

THE GRASSES OF GREAT BRITAIN.

Professor Charles Johnson, Botanical lecturer at Guy's Hospital, England, has recently published a work on the natural history and uses of the grasses of Great Britain. The work is highly illustrated, and is being issued in parts. All lovers of that department of husbandry, which has direct reference to the production of fine stock, ought to be especially interested in the development of every fact pertaining to the grasses. We need much information on this important subject, and hope the useful labours of Professor Charles Johnson will be duly appreciated. Treating of the Sweet-scented Meadow Grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*) he gives the following information:—

"Some of the earlier writers upon the relative qualities of British grasses as fodder, seem to regard that before us as a valuable and important one to the farmer. Stillingfleet observes that, 'Being found on such kinds of pastures as sheep are fond of, and from whence excellent mutton comes, it is most likely to be a good grass for sheep pastures;' and recommends the collection of its seeds, which he assures us, from his own experience, are 'very easy to gather.' And I have somewhere else met with a proposition for sowing it on those sheep-downs where it does not exist, in order to improve the flavour of the mutton. In opposition to such practice, I have myself observed that, on some of those of Kent and Sussex, its leaves are almost continually left untouched by the sheep, or only cropped when, in dry seasons, food becomes scarce. In the experiments made by Linnæus and his colleagues, it appears that cows, horses, goats, and sheep, ate it when offered to them apart; but these experiments were too limited and too carelessly conducted to warrant the importance attached to them at the time; and as far as the last mentioned animals are concerned, Stillingfleet's mutton must have owed its 'excellence' to other sources. They seem, however, to have had considerable influence on the opinions of the earlier agricultural systematizers of this country; and the sweet-scented vernal grass always holds a place among the species recommended by them for the production of improved meadow-land. The scantiness of the foliage is very much against its value as an economical grass; it yields little to the scythe, while in permanent pastures it occupies the place of others more nutritive and better liked by cattle generally. Whether its wide distribution among the latter, in almost all soils and situations, may not be productive of some wholesome medicinal effect on the more promiscuously feeding grazing animals, is a question perhaps deserving consideration; the more so, that certain tropical grasses, celebrated on account of their fragrance, have long been employed in their respective countries, with a view to the benefit derived from their tonic, stomachic, and other qualities."

SALT FOR PLUM TREES.

It is now almost impossible to cultivate any kind of plums in this climate, unless salt enters liberally as an ingredient into the compost applied to them. When this article is used in conjunction with house ashes, there appears rarely to be much difficulty in producing good and healthy trees, which ultimately prove highly productive of fair and well developed fruit. When trees are set in situations in which application of compost is not feasible or where it would subject the operator to considerable fatigue or expense, salt, in its crude state, may be applied; or it may be dissolved and poured around the roots.

If plum trees were carefully washed down once or twice a year in a whiskey lye, and supplied with two or three quarts each of salt—care being taken to retain the soil around their roots light and free from weeds, we should hear far fewer complaints of want of success in this department of pomological enterprise. No fruit commands a more ready sale or higher price in the market. Good plums are at present so scarce as to render them a luxury, and those who have valuable trees in good bearing, are realizing a heavy profit from them. Let those who have trees profit by the above suggestion; they indicate the only legitimate course to be pursued.—*New England Farmer*.

THE DELAWARE GRAPE was amongst the varieties shown at the meeting of the committee of the State Pomological Society of Ohio. This variety ripens from two to three weeks earlier than the Isabella, and is very hardy. The fruit also seems to withstand a moderate freeze.