

FLAX CULTURE

AND OTHER THINGS

DEAR SIR,—In reading the reports of the growing crops, it is most gratifying to find the prospects of the coming harvest so promising. Although it is admitted, and much to be regretted, that we are not without the ravages of the midge in some descriptions of wheat, and occasionally in the crop of barley, it is nevertheless a source of great satisfaction to know that there are certain descriptions of wheat known as midge-proof, that this destructive insect cannot damage to the same extent as some of the older kinds of grain formerly in use in this country. For the importation of a large quantity of this midge-proof wheat for seed the country is deeply indebted to the enterprising firm of Gooderham & Worts, of Toronto, whose good example in this respect is well worthy of imitation by other capitalists in different sections of the country where but little of this kind of wheat is known.

To those who have been unfortunate in having their wheat injured by the midge or weevil, a word of advice respecting a cure by substitution may not prove inopportune. Strange as it may appear, little or nothing has been said by our papers of the appearance and prospect of the Flax crop, while at this moment there are hundreds of acres sown in the country, and presenting the most beautiful appearance. In the Township of Toronto, where little or none has ever been sown before, some eight hundred acres are under crop, and it would well repay any lover of his country, or zealous agriculturist, to visit a plot of some thirty acres on the model farm of William Gooderham, Esq., Meadowvale. It is now between three and four feet long, and thick in proportion, presenting at this moment the most beautiful appearance, being in full bloom, with that blue-bell peculiar alone to this plant.

Now the advice which I would respectfully tender is this, that other farmers would follow the good example set by Mr. Gooderham, who never grew a stalk of flax before in his life; but is nevertheless so deeply impressed with the importance of the crop and the necessity which exists for encouraging its growth, that his firm is making all the necessary preparation for scutching and preparing the fibre for market; and in all probability we will see, ere the season passes, a linen manufactory started in some of those fine mills on the River Credit, where not only scutching will be carried on, but spinning and weaving to a large extent. Then, I say, if such projects are feasible in one county in Canada, why not in another, and in the name of common sense let us turn our attention to the establishment of manufactories, and let the grumbling system cease, that seems to have got into the mouths of every one of late. A perusal of a letter in the *Globe* of the 21st instant, comparing matters as they stand in Canada and the United States, ought to satisfy any reasonable mind that Canada has still many advantages, if only brought into requisition. What can compare with this country in respect of the water power, the mineral deposits, and the vast amount of valuable timber, from which immense wealth can still be realized?

The advantages of introducing flax-growing in Canada are numerous; while both seed and fibre are turned to good account; this crop, unlike wheat or barley, is not in any instance liable to the ravages of the midge or weevil, and wherever it is sown is a certain remedy for *fire worm*. The manufacture of this article into domestic goods for home consumption, furnishes at the same time employment for a large number of hands, of a class too that could not earn as much at any other work. A great deal of the work, both out and in-doors, can be carried on by girls and young boys, of from 10 to 15 years of age, while the more experienced mechanic will find ready employment at good wages. I may remark that too much attention cannot be given to the harvesting of this valuable plant; and while care is required in pulling, keeping the butt ends as even as possible, still more depends on the attention given while dew-rotting is going on: in this process a difference in value of several pounds per ton may be made. After remaining on the grass eight or ten days, it should be turned over, and allowed to remain until the woody part will leave the fibre freely, which will take place generally in eight or ten days. If allowed to remain too long on the grass it is liable to a deal of waste in the scutching; hence considerable loss; besides, the quality of the fibre is never so good. On the contrary, if taken up too soon a difficulty will be met in preparing the fibre and getting it completely free of the woody

parts; it is, therefore, most essential to have it taken off the grass at the proper moment, which is easily known by rubbing a few stalks between the fingers; and when the fibre leaves the stem freely it is ready to "lift." When parties water their flax, the same rule applies.

It is not anticipated, whatever the failure of wheat may be, to abandon its growth altogether in advocating the growth of flax, but a portion of the farm may, with great propriety, be appropriated for flax. Say from five to ten acres each year, if less than this, proper care and attention is seldom given, and it often happens that after the farmer has taken a good deal of pains to prepare his grounds in the Spring, and sow only an acre or two, the quantity being small, he does not look upon it as of sufficient importance to command that attention in harvest and after harvest it so well deserves, hence he fails to get the return he expected, and flax is put down as an unprofitable crop.

In all cases, the farmer requires to give flax the best of cultivation and attention, both in the preparation of the soil and in the sowing and saving. The best proof of his success in this particular consists in the fact that when parties who thoroughly understand it and give this crop the necessary attention it requires, a difference of fifty per cent is often obtained over those who are careless in attending it properly.

Trusting, therefore, that these hints may not be altogether unheeded by our agriculturists, and feeling confident we are on the eve of better times in Canada, I beg leave to conclude these remarks, imperfectly thrown together, by stating that although we are only getting about one-fourth of the emigrants arriving in Canada this season, those who do remain find ready employment at good wages at this agency. We have not been able to supply a tithe of the demand we have for good farm labourers and domestic servants. The former can have \$120 a year, with a free house to live in, firewood for nothing, grass for a cow, and a piece of ground for a garden. The latter, that is domestic servants, are much sought after, and can readily obtain from four to five dollars per month. Parties applying at the emigration office, Toronto, will be directed where they can find immediate and permanent employment at these rates.

JOHN A. DONALDSON,
Gov. Em. Agent.

Toronto, June 26th, 1885

Spirits of Turpentine.

This staple rose to a very high price, soon after the sources of supply in the Southern States were cut off by the rebellion. From 20 cents per gallon, it rose to 35c. The high rates stimulated the manufacture of turpentine in other countries. From France, Germany, and Norway, considerable quantities were exported. In the Northern States, in California, and in our own province, the manufacture was carried on. Substitutes were also resorted to, so that the price has gradually diminished, until now good Southern Spirits of Turpentine can be bought for \$1.20 per gallon.

It is not likely that any of the substitutes will be employed while good Turpentine can be had. The Benzole probably answers best in place of turpentine. It is, however, exceedingly dangerous, from its volatility and liability of the vapour to combustion. Serious accidents have happened from paints made with Benzole. As a solvent, it is quite equal to turpentine but painters complain of its want of 'body' in mixing with lead. A new substitute made in the North and in Canada has appeared in market, it is called Spirits of Turpentine, but is very different from the Wilmington, it is not equal in any respect, and is more properly a Spirit of Tar or Wood Naphtha. This is sold at \$1.20 in this market, and meets with ready sale. For the ordinary uses of Turpentine this Spirit, which is distilled from the wood and roots of the pine, will no doubt be useful; but for the manufacture of varnishes and paints it will never come into general use, as its want of uniformity of strength and of specific gravity will render its employment inconvenient, and frequently will occasion serious loss. The Wilmington Turpentine has peculiar properties as a solvent and drier, which will render it always the best to use. The French Turpentine is next to the Wilmington, in value, and has been largely used in the Northern States. By redistillation an article is produced nearly equal to the Wilmington. We anticipate a reduction in price as soon as Northern enterprise shall have provided new works at the South for the manufacture of Turpentine.

BRIGHT PROSPECTS.

THE prospects of an unusually good harvest still continue to be most promising. Private letters from various parts of the country, confirm the notices which we find in many of our exchanges, stating that the crops never presented a more flourishing appearance at this season of the year. The wheat is very abundant, and it would appear that it has not been subjected to the ravages from the midge to anything like the usual extent. The hay crop is represented as being exceedingly luxurious, which will probably have an important effect on the Cattle market. All kinds of cereals will give a large yield for the amount of ground under them, and we understand that the flax crop, which is assuming very formidable proportions in this country, is presenting a most prosperous appearance.

Unless some unpropitious circumstance should occur which we see no reason to anticipate, the abundant proceeds of the coming harvest will go far towards counteracting the ill luck which has been dogging us for the last couple of years.

IMPORTS FOR FIVE MONTHS

PORT OF MONTREAL.

We present herewith a table showing the imports at Montreal of the leading items in trade, from 1st January to 31st June of the present year as compared with the same period last year—

	1884.	1885.	Decrease.
Cottons.....	\$1,406,620	\$829,402	\$1,038,218 = 55 1/2 %
Woolens.....	1,569,531	879,287	691,244 = 44
Silks, &c.....	215,085	171,471	43,614 = 20 1/2
Sugars.....	631,062	413,590	217,472 = 34 1/2
Teas.....	1,369,873	688,582	681,291 = 50 1/2
Coffee.....	60,503	20,763	39,740 = 65 1/2
Hardware.....	376,271	195,348	180,923 = 48
Iron.....	383,101	223,022	160,079 = 42

PRODUCE PRICE LIST

FOR GREAT BRITAIN.

Prices of Produce F. O. B. at Montreal, 4 per cent commission included at 9 1/2 per cent. ad.

WHEAT—U. C. Wheat	per 480 lbs. Non	
U. C. Spring	"	38s 3d
States White	"	None
No. 1 Red Winter	"	None
No. 2	"	None
Millwaukee No. 1	"	34s 0d
Chicago No. 1	"	34s 0d
CORN—Mixed	"	21s 9d
Yellow	"	None
White	"	None
PEAS—U. C. White	"	31s 0d
FLOUR—Canada Superfine	per bbl.	21s 9d
" Fancy	"	21s 0d
" Extra	"	25s 0d
" Superior	"	26s 0d
Western States Superfine	"	20s 6d
Welland Canal	"	20s 6d
OATMEAL	"	18s 6d
ASHES—Pots, lsts.	per 112 lbs.	25s 0d
Pearls	"	22s 0d
BUTTER—Good Dairy	per cwt.	78s 0d
Grease	"	50s 0d
CHEESE—Factory	"	51s 0d
Dairy	"	45s 0d

Varnishes.

There is the usual amount of business being done in this manufacture. Turpentine is declining gradually as trade with the Southern States resumes its old channels, but even at the old price it cannot supersede Benzine. Turpentine we quote at \$2.00 per gallon and Benzine 50 to 55c.

Prices' Current Page.

On the Prices' Current page our readers will find besides correct quotations of most articles of trade, a complete list of the new failures, with notices of meetings of creditors, appointments of assignees, writs of attachment issued, and applications for discharge; also a comparative statement of the receipts of produce at Montreal, from 1st January of 1884 and 1885, together with a valuable table, shewing the imports of the leading items of trade at the port of Montreal, from 1st January of the present year, compared with the same period of 1884.