

of his books, that I have *not* the happiness to possess, that after making several experiments on different foods in different states or conditions, he came to the conclusion that pigs do better on food that has been kept till it is sour than on the same food when fresh. Consequently, he built, we think he mentions ten tanks, all of which were filled, each in its turn, with skim-milk, whey, waste from the house, etc., and each tank was served out to the pigs in rotation, so that ten days elapsed before one tank used to day was again emptied.

Curiously enough, Arthur Young and Lord Chesfield, ambassador at the Hague, and the author of the "Letters," were the only two men who predicted the outbreak of the Great Revolution in France at the close of the eighteenth century!

SELECTION OF SEEDS

The seed grain competition under the direction of Professor Robertson, for which Mr. Macdonald so kindly donated the large sum of 10,000 dollars promises to be an unparalleled success. Already comes the cheering news that the Province of Quebec has entered the largest number of competitors in the list, not so large however as it should be if all farmers' sons stopped to consider all the advantages which they would secure by taking part in such a contest. To gather a hundred heads of wheat and oats and send them free of charge to Ottawa seems a small trouble and expense for the prizes offered. Furthermore, winners or losers will all be able to share in the same degree the benefits to be derived from continuous and systematic selection of seeds for three years, in comparison of which prizes, large as they may be, are insignificant.

Selection of seeds is in fact recognized to day as a most important item in the growth of crops and the results obtained from all experiments since the attention of agriculturists was turned towards the question amply confirms the belief that our varieties of grain are as susceptible of amelioration as are our breeds of cattle. No intelligent farmer would think of taking any but the best types of a breed to reproduce from, in the hope of fixing their desirable characteristics in their descendants. In the same way, the very plumpest grain only should be sown in order to augment the size and the weight of the grain produced by the variety.

Yet, the advisability of selecting seeds was not always an undisputed theory. It was long believed that the seed, whatever its weight or size might be, reproduced only the type of the variety to which it belonged, in other words, that the hope of increasing the yield of our crops rested only in the selection of the variety, as well as in the careful preparation of the soil. That the different varieties differ greatly in some characteristics cannot be denied. It is for the farmer to choose among those the one which answers best to his needs or to the needs of the market. But in the adoption of a new variety, the adaptation to soil and climate should be the first consideration. The farmer should carefully ascertain whether the new variety which is recommended to him has been tested under conditions similar to those under which he is placed. Furthermore let him not forget that the best of varieties will speedily degenerate if no care be paid to the selection of seeds. Early maturity, weight of seed, and yield of crops, are all qualities which can be developed or greatly improved through seed selection.

It would not be just to say that this practice has been neglected up to this day. It is the custom, on many farms, to select carefully the finest looking part of the grain crop and save it as seed-grain for the following year. This is certainly a very commendable method but it is not enough. The seed bearing crop should receive extra care, for extra care will pay. It should be grown under such conditions as to insure the maximum development of every plant. Thin seeding and drilling are indispensable requisites, not only to permit weeding and cultivating but also to allow a free circulation of air and sunshine all through to crop, thereby stimulating everywhere a strong and vigorous growth. The soil should also be carefully prepared, for the development of the stem always depends upon the development of the root.

Perfect seeds are obtained from plants which have been well fed, abundantly provided with air and sunshine, and free from diseases. The more mature the seed grain is before being harvested, the greater are its productive powers. Such is the lesson taught by Experiment stations. To secure the very best from the best, the heads should be submitted to a light thrashing, which will separate the ripest grain. It should then be repeatedly sieved in order to save only the plumpest and heaviest grain, and even hand picked if