

THE
Canadian Agriculturist,

OR

JOURNAL AND TRANSACTIONS OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE
OF UPPER CANADA.

L. XIII.

TORONTO, FEBRUARY 16, 1861.

No. 4

Weeds.

Nothing, perhaps, as unmistakably denotes slovenly farming as the prevalence of weeds. They constitute a sign so obvious, and the disadvantages produced thereby are so palpable to the most ordinary perception, that no one who thinks and observes at all on the subject can well be led astray in his judgment. The presence of weeds in cultivated land is without doubt an unmitigated evil, and it is impossible to conceive of even one step being permanently taken towards an improved system of agriculture that does not include clean cultivation.

It may be asked what is a weed? The general answer would be, any plant that is noxious, or injurious to cultivated crops. Professor Buckman's definition is, "Every plant not from the crop, and growing with the view to its hindrance." This is a definition of a wide embracing character. According to a potato-plant growing amongst a crop of wheat, or a turnip amongst a crop of barley, or any of any of the cereals amongst a crop of any other species, and not intended to be there, is a weed. Farmers in general, however, do not use the term in so wide a signification; and they understand all such plants as are noxious and worth less, indigenous or imported and injurious to cultivated crops.

The weeds of the farm may be conveniently divided into two classes; although in some in-

stances both are united. Weeds that are propagated by seeds are usually annuals or biennials; and such as are propagated by roots, may be ranked among perennials.

Professor Buckman, of the Royal Agricultural College of Cirencester, England, has taken immense pains to obtain reliable results on the propagation and distribution of the more ordinary kinds of weeds. He discovered in a pint of clover seed 7,600 weed seeds; in a pint of cow-grass seed, 12,600; in broad clover, 39,440; and two pints of Dutch clover yielded severally 25,560, and 70,400 weed seeds. Supposing these samples to be sown, here were seeds enough to stock the land with weeds for many years, and which could not be extirpated but at a great expense of both time and labour. Our authority has counted 8000 seeds in a single plant of black mustard, and in a specimen of charlock 4000 seeds. The common stinking camomile produces 46,000, and the burdock 26,000 seeds; and the seeds of a single plant of the common dock produces 1,700 little docks.

From the above facts we learn with what a wonderful power of reproduction some weeds are endowed, and that the farmer often sows them, intermixed as they but too frequently are with his seed grain. It is well known in Britain that the ordinary rye-grass, which, like timothy, with us is sown with clover, is frequently saved in fields that are far from being clean, and on this account we have known farmers who would use no seed except of their own raising. Clover, timo-