . . VIRG.

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## AGRICULTURE.

### Virginia Husbandry.

*Editorial Notes on the Agriculture of certain counties in Virginia, continued from page 66.*

Leaving Winchester for Staunton, a kind letter from Judge H. introduced me the same evening to the civilities of Major H. whose spacious mansion of more than 100 feet in length attracts the notice and admiration of the traveller soon after passing Middletown. It serves to adorn a fertile farm of six thousand acres, and is built of a kind of stone which abounds in that country, and which is beautifully adapted to the purposes of building and fencing. On learning the extent of this estate, I could not help reflecting on the vast difference that exists in the rural and social economy, habits and circumstances of sister states; living, nevertheless, in the greatest harmony under the same general government. How wonderful is the political structure which binds together parts apparently so heterogeneous! How much to be admired is the patience and wisdom of the fathers who devised and established it! South of the Chesapeake, it is not uncommon to find from one to ten thousand acres of land occupied by a single proprietor, whereas to the question put by the Massachusetts Agricultural Society to one of the County Societies, "of what quantity of land do the farms in your vicinity generally consist?" The answer was, "from fifty to two hundred; generally about one hundred acres." Fifty acres is there considered adequate to the sustenance of a large family, nor will this appear at all incredible to the Southern farmer, when he considers the immensely productive capacity of the earth, if pushed to its greatest yield by the skillful application of labour and manure. In proof of her amazing fruitfulness when properly encouraged to display it, I will here introduce for the notice of the large landholder of the South, one or two examples.

In 1814 the Androssan Farmer's Society offered a silver medal for the best and heaviest crop of turnips in the Parish of Dundonald, situated in the west of Scotland; and appointed two judges to inspect the different fields, cultivated within the bounds.

They proceeded in the execution of their duty, and in compliance with the requisitions of the Society, by weighing a square rod taken from the average of the fields in different parts—the result of their investigation was, that on one farm, a Scotch acre, which is short of an acre, and a quarter English measure, produced in turnips—

	Tons.	cwt.	lbs.
Of bulbs, without leaves	76	0	0
Of leaves, by themselves	14	0	0
	90	0	0

Forty bushels of turnips are about equal to a ton; and the quantity per acre, therefore, in bulbs alone, arise to the enormous amount of 3040 bushels, besides fourteen tons of leaves, of highly nutritive quality. Estimating the bulbs at 33 cents per bushel, an acre will fetch upwards of one thousand dollars, a sum sufficient to awaken the utmost agricultural industry. On another farm the same judges found—

	Tons.	cwt.	lbs.
The bulbs weighed	49	11	17
The leaves	17	5	51
	66	16	68
	Tons.	cwt.	lbs.
On another they found that the bulbs weighed—	48	7	16
The leaves	20	0	0
	68	7	16

Another impressive example worthy of being mentioned, is that of the Alms House farm in Salem, which consists of about thirty-five acres. In 1816 it is represented to have been in a rough uncultivated state, and in 1818 it produced—

Of Pork killed, 7960 pounds  
12 live Pigs sold for 42 dollars  
On hand, 57 live Pigs  
Corn, 400 bushels  
Potatoes, 2250 bushels  
Turnips, 900 bushels  
3 tons Squashes  
50 tons Pumpkins—and all the common summer vegetables for the use of the Alms House.

Let these examples serve to demonstrate what may be done by labour judiciously exercised, and determine the farmer to concentrate his manure and his toils that he may apply them with much more effect on a smaller surface; extending gradually the sphere of his operations as fast only as he can do it with profitable effect. It were useless here to speculate on the moral and political causes which have and will continue to retard the progress of this great state in fertility and population; or to calculate her amazing physical strength when, if ever, a happier order of things shall have drawn her immense resources into fair and full operation.\*

"Bell Grove" estate opened a wide field for interesting observation, if my health and leisure had allowed me to gather what might have been learned from the ample experience of its industrious and observant owner. But having no minutes of our conversation, all that can be

\*It has been estimated that in Massachusetts proper, on an area of 6,000 square miles, there is at this moment a population of half a million, or eighty to the square mile—and that in a general survey, their climate and soil may be considered as of a medium character—an equal denseness of population, would give Virginia upwards of 5,000,000.

done is to offer, in a very desultory shape, some facts which appear, on recollection to be worthy of being stated.

Major H. was the first who introduced the use of Plaster of Paris, in connexion with the field culture of clover in the Valley of Shenandoah—and was well satisfied after more than twenty-five years experience, that its effect on clover and other crops, had greatly diminished: as a substitute for Gypsum, which had been for many years almost the sole reliance, he was about to construct kilns for burning lime, to which he had been more immediately induced by the essays of Doctor Black, of Delaware, published in the commencement of the second volume of this work.—The stone is inexhaustible in this valley, and it was matter of much surprise to me, that the farmers residing in it, should not have availed themselves of a resource so obvious, efficacious and plentiful. There prevails, of course, a want of information on the best method of constructing lime kilns—and I should feel particularly indebted to any one, who would enable me to supply my readers with the requisite particulars on this subject. A sketch might easily be made, which, being engraved would clearly represent the internal structure of the kilns, and accompanied with explanations, as to time, quantity and manner, would render the whole subject profitably familiar to the cultivators of a vast extent of country, on the face of which this valuable manure, has hitherto remained unemployed and useless.

The general system pursued by Major H., is a mixed one—under which the cultivation of the staple grains, wheat, rye, oats and corn are combined with the manufacture of some of these into spirit, and with grazing to a large extent—Cattle for grazing, are bought at his gate as they are driven down the valley. In some seasons the droves amount to 12,000 head. The average cost was about \$27 per head. They are generally purchased early in September, fed through the winter on straw and corn fodder—salted—and fattened the next summer and fall, and sometimes sold on the farm, but more generally sent to market and disposed of at an advance, heretofore, of little less than double their first cost.

Oxen are much used in the cart and harrow, by Major H., who is of opinion that they may and ought to be employed to do all the hauling on a farm—His oxen draw wood two miles as fast as horses, and he thinks they are coming into much more general use than formerly. The perverse prejudice against mules, noticed as being prevalent in Jefferson County, exists here with the same force, in defiance of the most unanswerable proofs of their incalculable value—amongst other ridiculous notions, an idea prevails that they do not possess sufficient strength. If this were the case, how does it happen that the practical farmer, in the habit