

Correspondence.

IMPORTANT TO FARMERS!

"Kohl Rabi."

SIR.—It is not often that I intrude upon your columns with any remarks of mine regarding agricultural matters, but as it seems to me that the above-named root at the head of this article is but little known, with all its advantages and desirability, to the Canadian farmer, I have thought it would not be amiss to state through the medium of your widely circulated journal what I know of the merits of this plant, and to suggest that the enterprising agriculturists of Canada give it the consideration and trial which it is worthy of.

In the first place I may safely say that the failure in many parts of the country of the turnip crop the two last hot, dry summers—but more especially the last one—has caused the cultivator of field roots to reflect seriously on a substitute for its failure; and I know of no root that can be grown for stock that will always insure the farmer against so severe a loss as he has of late suffered from his turnip crop, as the Kohl Rabi.

I have seen heavy crops of this desirable root grown in the old country to great advantage in dry summers, when the turnip crop has proved a partial failure, on the same farm, with no other preparation than an ordinary one for turnips and other roots. And I have heard of the same success attending the cultivation of this root by farmers in this Province the last two dry summers, who thought themselves fortunate, as the seasons turned out, in having given it a trial; and a great desideratum of this crop is that it can be grown upon soil that you hardly expect would produce a crop of turnips. Never mind how strong the nature of the soil may be, provided it is deeply ploughed and well pulverized, with as much manure as you can give it.

The reason you are sure of this crop in dry weather is that it is cabbage-rooted and consequently goes deeper into the soil and wider in search of food than does the turnip, and the moisture it finds prevents any stagnation of growth in dry weather; hence the bulk you obtain both above and in the soil.

There is not a more forcing or stronger green food than the head of this plant affords for fattening either sheep or cattle, and this has been proved and is freely admitted over and over again in the old country, but more especially so with regard to sheep; and as a much heavier weight per acre can be grown than of turnips, it must be in every respect a very desirable root to cultivate, particularly so as it requires no more labor than the turnip to produce it. I should say two lbs. of seed to the acre would be sufficient, thinning out the plants the same as you would the turnips.

After the head of the root is eaten off, towards the fall of the year, when the grass keeps becomes so valuable and scarce, the roots will increase in growth if sufficient time is allowed, and they can afterwards be stored away for winter feeding; at that period I have known the bulbs to weigh as high as from twelve to fifteen pounds each, with good cultivation.

AGRICOLA.

[Accept our thanks for your article; we should like to hear more from your pen.—We think this plant deserves a little more attention than it has had. When we were attending the Guelph Exhibition we saw several specimens, and while conversing about them we were informed that Messrs. Sharp, Bros., seedsmen of Guelph, had adopted a rather sharp practice. They tried to talk farmers into the benefit of sowing Kohl Rabi, but talking hindered the business, and they resolved to adopt another method. They put a handful or two of the Kohl Rabi into each lot of turnip seed they sold, and risked the censure

of their numerous patrons. The result in some instances acted like a charm; some farmers had their turnips eaten by the fly, but the Kohl Rabi remained, and they did not know the difference until the bulbs began to form. Some were vexed at first, but when the crop matured and they found what they had, they were highly delighted. We hear that several about Guelph intend purchasing seed this year. We would not advise our readers to abandon the turnip, carrot or mangold, but would advise a trial of a small quantity of this plant. We will put a small package of this seed separately in every pound of turnip, carrot or mangold seed we send out, unless specially ordered to the contrary. We shall give it as a present; the quantity will be but small, but sufficient to show how it will answer.—Ed.]

HOW TO SELECT DRAIN TILE.

Strike the tiles together; if the sound produced by the concussion is of a clear metallic ring, the tiles are hard burned and free from checks; if they have a dull leaden sound, they are soft burned and liable to dissolve. The test by striking is the best one known, and is used by engineers in selecting pipes for city sewers, for which purpose every one is thus tried. It would, however, be very tedious to subject all common tiles to this test, but by subjecting a few of different shades of color, one will be able to tell by the color those that are well burned. The red color of tiles is owing to the pressure of oxide of iron, or some vegetable pigment. If it is due to the presence of iron the tiles will grow darker colored under increasing heat, until they assume a mahogany color. Of such clay are made the Scotch pipe imported, and used in large quantities in the city of New York; also the "black pipe," exclusively used in the city of Chicago. They are made from an inferior quality of Stone-ware clay. A Stone-ware clay will retain the form in which it is moulded until the body of the ware is semi-vitrified, and the surface melted, forming a glaze. There is no Stone-ware clay in Ontario. The common clay of Ontario will only bear a heat sufficient to change the color of the tiles to a dark red, or cherry color. Those of a lighter red are not so well burned, and those of a dingy red are soft burned and liable to dissolve.

In judging by the color of tiles colored by vegetable matter, the reverse is the rule. They are darker colored in the early part of the burning, and grow lighter colored as the heat is increased, until they become white, or nearly so, then have a yellow tint, which changes to a very light green tint. If the heat is then increased the tiles very soon lose their shape, and melt.

The color is slightly affected by the absorption of water. No tiles should be laid before ten days after burning, so that if there be any lime in them it may have time to slack.

GEO. S. TIFFANY.

SIR.—I send you my sincere thanks for the prizes you sent my son, for the Cotswold ram lamb. He has a splendid fleece of wool on him, measuring eleven inches, and of a very fine quality. It is much better than I expected, from what you wrote to me, that it was in poor condition. I think it is better than if over-fed when young. And also, for your improved Berkshire boar; he is a beauty. My son intends to continue getting subscribers, as he wants to get some more of your valuable prizes, but as he is only eleven years of age, he is too young to canvass far from home. He got the most of his subscribers that he sent you after school hours. If your new subscribers appreciate your paper as I have done for the past year, I think they will all continue taking it, and recommend it to others, as your ADVOCATE is suited to all classes of the farming community, whether old practical farmers or new beginners, as it reminds the one of what he may have forgotten, and instructs the other in what he wants to know. I cannot go into detail of the benefits that may be received from you through the ADVOCATE.

R. W. CARSON.

Clarke, March 15, 1873.

DEAR SIR.—I have read your two essays on Culture of Carrots. I think highly of "Young Farmer's." I can't agree with Mr. W. G. St. John—1st, I like to see the same crop all through my field, a patch of carrots and the rest of the field stubble from July till you get your carrots out. Suppose you wanted to lay your wheat, part down in proper grasses, as is generally done? 2nd, I don't see it gives a better chance to prepare the ground than in the spring. A person ploughs deeply in the fall the fields he intends for potatoes, roots, and green crops; here he is laboring the whole field for a root crop; gets in his carrots first, potatoes, with mangold and turnips last; if he runs short of manure he can pound up bones, plaster, &c., to finish off his field with the turnips; but this thing of carrots and wheat in the same field is no farming, all your fields the same turn. 3rd, I don't think any spring seed is more likely to germinate by lying in the ground all winter, nor do I believe the seed has half the vigor. It will have to be planted properly, at the proper time in the spring. There may be some little hollows in your land, and if water lodges your seed is done. Again, let any farmer look at the state his garden is in, in the spring and summer,—as hard as some roads. Then, ground manured in the fall! It is impossible to keep down weeds except by turning it over or cultivating. I would not take the gift of a piece of carrots planted in the fall, to keep it clean with the hoe. The great point now in farming is, to do our work with the least possible labor. When a farmer takes \$250 and board for a hand out of his profits on 100 acres, it opens his eyes a little. No, no! Make your drills so that you can make use of both your plough and cultivator. It improves the land so much.

I am much pleased with your good, honest memorial respecting this cumbersome and dreadful expensive Agricultural Farm. It is all very well for office hunters, and those who have lined their pockets well out of agriculture. Humbugging gents, who expect good fat offices for themselves, or their dear friends. It is all very fine for these so-called practical ploughmen and farmers to shout, get up this institution, and that institution; the farm here to-day, and there to-morrow; making a political scape-goat of it, over the whole Province. The honest, industrious farmer has to pay the piper for these dancing excursions and big feeds. Mr. Christie may be a thundering fine farmer, and able to swell a regular practical farm. What I call a practical farmer is a man who has held his own plough; knows how to plough; has followed it from his infancy; has a place like a farm—not a hole that you would think Bullrun Hearnes was after inspecting. How Mr. Christie has railroaded free! I dare not say drunk, but he may have stretched his rural sides on the "canoe couch damask." Did Mr. McKellar tell Mr. Christie where he ever ploughed a day in his life? Did he give him a description of his here and there and everywhere Model Farm? And yet he is a practical fall ploughman! What a humbugging world this is! No, sir, this Model Farm will be only a political den to fleece the Province. Rent it, at a fair rent, to a couple of good Old Country men, who are practical farmers—no humbug; bind them to proper rotationary cropping; bind them, that any proper, moral young man, who wishes to be instructed in true practical farming, shall get said instruction free to himself, and free to the country, for his own work on the farm. If the farmers of Ontario would open their eyes—not allow themselves to be hoodwinked any longer, they would let these political practical farmers look to their own dens.

AN OLD FARMER.

DEAR SIR.—I have often thought of writing to you, to express my approval of your conduct in regard to the agricultural college affair. Although I believe that an agricultural college, conducted by real practical farmers, would be of benefit to the country, still, I as firmly believe that the Government has been humbugging the thing from beginning to end, for reasons already advanced by you through the columns of your valuable paper.

If agriculture was taught in our country schools—such books as "Johnston's Elements of Agricultural Chemistry"—or, if the Government would pay some of our leading farmers to set aside a few acres of their farms, for the purpose of trying agricultural experiments, and report the same through the

agricultural press, it would be of more benefit to the country than half a dozen agricultural colleges.

I like your rotation of crops described in your last issue very much. My rotation is, 1st year, summer fallow; 2nd, wheat; 3rd, clover; 4th, clover; 5th, oats, and the cereals, and repeat. I have, in a great measure, dispensed with bare summer fallows, sowing peas and beans as a clearing crop; I put all my manure on this crop.

As there is a large strip of wild pasture land on my place, I do not use any of the tillable land for pasture.

Query.—Could not a joint stock company be formed, and issue the FARMER'S ADVOCATE bi-monthly or even weekly?

I remain, my dear sir,

Yours respectfully,

R. K. KERNIGHAN.

Rockton, Rushdale, April 14th, 1873.

MR. EDITOR.—I endorse all your statements regarding the Agricultural College and experimental farm. The thing is very fine on paper, but in my opinion a great humbug. Is there an intelligent farmer in Canada who is not an experimental farmer? I maintain that the whole matter ought to have been submitted to all the agricultural societies before the passing of the act, which will necessarily receive a large outlay, and out of the farmer's pocket. I fancy to myself I see professors and servants, with all the appliances already at hand, busy at work gathering piles of manure and purchasing guano and other artificial stimulants, and raising an immense crop—a great improvement and the discovery of a secret, but which is already known to every intelligent man. Every simpleton knows that if he milks his cow and gives her no nourishment she will go dry. Just so with old mother earth—keep cropping year after year and give no return, and by the law of nature she is exhausted. This is mainly the cause of our failure in raising good crops, and will in the end ruin an otherwise fertile country. If the College will put a stop to this process carried out all over the country, it will deserve the support of all intelligent men. But this is well-known; yet men will violate the laws of nature year after year. I have never read of agricultural colleges in England or Scotland, where agriculture is carried on next to perfection. I have never seen a report of any improvement or discovery made by the so-called Agricultural Colleges of the States. On the contrary, private enterprising men have made, and are still making, discoveries and improvements, and all this we have through the press. We have two agricultural papers which compare favorably with any other I have seen, and I maintain that they promote the interest of the farmer more than the College will ever do. It is paying a poor compliment to our high schools and universities to say that we must send our sons to an agricultural college to be educated a sound English education. Chemistry is the only branch of science that would be useful to a farmer. But will that science be taught more perfectly at the so-called college than at our Provincial University? I throw not—nor so cheap either, and I predict that but few of our farmers sons will ever grace the halls of our great Agricultural College. Some of our rich men may send their sons to the College, to make use of the old Scottish proverb where men go in storks and come out asses.

Yours truly,

RIDEAU.

Rideau, April 14, 1873.

MR. EDITOR.—I thought I would write an essay on carrots, for the ADVOCATE for this month, but time slipped by, and I failed to do so. As I have had some experience in growing carrots, I must say that I must agree with Wm. G. St. John, in every point excepting one, and I do not know as I could differ in that if he had been more particular as to what kind of manure he put in his drills. Experience has taught me that unrotted manure put into the drills will make the carrot grow rough and sprangled, while they will grow smooth and even when the manure is well rotted. I have not much to say against the Young Farmer. But I have found that Wm. G.'s carrots would be up and growing by the time Young Farmer's would be planted. But I think that if all carrots were manured even as well as Young Farmer's, there would be better crops than there are generally. As to gathering the carrots, they should be left to lie in the sun, and dry before putting, or putting in the cellar. The pit, I think, is the best to keep them in, but I have not had much experience in the cellar.

Yours Respectfully,

ALEXANDER.

North Oxford, April 11, 1873.