

FARM AND FIELD.

FOR THE RURAL CANADIAN.

WALKS AND TALKS AMONG THE FARMERS.—NO. XVI.

SEVERAL of my neighbours have recently built large "bank barns," as they are called, that is barns located on a side-hill where an excavation can be made for a stone basement, so as to leave it open on the sunny side, and at the same time have convenient entrance to the barn proper with out building a gangway or piling up an inclined plane of dirt. One of these is a model, both inside and out, being well proportioned, and having some architectural beauty. It is surmounted by a tower and flag-staff, the tower being useful as well as ornamental, for it supplies the building with ventilation. Some of these barns, though commodious and convenient inside, are out of proportion as to height and dimensions, and have little insignificant ventilators on top of them that look like hencoops. It is a pity that a costly building should not look well when finished. But some farmers make it a point to show their contempt for "looks," as if it were a sin and a shame for structures to present a tasteful appearance. As one said to me the other day: "Oh, I don't care about looks, all I want is accommodation." Suppose the world had been constructed on this principle, what a dull place it would have been instead of teeming with beauty every where.

ONE of these large barns has been painted a dark dingy brown, and it makes a blot on the landscape like a big ink-spot on a sheet of paper. Had it been painted a light stone colour, or a light brown, it would have looked cheerful instead of gloomy. A light colour would also be preferable, because it would not absorb so much heat, and the boards would not be so liable to warp, twist, and loosen the nails. A barn left unpainted, to be coloured by the natural action of the sun and weather, looks better than if daubed over with a dark, dingy paint. I do not know if it pays to paint barns. It involves planing the lumber which, together with the cost of the paint, adds greatly to the expense. Of course the boards will last longer if painted with oil paint; but if this is done once, it must be done again every few years, and will soon cost enough to board over the barn afresh. One of the barns on my farm has been built fifty years, and the lumber is sound yet. I think I would leave the big barn unpainted, but paint the carriage house, stable, and smaller buildings. It is proverbial that things look better by contrast, and I have noticed that farm buildings look extremely well when the larger ones are unpainted and the smaller ones painted, that is, if bright and cheerful colours are chosen.

THE crops are generally good the present season, except the spring wheat, which is badly rusted in many localities. A neighbour of mine offered to let any one have a large field for the harvesting of it and a barrel of flour, reserving to himself the straw. I think it would have proved a good speculation to the taker had the offer been accepted; but there can be no doubt that the spring wheat is largely a failure this year. It is becoming so uncertain a crop that it is a question whether, with the competition of the North West against us, it is wise for us to grow it. Fall wheat is generally a good crop when sown in suitable localities, and I think it seldom if ever fails where it has winter protection. But the loss of the spring wheat crop is a serious affair, and as it is no new thing, but is getting sadly common, we had better betake ourselves to other products.

Too much rain seems to be as unpropitious for turnips as too little, and, at present, this crop

does not look thriving. I am no advocate for turnip growing in this country; but if the bulbs are cultivated, I like to see them flourish, which they are not doing in my locality this year. They may pick up later on, and give a decent yield of pulp and water—one-tenth solid food, and nine-tenths water. Oh, isn't that a "daisy" of a crop for a farmer to raise, when he can get the water for nothing, and grow better victuals than turnip pulp with half the labour and expense. My pet product, red clover, is "just splendid," as the girls say, this year. The aftermath is dense enough to smother out the stoutest Canada thistle that ever cursed an arable field.

BEE-KEEPERS have reason to be glad that Canada thistles are not exterminated, for they yield a lot of first-class honey. Since the basswood flow of nectar stopped, which it did very suddenly, my bees have been luxuriating on the Canada thistle, which has bloomed most profusely this year, and seems to have been fortunate in having just such weather and has developed its honey-producing qualities to the largest extent. The very air is laden with the luscious perfume in localities where the fear of Mr. Stirton's anti-thistle law has the least influence. I was riding with a friend yesterday, who asked, "What is that sweet odour we smell so strongly?" I replied, "it is the Canada thistle, whose flowers are laden with honey." My companion was astonished, for he had supposed this pesky weed was good for nothing except to vex the soul of the slovenly farmer. But it is, probably, next to white clover and basswood, the best honey-yielding plant we have in this country. This year, both white clover and basswood gave less than an average crop of honey, and the extra flow from the Canada thistle will go far towards making up the deficiency.

A NEIGHBOUR persuaded me to try the Beauty of Hebron potato this year, and it has brought back the memory of old pink-eye days, when we had potatoes that were potatoes. I have long mourned over the disappearance of the genuine old-fashioned pink-eye, which, though small in size, was, in sparkling mealiness and fine flavour, the king of potatoes. The Hebron has reminded me more vividly of the lost favourite than any of the new varieties which have been so numerous of late years. As an early potato it is better than the Early Rose was in its best days, and they are waning fast. Every variety of potato seems to run out in course of time, hence those who are originating new varieties are performing good service for agriculture and horticulture. If the Hebron continues "all the year round," to be as good as it is now, it will prove a "seek-no-further" in my case, and I shall pay my knife-and-fork attentions exclusively to it.

I HAVE spoken at least once before in the course of these "Walks and Talks" of the utility of washing machines, and of the satisfaction in our house with one that is in use there. It was Hanbridge's "Magic Improved" to which I had reference; but I wish now to add my commendation to that of THE RURAL CANADIAN, in regard to Dennis's Model Washer, which, along with the Hanbridge, or any other that will do the rubbing and wringing, is the perfection of washing by machinery, so far as yet known. Two little boys, aged twelve and nine, do the washing for the family of which they are members, with the help of these appliances, and say it is "just fun." Certainly it looks to be very much like child's play.

W. F. C.

Remove ink stains on silk, woollen or cotton by saturating with spirits of turpentine.

SAVING MANURE.

The constant care of the farmer, says the *New York Times*, should be to increase his supply of manure. There is no season of the year in which he may not be doing this. It is a great mistake to suppose that the excrements of animals alone are manure. These have no special value in this way over any other similar organic matter and even less, because some of the more valuable elements are taken from them in the passage through the digestive organs. The effective value of these substances is increased somewhat by the fine state of division and their maceration in the intestines of the animals, through which they readily ferment and decompose, and this is the only way in which manure made from hay or straw fed to stock becomes more available for fertilizing than they would be if kept in their original condition. It is not easy to reduce straw or hay to the state of manure excepting by feeding it or by using it as litter, which becomes mixed with the excrements and then quickly decomposes under the stimulus of the action of the moist mass. The farmer's first care, then, should be to feed as many stock as possible so as to procure the fermenting material, the leaven, so to speak, by which all the other wastes which do not come from the stock and which cannot be passed through them as through a grinding mill may be reduced to a condition of usefulness. And in feeding the hay and straw the skilful feeding of grain and oilcake meal may be made to add very much to the actual value of the manure as well as to its effectiveness as a fermenting agent. For it is not the animal which makes any difference in the character of the manure, but the feed which is consumed. A sheep or a horse fed upon straw alone would make precisely the same quality of manure as a cow would; the grain fed to the animals alone makes whatever difference there may be.

Then, with as large a quantity as possible of animal manure as a basis to work upon, the whole year may be made a harvest season for gathering in every waste matter the farmer can lay hands upon. Leaves, swamp muck, road scrapings, the numerous weeds from waste ground, roadsides, and fence rows (but these should be cut before the blossom appears or as soon as it appears), mud from tidal rivers, contents of cesspools, drainage from all sources, wastes of manufactories, tanneries, dye works, gas works, sweepings of village streets, everything, in short, which will decay and add to the bulk of the compost heap. Lime, wood ashes, and plaster should also be gathered liberally—the plaster spread abundantly over the stable floors to fix the escaping ammonia—and these will not only add to the bulk of the heaps, but will exert a useful chemical effect upon the most obdurate matters contained in them. When farmers feel in the way we write, and feel, too, in regard to this part of their farm work, then farming will no longer be called an unprofitable business, but will return a larger reward for the skill and industry brought to bear upon it than any other employment in existence.

HYBRIDIZING THE POTATO.

It is well known that the innumerable varieties of potatoes are derived from *Solanum tuberosum*, a native of the mountains of South America. Within a few years two new tuber-bearing species of *Solanum* have been discovered in the same country and taken to Europe, which, together with *Solanum Jamesii*, from Arizona, Colorado, etc., have been made the subject of experiments in the grounds of widely known seedsmen of Reading, England. In giving an account of these experiments the *Gardener's Chronicle* (London) falls into an error. It states that "English and