

FOURTH ANNIVERSARY ADDRESS  
AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY

OF

NEW SOUTH WALES.

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1827.

THE FOURTH  
*ANNIVERSARY ADDRESS*

TO THE  
AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY  
OF  
NEW SOUTH WALES.

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BY THE  
PRESIDENT.

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*Read to the Society on the 15th of February, 1827.*

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1827.

## AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY.

THE FOURTH ANNIVERSARY ADDRESS OF THE AGRICULTURAL, AND FIRST, WITH THE ADDITIONAL STYLE OF HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY OF NEW SOUTH WALES, BY THE PRESIDENT OF THAT BODY.

*Gentlemen,*

**I**N MY LAST ANNUAL ADDRESS TO YOU, for want of more general and important information from the Members of the Society, I exhausted most of the Agricultural and Horticultural observations I had made since in the Colony, and the past year has not furnished interesting novelty upon these subjects to induce me at present to trespass on your time at unnecessary length.

The corn crops recently secured notwithstanding the disadvantage of a season of extreme drought, appear to be productive of average crops, and certainly more extensive than have been hitherto grown in the Colony. Wheat sown on this side of the Mountains in the months of April and May was more productive and clearer of smut and grass seed, than wheat was sown in June and July; barley, rye and oats were productive saving crops, but, unless the two former are cut before the customary period of ripeness much of the grain will be destroyed by the ravages of the wheat-moth and weevils.

The early September maize planted on rich alluvial banks of rivers and creeks promises to yield a moderate crop, and some planted in November on similar rich spots looks healthful, and will cob well, provided it is assisted with necessary rain in the course of the present month. But the generality of the forest ground maize is so stunted and cobless by the long continued parching drought, as must prove very discouraging to the cultivators. The stubble maize, commonly the most productive crop, has quite failed for want of growing moisture in the earth; upon the whole, great comparative diminution with former seasons must be experienced in the maize crop during the present year. Before I conclude my report upon the corn crops, I must express a hope, that country proprietors will consider the advantages of erecting wind-mills on suitable elevated situations to be found upon most estates. By such convenience they could reduce their corn early in the season to the safe keeping and portable state of flour, and consequently save the losses I have last year enumerated by insects and vermin, besides



the encouraging emolments to be derived by such mills being kept employed grinding the neighbouring corn.

The long drought, as was reasonable to expect, has materially affected the successive growth of the excellent and green crops we have been accustomed to in more favorable seasons.

I regret still to observe the cultivation of tobacco so slow in revival; the reduction of the prohibitory duty which took place unfortunately at a precise period in 1824, as let into our market from vessels in the harbour and the bonded stores, such a glut of foreign tobacco as completely discouraged our numerous cultivators before they were sufficiently skilled either in its growth or preservation to compete with foreign produce.

Much commendation is due to Mr. Frazer, the Colonial Botanist, not only for his experimental growth of the sea island cotton in the Sydney government garden, but also on account of his having sent specimens to Scotland and England, where it has obtained the most encouraging approbation of the highest manufacturing authority in Glasgow and Manchester.

The society is on this as well as on every occasion, where Mr. Barnard the Colonial agent can be serviceable, much indebted to that gentleman.

The superstrate of our soil more especially on the coast being generally combined with the muriat of sea salt to an extent very conducive to promote not only the fertile growth, but the most valuable quality of cotton. And the established fact of the soil and climate of Sydney having produced cotton of such encouraging promise, afford sufficient reasons to induce its cultivation at Port Macquarie and Moreton Bay, where the soil and climate are still more congenial to its growth and quality.

The dry season and blighting winds which prevailed in the months of September and October, considerably reduced the produce and a variety of fruit in our Colonial orchards.

The vineyards which are well situated and sheltered from the over parching influence of the morning sun, have a most abundant show of grapes, of very superior flavour; but the want of persons skilful in making wine, deprives many of the advantage they would otherwise derive from the luxuriant bearing of our vines in this apparent suitable season of drought.

The influence of the Turf Club continues to encourage proprietors of horses to send increasing numbers of mares to those thorough-bred blood entire horses imported from England, which I mentioned in my last address. From the Arab blood of many of our mares, the crosses of these horses cannot fail progressively to improve our Colonial stud.

Horned cattle are still increasing in numbers, and many herds improving in quality from the advantage of having obtained

superior bulls. However severe the effects of the dry weather upon the pasturage, and the scantiness of water in many places, still the cattle support wonderful good condition until the present time.

Notwithstanding the reduction in the price of wool in England last year, sheep continue to be objects of our primary consideration. The last season for the first time, occasioned considerable losses in a few flocks, most imprudently kept on spongy hills, boggy vallies, or moist flats locally to be met with in the Bathurst country and elsewhere; and the frequent and heavy falls of rain which took place in the course of the last summer and autumn, forced such a spring of succulent grasses and herbage in these wet spots as were calculated to disease and rot sheep to a still more fatal extent in most other climates. To prove that the disease originated in the local cause I have pointed out, it has come to my knowledge, that part of some of the flocks herded on these ill selected sheep stations, were removed to eligible dry runs before the wet season set in, where they preserved perfect health, nor have any of the Bathurst flocks, judiciously placed and managed, suffered excepting the loss of a few old ewes, owing in a great measure to the destructive effects of a more than commonly severe frosty winter upon their health and the nutriment of the grasses for their support. I had myself two flocks of sheep in the Bathurst country, and I am not aware of having lost one of them by disease; I attribute their very healthy condition, not only to the suitable dry pasturage they are placed upon, but the occasional use of the sheep ointment, which I recommended in my last address. When the season is wet I cause about a teaspoonful of common salt to be given to every sheep three times weekly, it may either be given plain or in solution, or in bran, or if even thrown in the yard, they are instinctively so fond of it, that they will lick up what they desire, and I believe it to be certainly do consider the best preventive of the rot or flukes in the liver yet known. I considered it necessary to offer the above opinions on the cause and preventive of the disease which proved so fatal in some flocks in the Bathurst country last year; least erroneous reports should go abroad, which might unfairly detract from the justly established healthful quality of our sheep wools.

The anxious competition and encouraging high prices given for years past, to importers of Anglo Merino ewes and rams have already furnished large sheep owners with a number of these to supply pure bred rams for their flocks, which so materially contributes to promote the rapidly improving quality of our wool. But since the arrival of the Saxon sheep imported into the Colony by Mr. Jones, Mr. Riley, the Australian Agricultural Company and others, many gentlemen consider

the quality of their fleece so superior to our pure Merinoes, that they readily gave to Mr. Jones at the rate of from £70 to £80 per head, for about a dozen of rams he obligingly sold to them, such high prices were given under the expectation, that every cross of such superior fleeced Saxon rams would gain years in the improving quality of our wool. As the Saxon sheep have been in the Colony sufficiently long to determine the influence of our climate upon their constitutions and quality of their fleeces, and also the promise of their increase, I was anxious to obtain information on these interesting heads from the highest qualified authority; I therefore addressed a letter to Mr. Dutton, requesting that he would have the kindness to furnish me with such information as he considered publicly useful, touching the above queries, and I made a similar request to Mr. Riley, both these gentlemen have obligingly replied to my application; and I consider their information so creditable to themselves, and containing such valuable public information, that I have appended them to this report. Messrs. Dutton and Riley, seem to attach superior purity of blood to the Saxon sheep, as descendants from the Royal Escorial flock of Merinoes long extinct in Spain. Whether it is from such purity of blood, or the judicious breeding, selections, and arrangements, or the artificial Saxon method of rearing sheep, certain it is that their wool is unrivaled in value in the British market. Therefore, as we possess a climate which I believe is justly allowed to have improved the fleece of every description of sheep yet imported into it. And if the clear and scientific opinions of Messrs. Dutton and Riley should establish the momentous fact of the improving influence of our climate upon the fleeces of the Saxon sheep, after only one year's experience; why then every public spirited sheep breeder who value their own interest, and the prosperity of the Colony should use all the means in their power to import Saxon sheep, more especially rams, for the improvement of their flocks. I now lay before you three fleeces of Mr. Riley's Saxon ewes which he sent to be exhibited to the Society, and he freely challenges comparative tests of quality. Accompanying the fleeces Mr. Riley also submits to the Society the model of a rack used in Saxony, calculated to prevent the fleeces of sheep when feeding out of it in winter suffering from the hayseed. I cannot refrain from congratulating the Society on the addition of such a useful and intelligent Member as Mr. Riley has already proved himself. It may be necessary to inform you, that Mr. Dutton is a Gentleman selected by the Directors of the Australian Agricultural Company (from the highest testimonials of his knowledge of Saxon sheep and sorting of wool.) to purchase the Company's electoral flock, and come out in superintendance of them to this Colony.

The unusual heavy and frequent falls of rain we experienced last summer and autumn, occasioned such increased growth of the indigenous grasses and herbage, which became so dry and parched by the long drought we have since suffered from, as to form a most destructive conductor of accidental fires over a great part of the pasturage on this side of the Mountains. And the prior removal of a considerable portion of our stock to distant tracts prevented that local close grazing which would have occasionally interrupted the rapid course of the devouring element. The occasional high winds during the two last months spread these fires far and wide with no trivial loss and danger to some of our rural population. And I much fear the flame was so powerful from the quantity of dry grass and the number of fallen limbs of trees which had been accumulating on the surface for years past, that not only all the cast seed, but so much of the roots of the grass burned as will require years to recover such a close productive sward as we possessed before the conflagration.

James Atkinson, Esq. of Oldbury, one of our original Members, has presented the Society with his lately published book, containing an account of Agriculture and Grazing in New South Wales: in virtue of which, Mr. Atkinson becomes a candidate for the gold medal offered by the Society for the best treatise upon these subjects.

I have attentively perused his book, and consider that it contains much experienced and useful information, not only calculated to instruct emigrants, but many of our old settlers also, and I beg to recommend it to the favourable consideration of the Society.

Mr. Barnard, the Colonial Agent, continues to present the Society with the regular numbers of the Mechanics Magazine as they are published.

Mr. Deputy Commissary General Goodsir, has obligingly presented the Society with a box of Botanical seeds from Calcutta, amongst them are a great number from the distant Region of Nopaul—which may prove suitable to our climate, the are to be cultivated in the Society's Garden.

The Treasurers have £193 cash in hand, and the yet uncollected subscriptions amounts to £481: making in all £674.

JOHN JAMISON, President.

Sydney, 12th December, 1826.

Sir,—I have had the honour of receiving your letter of the 10th instant, and in reply to your questions respecting the influence which this climate evinces towards improving the fleeces of the original Saxon sheep imported into this Colony, beg to state as follows:—

From a minute examination of Mr. Riley's Saxon wool, dur-



ing sorting, I am led to believe that it has gained in elasticity, thereby acquiring an additional length of pile, without losing that closeness and shortness of staple which the manufacturers call close crowded, and which is only to be met with in the Saxon wools. If this quality increases in the descendants of fine Saxon blood, which with a well judged selection of the breeding animals it must do, it will not only give a weightier fleece to the producer, but I am also of opinion that it will give rise to a new character of wool, infinitely superior to the present Electoral wool, which must naturally tend to create a new branch of manufacture, the raw materials of which must be exclusively derived from this Colony. As the fineness of the wool depends upon the number of curves, or undulations, contained in a given space, and as these curves are the immediate cause of elasticity, it is evident that the quality alluded to above must tend to increase the fineness, the softness, mildness and pliability of the cross-bred wools of this country, lead me to conclude, that these desirable qualities, inherent in our climate, will also be transplanted, in an eminent degree, on the progeny of the real Saxons and of their crosses.

The constitutions of the Saxon sheep are naturally tender, but as the climate in Germany, throughout the greatest part of the year, is of an inclement nature, I must think that the transplanting them to a dry and salubrious a climate as this is, would even strengthen the constitutions of the original sheep, I can have no doubt of this being the case with the increase. It is evident in Mr. Riley's lambs, for I never saw a finer crop than they are.

It is thus to me evident, that nothing but the very finest sheep, imported direct from Saxony (such as these of Mr. Riley's, who certainly has shewn great judgment in his selection) can so rapidly improve the quality of wools in this Colony; and I am as perfectly convinced, that if proper attention be exercised in breeding the fine Saxons, we shall be able to transmit, from this country, a wool hitherto unknown to the manufacturers, but at which the Saxon sheep breeders aim as their beau ideal.

I have only spoken of Mr. Riley's sheep, they having been in the Colony twelve months, and having myself assisted in sorting the fleeces, I could assert what I have said with reference to them with confidence. With Mr. Jones's sheep I am unacquainted, having only once examined them casually in the bush; I therefore refrain from giving an opinion as to them.

The Saxon sheep of the Australian Agricultural Company have suffered since arrival in the Colony, from a variety of external influences, which as they were unusual, may not occur again, or if they do recover, can easily be guarded against.

The superiority of the Saxon blood over the best Spanish sheep, is owing to their having been selected in 1765 from the Escorial flocks of the king of Spain. The persons who selected them were ordered, under a penalty of fifteen years imprisonment, to chose the best. The Escorial flock was broken up about forty years ago, and no traces of it now remain in Spain; whilst the Saxons, with their most valuable foundation, have for the last sixty years been improving the original Escurials, until they have, at last, so completely cast off the character of Spanish wool, that it has been, for some time known in trade, by the name of Electoral wool.

It is therefore clear, that we must not look either to Spanish or Anglo-merino blood, for attaining quickly that perfection of which the sheep of this country, aided by the climate, and fine Saxon rams, would so soon be susceptible.

I shall be happy, at all times, to communicate any thing which you may think worthy of the notice of the sheep breeders of this Colony to you, for their information; I mean with respect to the Saxon method of selecting and managing the flocks. In the mean time, I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

W. H. DUTTON.

To Sir John Jamison, Knt. A. A. &c. &c. Regentville.

Raby, January 13, 1827.

SIR.—Agreeably to your request, I now communicate to you a statement of those particulars that you wished to possess, relative to Saxon sheep, more particularly with regard to those imported by myself direct to this country, and I shall add a few observations of the effects which this climate has already produced on the fleeces of the originals from which I am led to deduce the most favourable results on their descendants.

As the most mistaken notions seem to be prevalent respecting the origin of the electoral flocks, I beg leave to give you the following particulars, the authenticity of which I can affirm in the most indubitable manner:—In 1765, at the close of the seven years war, when the electorate of Saxony was devastated by the enemy, the King of Spain made his cousin, the elector, a present of 300 sheep from the Royal Escorial flock.

The Majoral or Spanish flock masters were ordered, on pain of fifteen years imprisonment, to select the finest from this flock, and two of them were sent with the same to Saxony. In 1774, another flock was then purchased by the recommendation of Count Einsiedel, the elector's prime minister—these also were selected by a particular favour from



the same flock, and they arrived in Saxony, although with considerable reductions by death. The prejudices against them on their introduction, were almost unmountable, but by a royal decree, no government domains were farmed without the proprietors entering into bond to improve his common stock of sheep with these rams.

The success of these people soon induced other landed proprietors to make a similar experiment, and this, aided by the principal noblemen at court, it became a fashion, and ultimately was the means of relieving the electorate from an overwhelming debt, and of laying the foundation to unrivaled prosperity. Commencing with sheep never exported to any other country, bestowing the most exemplary care on their improvement, breeding with judgment for one particular point. The Saxons have now attained an unequalled pre-eminence in the intrinsic value of their wools, which, as much as they surpass those of Spain and other countries, bear no affinity to any of them. The Saxon wool never can be produced anywhere, excepting by the use of the present breed of electoral rams—the causes are evident. The total extinction of the Escurial breed in Spain, the amalgamation of the Spanish flocks on the suspension of the rights of the *Mesta* (by which alone they could exist) all tend to obliterate that purity of descent which alone could have insured the success of an experiment similar to that undertaken in Saxony sixty years ago. Although the flocks of pure descent in Saxony still bear the palm in the sale of their breeding animals, yet, from the constant use of their male blood during a succession of generations, the generality of the cross bred flocks in no wise differ either in fineness or other qualities, from their ancestors—in fact, many of them even surpass them.

The electoral wool is valued, firstly on account of its extreme fineness. This was produced by the system pursued in breeding, and which was first discovered by the exact value found to exist between the number of ewes in a given space of wool and its fineness. This quality is also the cause of elasticity, which, in its perfection, induces that closeness of staple peculiar alone to the electoral wool, and which is so highly prized by the manufacturer.

The curve must be regular from the top of the pile to the bottom—the greater the number of bends the finer will be the wool; but I by no means wish to advocate that irregular distorted bend termed *trussed*, which is as prejudicial to the fleece as the other quality is beneficial. The ewe fleece, No. 3, illustrates these three qualities in an eminent degree.

The constitutions of these animals may be compared to that of the blood horse, or other animals of similar perfection, but I have not the least hesitation in saying, that the rising generation will become as hardy as any sheep in this country. I must, however, observe, that their immense value more than treble repays any care and expense that can be bestowed on them. The loss of one is equal to that of ten times the number of Colonial sheep—I therefore take every means in my power to cherish them; at the same time I repeat (when their numbers increase to such an extent as to preclude) I have no fear that they will thrive equally, with the same treatment and food, of the sheep of this country. Their constitutions, although tender, cannot be called weak; as an instance, I need only give the following statement of the flock at Raby:—I purchased, eighteen months ago, 160 ewes and 20 rams; I now have 162 original ewes and 19 rams, one being drowned here by carelessness. The increase this year amounts to 158 lambs, all thriving, and in every respect surpassing my most sanguine expectations.

The fleeces I transmit to you for inspection, they have twelve months in the Colony, and it is my opinion they have gained considerably in elastic and plastic qualities; and I expect that next year the fleeces will average three pounds and a half; although now from the effects of a long sea voyage—the unparalleled severities of the last winter, and the reduction in affording nutriment to a flock of lambs, they will not, this year, average more than two pounds and three quarters.

As I have before stated, the increase answers all my wishes in numbers, and, as far as I can judge from outward appearance, also the most distinguished qualities. However, next spring I shall be able to judge with confidence; and as it is my intention to dispose of some of the rams, the public will have an opportunity of estimating the correctness of my present statement.

I submit to you, Sir, for the inspection of the Society, of which you are President, the accompanying three ewe fleeces; I hope it may be in the power of other importers to lay before you similar specimens of their flocks; and, I assure you, that it will afford me the greatest satisfaction, as an Australian patriot, if these specimens should equal the ones I now present, even labouring as they are under the disadvantages I have above stated. I must, however, apprise you, that the fleeces are by no means picked; for it was only during the shearing of the last score of sheep, that I determined retaining a few for that purpose; therefore they must not be considered as the best, although I am sanguine enough to hope they will not be sur-

passed in this Colony, aided by the experience of foreigners, pursuing their best breeds of sheep, with a climate in every degree calculated to improve them, at no expence for artificial feed. I can only augur from the emulation and spirit which we possess as Englishmen, and from the capital which has been already vested by gentlemen in this stock, that we shall not only soon rival the Saxon wool in the emporium of the world (London), but I hope to live to see the day when Australian Electoral wool will shine at the head of the Price Current, and form a standard for the sale of the wools of other countries.

I shall be happy in affording you, or any other gentleman, any information in my power, as I consider that it is only by mutual communications, untainted by envy or jealousy, that we can expect to prosper in this most important branch of Australian industry. I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

EDWARD RILEY.

To Sir John Jamison,  
President of the Agricultural Society of New South Wales, &c.