



The Field.

Winter Work on the Farm.

Each season of the year has duties peculiar to itself. There is a time for everything, and it is the beauty and charm of a well managed business to have things done at the proper time. Although winter is looked upon as a period of inaction, and it is, to a large extent, free from the hurrying and imperative claims that press themselves into notice at other seasons of the year, yet it must not be allowed to pass idly by. There is no difficulty whatever in so improving the period of winter as to make it contribute its full quota toward the activities and profits of the year.

THE CARE OF STOCK is the most important duty of the farmer in winter. Much depends on the attention animals receive at this season. Young stock are usually either made or spoiled by the treatment they get in winter. Warm shelter, wholesome food in full and varied supply, regular watering, comfortable bedding, and cleanliness, are the chief requisites in the care of stock.

THE MANUFACTURE OF MANURE is one of the most important operations of the farm. How much may be done to increase compost heaps, and preserve the materials by which land is enriched. Foremost among these means is the care of the stable droppings. Not only should the solid but the liquid droppings be kept from waste. Either by drainage into tanks or ample provision of dry absorbents, every drop should be saved for future use. Spare time in winter may be turned to the very best account in hauling up swamp muck, spent tan bark, saw dust, leached ashes, in short anything that will decompose; and in mixing these substances with stable dung, so as to form a valuable compost. A well-made manure heap is a store-house of wealth.

FENCE MATERIAL.—As fence-making and mending are among the first things that demand attention when spring arrives, so a standing job for the winter is getting out a good supply of posts, stakes and rails. When fence timber must be procured from the black-ash or cedar swamp, it is indispensibly necessary that the season of winter be improved for the purpose. Then the swamps are frozen over and are readily accessible both to man and beast. Not only should fence timber be got out and drawn to

the place where it will be needed, but, as far as possible, it should be prepared for actual use, so that no more time than is actually necessary may be consumed in this kind of work, when spring opens.

FIREWOOD.—Winter is the time to provide the year's supply of fuel. Many farmers manage so badly as to be compelled to take time in the busier season of the year to furnish wood. It is baking or washing day—there is nothing to feed the cooking stove's hungry maw, and though more important operations are pressing, a load of wood must be got! The best way to obviate this is to improve the comparative leisure afforded by winter to lay in an ample store of fuel for the year. In this way too, the use of green wood—a wretched economy, and what is worse, a most provoking annoyance may be avoided.

A VARIETY OF ODD JOBS may also be done in winter. Every farmer should have some sort of a workshop, a few tools, and ingenuity enough to make many things required on the farm during the busy season. Much time is lost, and many depredations are committed by stock for want of gates. That miserable make shift, "clept bars," is one of the greatest nuisances to Canadian agriculture. Think of the time spent in taking them down and putting them up, the lessons in breachiness given to cattle by putting up two or three only, because in haste, and say if true economy does not dictate an utter abandonment of this wretched device for getting into and out of fields. Who cannot make a gate of some kind? There is no gate so clumsy and ill looking that is not far preferable to the neatest pair of bars ever put up. Winter is the time for gate-making. There are also many conveniences, such as waggon-racks for hauling hay, &c. ox-sleds, stone-boats, rollers, drag and cultivator frames, which many farmers are ingenious enough to make with their own hands, and in the timely preparation of which winter may be improved. A variety of repairs and fixings to implements, &c., may be advantageously done at this season. A supply of hurdles for temporary fences should be provided on every farm. The lumber for these is not very expensive, and, made by the farmer himself, they soon give back their cost. This is another good winter job.

ACCOUNT-KEEPING It is, also, a good time for overhauling the farm accounts. Every farmer should adopt some easy, simple, accurate plan of account-keeping, and record his receipts and expenditures faithfully. The review of these from time to time will suggest many lessons of wisdom, and be a source of actual profit. Well kept farm accounts are useful in settling facts, proving dates, preventing law suits, &c. There is no mystery about book keeping, and any common sense man can soon make himself sufficiently familiar with it for all practical purposes.

PLANNING.—Plans for the coming season should be well thought out and thoroughly laid in winter. The capabilities of the farm should be studied, mistakes

and successes noted for future guidance, a wise rotation of crops arranged, and everything reduced to system as far as possible. Just as a good packer will get twice as many things into a trunk as a poor one, so will a good planner get twice as much work into the year, and twice as much profit out of it, as a disorderly, improvident, slipshod man who lets things take their chance.

CULTURE OF THE MIND.—Above all, winter is the time for mental improvement. The long evenings invite to reading, reflection, attendance on lectures, holding of farmers' clubs, &c. There is no reason why the farmer should not be thoroughly intelligent and well-informed. Even the busy season furnishes many opportunities for observation and reflection, whilst winter gives the fullest chance for self-improvement. The time is gone by for prejudice against book farming and agricultural improvement. Our township, county, and provincial shows, have demonstrated what science can do for the advancement of everything connected with agriculture. But there are other subjects besides those connected with his own immediate business, on which the farmer should read and think. This is an eventful age, and he must read a good deal who manages to keep up with history, so rapid is its onward march. All departments of science, the ample page of general literature and poetry, the sublime themes of religion as set forth in God's own book—itsself the text-book of study for an immortal lifetime,—plead for a share of that leisure which winter so liberally supplies.

Winter Mulch.

In this climate grass and young grain are the better of being covered partially or wholly in some way. Snow answers the purpose, if it comes in good time, does not fall too abundantly, and departs when its presence is no longer required. Sometimes, however, it fulfils none of these conditions. It is long in coming, falls heavily, and stays late. Manure applied in the fall or early winter, is a better mulch than snow. It lies lightly on the surface, does not pack the soil, and protects the roots of grass and grain from the effects of alternate freezing and thawing. In addition to these benefits, it enriches the land. While it affords protection, it adds fertility.

It will perhaps be urged, that if manure be applied as a dressing to the top of the ground, much waste will be the consequence. The gases will escape and the rains of autumn, winter, and spring will wash away all its virtue. To this it may be replied, that there is not so much waste as at first appears. The heat of the sun is not great at the season referred to, and evaporation does not go on very rapidly. Besides even when the sun's rays are more intense, there is not such total loss by evaporation as many think, because the soil attracts and absorbs a large share of the gases as they are set free. As to washing away, it is into the ground that the virtue of the