Experience in Flax Growing.

To the Editor of THE CANADA FARMER:

SIR,—Various communications having appeared in your columns, uniformly showing that Flax was a very profitable crop, I do not think it right to withhold my experience, which is of an opposite character. By way of trial, I last spring sowed a small plot which parties interested in a flax mill told me was peculiarly suited to its growth. The soil was a soft, black muck, spiced with sand, and it produced what, judging by various other plots, would be called an average crop.

Something over two day's work sufficed to pull it. It was taken to the mill and sold at $14 per ton (the usual price here) and I pocketed the proceeds amounting to 95 cents. After making due allowance for land rent, seed, and labour, it seems to me that the margin for profit is rather small. While I can get at least an equal weight of hay per acre, and have it cut for 60 cents, I most respectfully decline to *pull* flax in handfulls at the same price per ton.

It is very easy to show great profits in flax culture, by quoting its manufactured value. It would be equally fair to reckon the value of an iron mine by the price per ton of watchsprings. To compare the labour of harvesting wheat, with that of harvesting flax, will appear absurd to any practical man. I find this to be the uniform testimony of those who have experience, though they are not very apt to chronicle their discomfitures. E. M.

Sidney, Hastings Co., C. W.

NOTE BY ED. C. F.—Our correspondent has not stated his "flax experience" very clearly. More minute details as to the quantity of land, mode of preparation, cost of labour, nature of the season, &c., would have made his communication of more value. We insert the letter, though it is vague and meagre in some respects, because the writer intimates that we have thus far only given the bright side of flax culture, and we desire to show a readiness to give a dark side also, if there be one.

"Topping" Trees.

TREES which originally grew in the forest, and have been left standing when the forest was cut, are ill calculated to endure the exposure. They are generally tall and slim, with a small development of root in proportion to the top. This makes them liable to be blown down by high winds. Deprived of the shelter of the neighbouring trees, and of the natural mulching of leaves which every Autumn gave them, they are quite apt to become diseased. A good remedy for these evils is *topping*—cutting off a good portion of the top. This removes the danger from winds, and in most cases will give vigor and long life to diseased trees. It impairs their beauty for a time, but will eventually result in improving them, for new branches will be sent out, and a good top formed. We have seen Oaks, Maples, Elms and Beeches so treated, and know that they are saved from decay, and improved in appearance. Autumn is the best time for performing the work. Large trees may have from twelve to twenty-five feet of the main trunk cut off, and the ends of the lower side branches cut to correspond. Smaller trees should be cut less severely.—*Western Rural.*

☞ THE corn crop of Minnesota the present season is an unprecedented success. We question whether a State in the Union can boast of as fine a crop of corn as Minnesota can the present year. A much larger number of acres of this valuable grain seem to have been planted this year, and from every quarter we learn there is a most wonderful yield. Not an ear has been touched with frost, and the fodder, so much prized for stock, is generally saved in excellent order. Let us be thankful.—*Chatfield Democrat.*

APPLYING MANURES.—Mr. Patten, of Hightstown, N. Y., informs the *Country Gentleman* that one-third of a field in strips received an autumn dressing of manure at the rate of about 12 or 15 loads per acre. A second portion was manured in the spring with an equal quantity, and a third was dressed with guano, at the rate of 300 pounds per acre. The crop on the fall manured part was about three times as good as on that manured in the spring. The guano gave an intermediate result. The second year guano was applied over the whole, and the third year the growth on the autumn manured portion was decidedly the best; the second best was on that which was guanoed the first year; and the poorest of all was on the spring manured portion.

ILLINOIS COTTON.—The editor of the Peru *Herald* was presented, a few days since, with a sample of this season's cotton, raised in Illinois. The fibre, he says, is as fine as that raised further South. The owner of the plantation from which this sample was taken, has 260 acres under cultivation, which will average nearly one bale per acre, and at the present price per pound, he will make clear of all expenses, one hundred thousand dollars. From this experiment, who will not say that eventually the southern part of Illinois will yield large quantities of this indispensable agricultural product, and at a profit equalling any other crop? It is found by experiment, this season, that the cost of the cultivation of cotton does not exceed that of corn or other staple agricultural products.

SEEDING MARSH LAND.—I have had some experience during the last five years in reclaiming Michigan marsh land—on a small scale,—and am willing that others should be benefitted by my experience. I have tried a variety of experiments, and have now good timothy growing on muck five feet thick, where five years ago nothing grew but the rankest, coarsest kind of sickle grass. The subsoil is clay. A part of it has been mowed two years, yielding a very heavy crop of the best kind of hay. If farmers will exercise a little common sense, and a great deal of perseverance, I think they will succeed. If I had another marsh to subdue I should proceed as follows: First—Draw off the surface water, but nothing more. Deep draining leaves the land too dry. Second—If it could be ploughed I should mow it in August, take off the grass and then turn it over with a sharp plough; harrow well and put on the seed—pure timothy. If it could not be ploughed, or if I had not time to do it, I would sow any kind of grass seed that I could get most easily, each spring and fall mowing and renovating the grass and weeds each year until I got something better than sickle grass. Stock of all kinds should be kept off.—*L. M. Rose, of Hillsdale County.*

SOW MORE RYE.—Farmers would find it greatly to their interest to sow more rye. For winter and early spring pasturage, it is very valuable. All kinds of stock like to get a green nibble whenever it can be obtained in winter—and in spring it will furnish good pasturage before it can be obtained elsewhere. It is not only as food for stock that we urge its cultivation, but it is of great value to the soil as a preparation for some other crop. It is almost equal to a coat of manure if the green crop is ploughed in, in the spring. The soil is full of the roots of the plant, and there is also the coat which covers the surface, and if these are well turned in by the plough, they ferment and decay, and consequently enrich the land. The coating will also prevent, to a considerable extent, the washing of the land by the severe rains of winter. The crop, if not ploughed in, is a paying one. If our readers will put in a few acres of rye, they will not fail to sow it every fall hereafter. It should be sown at the same time and in like manner as fall sown wheat. It is not necessary to bestow the same preparation of the soil as for wheat, unless one feels disposed to do so.—*Valley Farmer.*

COMSTOCK'S ROTARY SPADER.—The accounts published during the past season of the success of this implement at the West attracted considerable inquiry as to where it could be procured. From our advertising columns it will be perceived that Mr. Bidwell, of Pittsburgh, Pa., has undertaken its manufacture on a large scale. A Pittsburg paper says:—"We will not attempt a mechanical description, but will simply add that the spader is a pair of wheels with a series of steel forks pivoted at equal distances around their circumference, and which are so governed by stationary cams on the axle outside the wheels as to produce the same entrance in the soil and lift as the spade fork in the hands of a man. It has the appearance of a small wagon drawn by horses, mules, or oxen (the forks being attached to the hind wheels), and throws up the dirt behind as it advances, somewhat as water is lifted and thrown by the paddle-wheel of a steamboat, and is thrown in and out of gear at the option of the driver. The entire machine is as simple as a common seed-drill, and fully as easily understood and managed. It is built principally of steel and iron, and there is nothing about it to get out of order. It is capable of spading at least three times as much as one plough, besides one man or boy doing what would require three or four. The work is also better done, and with more ease. Mr. Bidwell is known as one of our most extensive plough manufacturers, and has facilities equal to any in the United States. He will leave no effort or expense undone to make the spader both a durable and profitable improvement to farmers."—*Country Gentleman.*

BEAT THIS WHO CAN.—On the farm of Mr. Robert Wilson, lot 20, 11th concession of Wawanosh, in a seven acre field of turnips, hundreds can be found weighing from 20 to 25 lbs., and one white globe that weighed 31 lbs.

Experiment with Bone-dust.

RESPECTED FRIEND—In thy last thee reminds me of my promise to report the effect of bone-dust upon my farm crops. I had not forgotten the promise, but want of time must plead my excuse for delay. So far I can report its actual effect upon oats, corn, potatoes, and broom corn; and as it was mainly applied to, but not for the oats, I will begin with that crop.

The field had been through the usual rotation of hay and pasture, followed by corn, of which it yielded about 50 bushels per acre without any manure. It contained exactly 9 acres, 1 rood and 23 perches, by actual survey, and was about one-half ploughed during the fall of 1863, and the remainder during the spring of 1864. Upon each half I laid off one acre for potatoes, and, after sowing and harrowing in the bone-dust, *drilled-in* the seed at the rate of 2 bushels and 1 peck per acre. The amount of bone-dust averaged about 600 lbs per acre, varying from 800 lbs. on one side, to 400 on the other. Some of my friends had led me to suppose that the dust would exhibit little or no effect during the first year, and hence I applied it more with reference to the wheat crop than to the crop which immediately succeeded the application. The result will show the fallacy of this idea; but I must not anticipate matters.

In my account I have the crop charged with work done and material furnished as follows:—

Fall ploughing	$9 75
Spring ploughing	10 50
3,000 pounds bone-dust	63 75
Sowing bone-dust	5 50
Harrowing	5 25
Drilling	4 75
Seed	12 75
Harvesting	21 25
Threshing and marketing	23 50
Interest on cost of land	15 00
	$172 50

To counterbalance this, I have the field credited with:—

287 bushels of oats, at 82 cents	$235 34
260 do do 81 do.	210 60
12 tons straw (estimated) at $8	96 00
Chaff	5 00
	$546 94

A comparison of these two sides of the account shows a profit of $372 44.

This will answer thy first question, "Will the application of bone-dust to a rented place pay?"

The second question, "Will heavy applications of bone-dust pay as well in proportion to the expenditure as light ones?" I would answer in the affirmative, and will next spring practice what I preach by using it upon corn and oats at the rate of from 800 to 1,000 lbs. per acre.

As before stated, that portion ploughed in the fall was top-dressed with bone at the rate of 600 to 800 lbs. per acre. This was harvested threshed and marketed separately from the other and showed a yield of exactly 81.1 bushels per acre, and weighed 32½ lbs. per bushel. The remainder of the field, owing more to its situation than anything else, (being a dry hill-side) did not yield so well, reducing the average of the whole field to 75½ bushels per acre.

Some of my neighbours predicted a crop badly "laid," but I noticed that although in some parts of the field the straw was five feet long, it was not "laid" near as much as some other fields in the neighbourhood to which no stimulant was applied. What might have been the effect of a storm I cannot say, but the straw was much stiffer than common for oat straw, and seemed to partake more of the nature of that of wheat.

The potatoes, in addition to the bone-dust, had a dressing of barn-yard manure at the rate of 10 loads per acre, spread and ploughed in; and in spite of a bad season produced a very good crop, which has not yet been measured.

Thee asks more particularly "for its effect upon corn." Last spring I put in with corn a field containing about seven acres. One-half had been in with corn in 1863, and produced a medium crop only; consequently the corn of this year on this part of the field was "second crop," a term which very nearly corresponds with "half a crop." A trial of half an acre showed a yield of 62 baskets of ears and 10 of nubbins. This corn was dressed with a mixture of 300 lbs. of bone-dust, 200 of phosphate, and 2 bushels of plaster per acre, and in addition to the corn the plot has now growing on it a heavy crop of turnips from seed sown just before the last hoe-harrowing, which, in spite of the past bad root season, has made a fair to good crop.

The remainder of the field was clover sod of two years' standing, and after a good fall ploughing was top-dressed with dust at the rate of about 400 lbs. per acre, and put in with corn, broom-corn and sweet potatoes. A trial acre of the corn yielded 162 baskets of good ears, and 5 of nubbins or soft corn; in fact, upon the whole acre there were but about one dozen