

HINTS IN SEASON.

Nothing can be more erroneous or prejudicial, than the prevalent idea, that in winter the farmer has little or nothing to do. It is true that in Canada, as in most countries of the temperate zone, his labours are neither so numerous nor pressing at this season of the year, as they are from the period of depositing the seed to the gathering in of the harvest. A certain amount of freedom is now enjoyed, from the anxious cares and labours incident to the field, and a portion of leisure is possessed, which every intelligent and enterprising farmer will gladly embrace, for the culture and discipline of his mind. There is reason to fear, that the mental energies of our farming population are allowed to partake too largely of that rest which is now enjoyed by the body; a circumstance that will, so long as it is permitted to exist, keep the farmers of this country from occupying that useful and honourable position in the social and political scale, to which they have otherwise a first and most indisputable claim. Books are now easily procurable on all subjects, and our own language is already rich in an agricultural literature, whose treasures every aspiring young farmer will gladly strive to make his own. Our first hint, then, to our readers, includes the duty and happiness of *improving the mind*, as well as the soil; for between the two, there is an intimate and indissoluble connection. The farmer must study to acquire the invaluable habit of thinking deeply and observing correctly, ere he can have the least chance of comprehending and advancing the principles of his important art. He must think, as well as work. Between a taste for books, a desire for social usefulness and distinction, a comprehension of the great forces which regulate the varied phenomena of nature; or, in other words, between the instruments of thought and physical research, and the guidance of the plough, we aver that there is no natural incompatibility. There is no occupation of life, in which the body and mind of man can be subjected to a salutary discipline, beyond that of the husbandman—the most essential and time-hallowed of all pursuits. What a pity it is that so many remain blind to these advantages!

At this season, the utmost attention should be paid to all kinds of live stock: the loss which the farmer sustains, from even a slight neglect of this matter, is certain to be considerable. It too frequently happens, that sufficient time is not given to the care of stock; and for this no excuse whatever can be urged in winter. All animals require, not only to be well sheltered from the pitiless cold and storms of these inclement regions, but they should be kept perfectly clean, by carefully removing their excrements, and bountifully supplying them with straw for bedding. Regularity in feeding is of primary importance, and a *mixture* of food will be found highly advantageous. Hay cut up with various kinds of straw, or corn stalks, and sprinkled occasionally with a little salt, will be better relished by animals, than when given separately; besides, the practice of cutting and mixing is far more economical. If farmers would

but attend properly to these matters, and tend and feed their cattle with humane attention and punctuality, they would be spared in the spring the too frequently distressing spectacle of half-starved, miserable-looking animals; and their pockets too would derive a proportionate benefit. A slight acquaintance, even, with the laws and principal facts of animal physiology—such as any intelligent young man might easily make, by devoting to that study a small portion of the long evenings of a single winter—would materially elevate his condition and qualifications as a farmer.

It is of the greatest importance, that every preparation should now be made, with reference to the approaching busy season of spring. Firewood should be procured sufficient for the wants of the year; rails split and got in readiness for repairing fences, immediately after the melting of the snow, and before the ground is in a condition for ploughing, when the pressing operations of cultivation will engross the whole time of the farmer. Manure may be taken to the more distant parts of the farm, when the weather will admit; it should be put into heaps, and well secured against the action of air and rain. Ploughs, harrows, and all other kinds of implements, should be carefully examined and repaired. In a word, everything should be got in readiness, and the plans of operation for the approaching active agricultural season well considered and determined. In this climate particularly, where the season for preparing the seed bed is so short, the appropriate work of winter ought to be thoroughly finished, before the auspicious season of spring arrives. To this end, both thought and energy are required.

Sugar making, on many farms in Canada, is a matter of economical importance; and now is the time to make the necessary preparations. Let buckets, boiling shed, and whatever else is required, be got in readiness; that as soon as the genial influence of the sun puts the vegetable juices into motion, the majestic maple, the beauty and monarch of our forests, may be made to contribute to the multifarious wants of man. As the climate of this country is evidently undergoing very considerable modification, the sugar season will consequently become more irregular, as compared with past experience; hence the desirableness of being duly prepared, that the business may be prosecuted with despatch, and not a day be lost. There are few farmers possessing any sort of a sugar-bush, but might manage to procure enough of that necessary article for their domestic use, and in favourable seasons have considerable to spare. By a little extraordinary attention and trouble in boiling and refining, this article, which is sometimes objected to on account of colour and impurity, may be made as clear and white as most of the better imported qualities. We have seen most excellent samples at the Provincial and other shows, which were as agreeable to the taste as they were attractive to the eye. To such as have little or no maple on their farms, we would strongly recommend the planting of that tree, for the twofold purpose of ornament and utility. It bears transplanting well; an operation, however, that should never be deferred till late in the spring, as