

Advantages of the Old and New
Husbandry
extracted from the Complete
English Farmer.

In the cultivation of lands, it is yet undecided, whether the Old or the New husbandry is the most profitable; yet if we may be allowed to judge from the general disregard paid to the New husbandry by the practical Farmers, who are as keen a set of Men, collectively considered, and as ready to embrace every project where the prospect of success presents itself, as any other class of Men in the kingdom, and if we consider farther the little success that has attended the practice of it, and the slow progress it has made both here and abroad, under the direction of gentlemen of the first eminence; we need not hesitate a moment in the present improved state of agriculture

agriculture in this kingdom, to pronounce in favour of the Old. But at the same times, it must be acknowledged, that the principles upon which the new is founded, are just in themselves, and that the practice only, being less simple and consequently less accommodated to the genius of those who are bred to common labour than the Old husbandry, is the great impediment to its advancement, and were there no other, would long prevent it from becoming the common husbandry of this or any other country.

M^r. Full the Inventor of the New husbandry, acknowledges that no less than five distinct tradesmen are necessary for making the Instruments required for carrying it on, all of whom must be taught by the undertaker, and satisfied for their time.

Sir Digby Legard commends M^r. Full's drill-plough, and M. du Hamel's hoe-plough, and says the first is made in his neighbourhood for fifty shillings, and the latter, for thirty.

(2034) By the nature of this husbandry, weeds must increase in proportion as the space allotted for them is to the space allotted for the grain that is sowed, which is as 70. to 1. consequently a more effectual instrument than as yet invented is necessary to destroy the weeds, as the present horse hoe, or the hand hoe are methods of abridging them which exceed the ordinary expense in the old husbandry of ploughing, sowing, and harrowing the whole crop.

Every Acre of Wheat according to this method requires but six horse-hoeings m^o Full says eight, these six hoeings cannot cost less than three plowings, and if the partitions are neglected to be hoed by hand, the destruction of Weeds will not be effected, but if this is done as often as the intervals are horse-hoed, the expense will be amazingly enhanced, and if the
New

New husbandry were in general practice, the present method of hand-hoeing could not be executed for want of hands, and were the intervals and partitions properly ~~shaded~~ ^{planted} ~~planted~~ ^{planted} should the ~~rows~~ remained unweeded they would stock the rest of the ground, besides this method requires a more diligent and expeditious labour than it will be likely to find a servant equal to perform.

To decide the question with candour it seems just to state the comparative views of the New husbandry over that of the Old or Virginian husbandry as produced by M^r. Full the author of the former.

1. The Virginian is commonly late in sowing, not being able to fallow his ground early for fear of killing the couch and other grasses that maintain his, & his sheep, which are so necessary to his husbandry.

Observation M^r. Full seems rather to have stated this stronger than the usual practice will justify.

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2. When Wheat is sowed late, it must not be sowed dry, least the winter might kill the young wheat; but it cannot then be plowed dry and sowed wet, because commonly sowed under furrows, that is the seed is first sowed and then instantly ploughed in.

Observation Mr. Full's position is liable to be disputed, but were it just the inference against late sowing can have no weight, as a dry season when the late sower puts his seed in the ground secures its being destroyed.

3. The sowing early in light land can only succeed if the ground is wet, least poppies and other weeds should devour his crop.

Observation Mr. Full should rather have objected to wet sowing as subject to weeds; poppies are only local annoyances.

4. Strong land whether sowed early, wet or dry is apt to grow so hard and strong by spring, that the crop is in danger of being starved, unless the land be rich, or much dunged; and then the winter and spring
sowing

proving kind, it may not be in less danger of being so big, as to fall down and be spoiled.

Observation. Were all this true, the old husbandry farmer could have no chagres for a crop, yet the experience of a thousand years proves the contrary.

5. If no impediment prevents the ploughing deep and sowing wet, there is seldom time for it, as all the ground must be ploughed, yet whilst it is wet no work can be done.

Observation. It seems here taken for granted that all the land is of one sort which very rarely happens.

6. When land is sowed under furrows, it is dangerous to plough very deep, for fear of too much burying the seed; and if shallow it loses a great advantage.

Observation. This objection has no force for the Virgilian plows deep for a fallow, and shallow when he sows his seed, which is the practice of the Fulkian when he plants with his drill-ploughs.

7. When land is sowed over furrows, it must be harrowed level to cover the seed, which exposes the Wheat the more to the cold winds,
and

and suffers the snow to be blown off it, and the water to lie longer on it, all which are great injuries to it.

Observation. That land lying rough, should discharge the water from it sooner, than land harrowed smooth cannot readily be admitted; indeed most of M.^r Full's objections against the old husbandry seem introduced that he may display the advantages of the new; in searching after truth therefore it is right to hear all he has said in favour of the new husbandry.

As to the hoeing husbandry is different in the following particulars

1. The two furrows on which the next crop is to stand can be plowed immediately after the present crop is off.

Observation. This is a great advantage.
2. The land does not require folding or any other Manure.

Observations. M.^r Full diminishes the advantages to the old husbandry from the fold, by confining its virtues to one year, and also enhances those of the new, by declaring it will produce better crops every year
without

without any kind of Measure, than the former
can have with it. Sir Digby Leonard Thompson
great friend to the New, has experienced as
such superiority.

3. The land can be plowed dry and drilled wet.
Observation. This practice is not in general
approved, and the land, except by a very
peculiar kind to suffer such a mode of
treatment.