EASTON GAZETTE.

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Agricultural.

From the N. England Farmer.

FARMER'S CALENDER.

Gathering and securing Potatoes.—A variety of conflicting opinions have been and we believe still are entertained relative to the topic of digging and preserving potatoes. Formerly it was the custom among farmers to dig them early, while the tops were entirely green and the potatoes not ripe, nor indeed fully grown. They took care to dry them in the sun till the bulbs were almost as green as the balls or apples, and nearly as strong as so many quids of tobacco.—Potatoes treated in this way become poison for pigs, and very unwholesome for all other animals, including the great *rational* biped whose sagacity is as apt to go astray in this as in other matters of importance to his welfare. It was probably this and other injudicious modes of cultivating, managing, and using this crop, that caused those violent prejudices against the plant, which prevailed for a long time among the bulk of mankind, after the potatoe was first introduced and recommended as an article worthy of the attention of the rural economist. Even in this enlightened age and nation, we have known farmers nearly spoil their crop of potatoes by mismanagement in digging and securing them. Some of those wise cultivators who know too much to be taught, either by the lessons of experience or the dictates of reason, let them lay after they are dug, for several days, perhaps weeks, in the field, as if on purpose to spoil them.

But, of late years, more correct systems relative to this and other branches of husbandry are introduced and becoming prevalent. Men who unite science, good sense, and experience afford such lights that none but those whose mental optics are, as it were, hermetically sealed by obstinacy and prejudice, persevere in the use of bad means to attain good ends. Among others who have deserved well of their country and of mankind, by illuminating the path of the husbandman, the Hon. Mr. Fiske, of Worcester, has directed his attention to the subject under consideration. The remarks to which we allude are contained in his Address to the Worcester Agricultural Society, delivered October 3, 1833.

"While on the subject of the potatoe," says Mr. Fiske, "it may be worthy of remark, that it possesses one peculiarity distinct from any other germinating vegetable. It is not susceptible of vegetation until the season succeeding its growth. From this it seems obvious, that nature has not accomplished its maturation at this period when the vines decay, and the farmer believes it to be ripe. It seems probable that the earth, by some unknown process, perfects its qualities after it has attained its growth. That potatoes which have remained the whole season in the earth are more farinaceous and pleasant, has been ascertained. A farmer in this town, who was in the practice of planting a large quantity, took his family supply from a large field early in autumn. As the residue were intended for his stock, he deferred harvesting them until a late and more convenient period. During their consumption, his table was furnished with some which had been destined for the barn. The quality was so obviously superior as to lead to an investigation of the cause.—From that time the two parcels received an exchange of destination. Another fact illustrative of this position, was stated to me by an eminent farmer in the vicinity of Boston. A distinguished agriculturalist, from Scotland, who had dined at the best tables in this city and its neighborhood, remarked at the hospitable board of my informant, that he had not seen in this country what, in Scotland, would be considered a good potatoe. He imputed their difference to the different mode of cultivation. There they plant early and dig late. Surely the science of Agriculture must be in its infancy, when the cultivation of our most common and staple vegetables is in dispute."

The following paper from the transactions of the Society of Arts in London may be of use to those who wish to preserve potatoes in the best possible condition, either for sea stores, foreign consumption, or domestic use.

The usual mode at present practised for endeavouring to preserve potatoes, is to leave them, after digging, exposed to the sun and air until they are dry. This exposure generally causes them to have a bitter taste; and it may be remarked, that potatoes are never so sweat to the palate, as when cooked immediately after digging. I find that when potatoes are left in large heaps or pits in the ground, that a fermentation takes place which destroys the sweet flavor of the potatoes. In order to prevent that fermentation, and to preserve them from losing the original fine and pleasant flavor, my plan is, (and which experience proves to me to have the desired effect) to have them packed in casks as they are digging from the ground, and to have the casks, when the potatoes are piled in them, filled up with sand or earth, taking care that it is done as speedily as possible, and that all vacant places in the cask are filled up by the earth or sand; the cask thus packed, holds as many potatoes as it would were no earth or sand used in the packing; and as the vacant spaces in the cask of potatoes are filled, the air is totally excluded and cannot act on the potatoes, and consequently no fermentation can take place.

"I sailed from New York to St. Bartholomew, and brought with me two hundred barrels of potatoes, packed in the above manner.

"On my arrival at this island I found, as I expected, that the potatoes had preserved all their original sweetness of flavor; in fact, as good as when first dug, having undergone no fermentation, nor in the slightest degree affected by the bilge or close air of the ship. Some barrels of the potatoes I sold there, and at the neighbouring islands, for four dollars per bushel, and at the same time potatoes carried out in bulk, without packing, and others that were brought there packed in casks which had not been filled up with earth, sold only for a dollar per bushel, they being injured in the passage by the bilged air and fermentation, being bitter and bad, whilst mine were as perfectly sweet and dry as when first dug. What remained I shipped from St. Bartholomews to Jamaica, where they arrived in equally good condition, and sold at a higher price than they had brought at the former island; some of these casks of potatoes were put in a cool cellar by the purchaser at Jamaica, and on examining them when I was leaving the island, two months after, I found that they had in a very small degree sprouted, but that all their orriginal flavor was preserved."

CHARLES WHITLAW.

In order to preserve potatoes in sand or soil, it is not necessary to pack them in casks or other vessels. They may be mixed with a due quantity of the earth of the field in which they have grown, and put into bins in cellars, or buried in holes dug in the ground. The earth should be in such quantity as to keep them from the air and from the general contact with each other. Placed in this manner, they will not suffer from the heat nor frost, if deposited in a cellar which freezes. If surrounded by earth they will receive little or no injury from frost. It is wrong to suppose that the earth or sand in which they are embedded, should be perfectly dry. Some degree of moisture is necessary, in order to preserve the life of the root. If the vital or vegetative principle is destroyed, they will soon decay, by a sort of dry rot. They may, however, it is said, be cut into slices, and dried in an oven or kiln, and will then remain sweet and sound for years. We suppose that either the native juice of the potatoe should be expelled by heat, or the vegetative principle preserved by moisture, and a seclusion from the air.

From the Kinderhook Sentinel.

SHEEP HUSBANDRY.

In my last number, I endeavored to establish the position that the farmers generally, who grow sheep for the mutton and wool, have not yet obtained the most profitable kind of animal for that purpose. The next subject of enquiry is, whether taking the quality of the native sheep as they now are, the growth of them affords as much or more profit to the farmer—who keeps a small flock only to fill out the number of his stock—than it would be to raise the Saxon or Merino on account of the fineness of their wool. I know of no better way to come to a correct conclusion than simply to compare the first cost of each animal with the expenses of keeping and the profits.

A native ewe will cost say	$1 50	
Interest for one year	10	—1 60
The profits will be 3 1-2 lbs wool at 45 cents per lb	1 57	
Lamb	1 25	
Ewe when fattened	2 00	—4 82
Profits		3 22
A full blooded fine Saxon and Merino ewe, will cost say	3 50	
The profits will be 3 lbs of wool, which will sell at say 60 cts per lb.	1 80	
The chance for a lamb is one half of its value, *i e.* only one half of the ewes have a lamb, and if the lamb is worth $1 75, we allow	88	—2 43

Deducting the interest on $3.50 for one year, leaves $2.43 as the gross amount of profit. The annual profit on the native sheep is $3.22 and on the fine wooled it is $2.43. Thus a balance is left in favor of the coarse wooled or native sheep of 79 cents.

In the above comparison I have allowed 15 cents as the difference in the price of wool between the coarse and fine wooled animal, but if we go back for the last five years we will see that the actual sales of fine wool have approximated much nearer than that sum, and I do not think 10 cents would vary much from the real amount. This may be considered an additional argument in favor of the native sheep. For the native sheep, however I have given credit for a lamb positive. This to be sure is not always the case, but it is much more sure than it is in the Saxon or Merino for in a flock of the last named near one half of them will commonly go farrow. I account for the last circumstance from the fact that the buck is not put to the latter until late in the fall when the ewes have got over their heat; for it is all important that fine sheep, which are considered of tender constitutions, not to have lambs too early in the spring. With a native ewe however the buck is generally put a month earlier and of course the chance for a lamb (other causes being the same) is much greater. We see there is a great difference in the first expense between a common and a fine ewe, the latter costing more than double the price of the former, and as we have taken only the interest of this into calculation the chance therefore of losing the one may be put against the chance of having a lamb from each native ewe. Again the fine sheep do not often have lambs until the third year, so that until then the only profit from them is the wool, whereas with native sheep the ewes often have lambs when they are but one year of age.

It is manifest therefore that the difference is entirely in favor of the common sheep, and more money may be made in growing them by farmers, who do not entirely stock their farms with sheep, than to have the more expensive Saxon and Merino. Sheep for mutton and wool likewise, give the most sure and speedy returns. Their wool is much sooner bought up as there are ten purchasers for coarse where there is one for fine wool, and a lot of lambs or fat sheep are always in demand, the difficulty not being to sell them, but to keep them long enough to put them in proper condition for market.

The expenses of keeping the two kinds of sheep I have assumed to be the same but the truth is the Merino are the most expensive if they are kept as they ought to be, and were the latter wintered as most of our farmers in this vicinity winter their native sheep, one half of them would not live until a succeeding spring. Were farmers however to stock an entire farm with the native sheep, to the exclusion of cattle and tillage and expect to realize the profit above mentioned from them, they would be disappointed, for in that case by crowding so many on a farm the lambs would not be so valuable, and the sheep would not fatten with facility, which would lessen if not cut off two great sources of revenue.

The result of my inquiries therefore is that those farmers who plough, sow and keep horses and cattle, and only fill up the remainder of their farms with as many sheep as they can keep well, it is to their interest to have the common kind in preference to the fine sheep, because they can make a profit on both mutton and wool. But on a farm intended only for grazing, and where we do not mean to fatten either young or old, or keep sheep simply for the sale of the wool, and when it is an object to have as many on a farm as it can sustain, the Saxon and Merino on account of the superiority of their wool are of course the most valuable. I wish to have it borne in mind however, and hope to see it generally carried into effect that the native sheep both in their mutton and wool are susceptible of great improvement. Much more might yet be said upon sheep and sheep husbandry that is interesting to the farmer and wool-grower, but whether I shall undertake it, time and circumstances must hereafter determine. A.

Shoeing Horses.—From a report on agriculture in Flanders, we learn that, in that country the method of shoeing horses, is far superior to the English method. The shoe is so formed that the whole of the foot has a bearing. This strikes us to be necessary. Whereas the English farriers' shoe causes a bearing only on the edge of the hoof. To this is attributed many of the incurable lamenesses to which the horses of this country are subjected, such as corks, thrushes, contracted heels, &c.

The Post Mortem Cogitations of the late popular Mr. Smith.

I died on the 1st of April, 1823; and if the reader will go to the parish church of Smithton, ask the sexton for the key, and, having gained admission, if he will walk up the left hand side aisle, he will perceive my family pew beneath which is my family vault, where my mortal remains are now reposing; and against the wall, over the very spot where I used to sit every Sunday, he will see a very handsome white marble monument a female figure is represented in an attitude of despair, weeping over an urn, and on that urn is the following inscription:

"Sacred
to the Memory
of
ANTHONY SMITH, Esq.
of Smithton Hall,
who departed this life
on the 1st of April, 1823.
The integrity of his conduct & the amiability of
his temper, endeared him
to a wide circle of friends;
he has left an inconsolable Widow,
and by her
this Monument is erected

The gentle reader may now pretty well understand my position when alive; popularity had always been my aim, and my wealth and situation in society enabled me to attain what I so ardently desired. At county meetings—at the head of my own table—among the poor of the parish I was decided popular, and the name of Smith was always breathed with a blessing or a commendation. My wife adored me; no wonder, therefore, that at my demise she erected a monument to my memory, and designated herself, in all the lasting durability of marble, my "inconsolable widow." I had a presentiment that I should not be long lived, but this rather increased my thirst for popularity; and feeling the improbability of my living very long in the sight of Mrs. Smith and my many dear friends, I was the more anxious to live in their hearts. Nothing could exceed my amiability, my life was one smile, my sayings were conciliatory, my doings benevolent, my questions endearing, my answers affirmative. I was confirmed that my will unlike most wills, should be satisfactory to every body. I silently studied the wants and wishes of those around me, and endeavored to arrange my leavings so that each legatee should hereafter breathe my name with a blessing, and talk of 'that dear good fellow Smith,' always at the same time having recourse to a pocket handkerchief. I perpetually sat for my picture, and I gave my resemblances to all the dear friends who were hereafter to receive "the benefit of my dying."

So far I have confined my narrative to the humdrum probabilities of every day life, what I have now to relate may strike some of my readers as less probable, but nevertheless, it is not one jot the less true. I was anxious not only to attain a degree of popularity which should survive my brief existence, I panted to witness that popularity; unseen to see the tears that would be shed,—unheard to mingle with the mute mourners who would lament my death. Where is the advantage of being lamented if one cannot hear the lamentations?—But how was this privilege to be attained? Alas! attained it was; but the means shall never be divulged to my readers. Never shall another Mr. Smith, self-satisfied and exhulting in his popularity, be taught by me to see what I have seen, to feel what I have felt.

I had perused St. Leon; I therefore knew that perpetually-renovated youth had been sought and had been bought. I had read Frankenstein, and I had seen that wonders, equally astonishing and supernatural, had been attained by mortals. I wanted to watch my own weepers, nod at my own plumes, count my own morning coaches, and read with my own eyes the laudatory paragraph that announced my own demise in the country newspaper. I gained my point.—I did all this, and more than this; but I would not advise any universally admired gentleman and fondly idolized husband to follow my example. What devilish arts I used, what spells, what conjurations, never will I reveal, suffice it to say that I attained the object of my desires. Two peeps was I to have at those I left behind me,—one exactly a month after my demise, the second on that day ten years!

And now for the result of peep the first.

In some degree my thirst for posthumus popularity was certainly gratified; and I will begin with the pleasantest part of my own "post mortem examination."

My own house (or rather the house that had been mine) looked doleful enough: no mirth, no guests, no music, the servants in deep mourning, and a hatchment over the door. My own wife (or rather my relict) was a perfect picture of misery and mourning, in the extreme of the fashion. She heaved the deepest sighs, she was trimmed with the deepest crape, and wore the deepest hems that ever were seen. The depth of her despondency was truly gratifying. Her cap was most conscientiously hideous, and beneath its folds every hair upon her head lay hid. She was a moving mass of crape & bombasine. In her right hand was a pocket-handkerchief, in her left a smelling bottle, and in her eye a tear. She was closeted with a gentleman, but it was no rival—nothing to arouse one jealous pang in the bosom of a departed husband. It was, in fact a *marble masonic meeting*. She was giving directions about my monument, and putting herself into the attitude of lamentation in which she wished to be represented [and is represented] bending over my urn: she burst into a torrent of tears, and in scarce articulated accents called for her 'sainted Anthony.' When she came a little to herself, she grumbled somewhat at the extravagance of the estimate, knocking off here and there some little ornamental monumental decoration, bargaining about my inscription, and cheapening my urn!

She was interrupted by the entrance of a milliner, who was ordered to prepare a black velvet cloak lined with ermine; and no expense was to be spared. Alas! thought I, the widows's 'inky cloak' may well be warm; my black marble covering will be cold comfort to her. "Just to amuse you, ma'am," said the *marchande des modes*, "do look at some things that are going home for Miss Jones' wedding."

The widow said nothing; and I thought it was with a vacant eye that she gazed apathetically at satin, blonde, and feathers white as the driven snow. At length she cried abruptly, "I cannot—cannot wear them!" and covering her face with her handkerchief, she wept more loudly than before. Happy late husband that I was—surely for *me* she wept! A housemaid was blubbering on the stairs, a footman sighing in the hall: this is as it should be, thought I: and when I heard that a temporary reduction in the establishment was determined on, and that the weeping and sighing individuals had been just discharged, I felt the soothing conviction, that leaving their living mistress tore open the wounds inflicted by the loss of their late master, and made them bleed afresh. My dog howled as I passed him, my horse ran wild in the paddock, and the clock in my own sitting room maintained a sad and stubborn silence, wanting my hand to wind it up.

Things evidently did not go on in the old routine without it, and this was soothing to my spirit. My own portrait was turned with its face to the wall: my widow having no longer the original to look at, could not endure gazing at the mute resemblance! What, after all, thought I, is the use of a portrait? When the original lives, we have something better to look at; and when the original is gone, we cannot bear to look at it.—Be that as it may, I did not the less appreciate my widow's sensibility.

On the village green the idle boys played cricket; they mourned me not—but what of that? a boy will skip in the rear of his grandmother's funeral. The village butcher stood disconsolately at the door of his shop, and said to the village baker, who was despondingly passing by, "Dull times these, neighbor Bonebread! dull times. Ah, we miss the good squire, and the feastings at the hall."

On a dead wall I read, "Smith forever." "Forever," thought I, "is a long time to talk about."—Close to it I saw, "Mitts for ever," written in letters equally large and much more fresh. He was my parliamentary successor, and his politics were the same as my own. This was cheering; my constituents had not deserted my principles—more than that I could not expect. The "Smith" who, they said, was to be their representative "for ever," was now just as dead as the wall upon which his name was chalked!

Again I retired to my resting-place under the family pew in the church of Smithton, quite satisfied, that, at the expiration of ten years, I should take my second peep at equally gratifying, though rather softened evidences of my popularity.

TEN YEARS! What a brief period to look back upon! What an age in perspective! How little do we dread that which is certain not to befall us for ten years! Yet how swiftly to all of us will ten years seem to fly! What changes, too will 10 years bring to all! You schoolboy of ten, with his toys and his noise, will be the lover of twenty. The man now in the prime of life will, in ten years, see Time's snow mingling with his dark and glossy curls! And they who now are old—the kind, the cheerful, looking, as we say, so much younger than they really are—what will ten years bring to them?

The ten years of my sepulchral slumber passed away, and the day arrived for my second and last peep at my disconsolate widow and wide circle of affectionate friends.

The monument already mentioned, opened "its ponderous and marble jaws" for the last time, and invisibly I glided to the gates of my old domain. The old Doric lodge had been pulled down, and a Gothic one, all thatch and rough poles, little windows and creepers, (a sort of cottage gone mad,) had been erected in its stead. I entered, and could not find my way to my own house; the road had been turned, old trees had been felled, and new plantations made, ponds had been filled up, and lakes had been dug; my own little "Temple to Friendship" was not to be found, but a temple dedicated to the blind god had been erected in a conspicuous situation. "Ah!" thought I, "her love is a buried love, but not the less dear. To me—to her dear departed—to her 'sainted Anthony,'—this temple has been dedicated!"

So entirely was the part changed, that I did not arrive at the mansion until the hour of dinner.—There was a bustle at the hall door, servants were assembled in gay liveries, carriages were driving up and setting down, and lights gleamed from the interior. A dinner party;—no harm in that, on the contrary I deemed it fortunate. Doubtless my widow, still in the sober grey of ameliorated mourning, had summoned round her the best and the dearest of my friends; and though their griefs were naturally somewhat mellowed by time, they remembered me in their calm yet cheerful circle, and fondly breathed my name! Unseen I passed into the dining room—all that I beheld was new to me the house had been new built on a grander scale—and the furniture was magnificent! I cast my eyes round the table, where the guests were now assembled. Oh! what bliss was mine! At the head sat my widowed wife, all smiles, all loveliness, all pink silk and flowers—not so young as when I last beheld her, but very handsome, and considerably fatter. At the foot (oh! what a [illegible] compliment to me!) sat one of my oldest, dearest, best of friends, Mr. Mitts, the son of a baronet who resided in my neighborhood: his father, too, was there, with his antiquated lady, and the whole circle was formed by persons whom, living, I had known and loved. My friend at the bottom of the table did the honours well, (though he omitted to do what I think he ought to have done—drink to my memory,) and the only thing that occurred to startle me before the removal of dinner was my widow's calling him "*my dear*." But there was something gratifying even in that, for it must have been of me she was thinking; it was a slip of the tongue that plainly showed the fond yearning of the widowed heart.

When the dessert had been arranged on the table, she called to one of the servants, saying:—"John, tell Muggins to bring the children." What could she mean! who was Muggins? and what children did she wish to be brought! I never *had* any children! Presently the door flew open, and in ran eight noisy, healthy, beautiful brats. The younger ones congregated round the hostess; but the two eldest, both fine boys, ran to Mr. Mitts; at the bottom of the table, and each took possession of a knee. They both strongly resembled Mitts: and what was my astonishment when he exclaimed addressing my widow, "Mary, my love may I give them some orange?

What could he mean by "Mary my love?" a singular mode of addressing a deceased friend's relict! But the mystery was soon explained. Sir Marmaduke Mitts filled his glass, and after insisting that all the company should follow his example, he said to his son, "This is your birth day, Jack; here is your health my boy, and may you and Mary long live happy together! Come, my friends, the health of Mr. and Mrs. Mitts."

So then after all, I had come out on an exceedingly cold day to see my widow doing the honors as Mrs. Mitts?

"When is your birthday?" said Sir Marmaduke to his daughter-in-law.

"In June, she replied: "but I have not been in the habit of keeping birthdays till lately: poor Mr. Smith could not bear them to be kept."

"What's that about poor Smith?" said the successor to my house, my wife, and my other appurtenances. "Do you say Smith could not bear birth-days; Very silly of him, then; but poor Smith had his oddities."

"Oh!" said *my widow* and Mr. Mitt's *wife*. "We cannot *always* command perfection; poor dear Mr. Smith *meant* well, but every man cannot be a *Mitts*" She smiled, and nodded down the table; Mr. Mitts looked, as well he might, partic-

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