PROSPECTS OF THE CROPS.

The present season commenced in the States with an unusually wet spring, but there is promise of abundant crops.

AGRICULTURAL AND ECONOMICAL USES OF SEA WEED.

Our extensive coasts afford abundance of sea weed, a product of nature which is not taken advantage of to such an extent as it might be. The manufacture of Iodine and of Kelp, if profitable anywhere, might surely be made so on those shores of Nova Scotia where fishermen and farmers spend a portion of the season in absolute idleness.

The beneficial use of sea weed as a manurial application to the soil is well known in many localities; and where the soil has been injured by it, the injury has no doubt resulted from the sea-weed being applied in the fresh wet state, without any previous process of composting. In dry, sandy soils, sea weed acts in two ways: first, by directly contributing food materials to the crop, and secondly, by the hygroscopic action of the mucilaginous tissues in maintaining a certain degree of humidity in the arid soil, a result that is no doubt aided by the presence of the sea salt accompanying the weed. The richness of the ash of the common seaweed in potash, soda, phosphates and other materials of plant growth, shows that it has a high manurial value. In Greenland specimens the ash has been found to contain ten per cent of phosphates. The proportion of water in the recent weed is so large that it cannot be profitably carried to great distances.—This ought to render its employment on sea shore farms all the more extensive.

When in Cape Breton, we were shown some fields that had been rendered nearly sterile by the use of sea weed. At first it yields great crops, but afterwards the land becomes barren. How is this to be accounted for? It may be in two ways, both resulting from an error committed in the mode of applying the weed. It is well known that whilst salt, in small quantity, is beneficial to most soils, an increase in the quantity proves detrimental to the crops. When fresh sea weed, dripping with sea water, is applied to the land, of course a large quantity of salt is carried with it, and the sandy soil, especially if subject to occasional inundation from the sea, probably contains enough already. It is likewise well known that oily and mucilaginous matter applied to the soil in too great quantities acts injuriously upon vegetation, probably by impeding absorption by the plant's tissues, in the same way as they impede the passage of fluids through filter papers.

Is there any remedy, or rather, is there any mode of avoiding these evils? The mode is indeed quite simple. By allowing the sea weed to lie on the beach to be to be washed by a few showers of rain, then dried, much of the salt will be removed. But a much more effectual plan, and one suited for rendering the mucilaginous matter non-injurious, is to *compost* the sea weed. After preliminary washing and drying in the way indicated, let a compost heap be formed, one layer of soil, one of sea weed, one of plaster in powder, (where obtainable), and so on, repeating the layers of soil, weed and plaster, until the compost heap is finished. Stable manure mixed with it would be a great improvement. Such a compost heap, after lying for a few months will afford valuable manure that can do no harm to any soil, but will yield an abundant and healthy crop wherever it is applied. For cabbages it is a "special" manure, but turnips and all other crops are benefitted nearly as much.

We have been led to offer a few remarks on this subject at the present time, partly on account of the conflicting opinions expressed by farmers in Nova Scotia as to the value of sea weed as a manure, and partly because the subject is gaining increased attention in other countries. A communication has just reached us from Dr. LeJolis, a distinguished French naturalist, in which he states that the Imperial Society of Natural Sciences of Cherbourg offers a Gold Medal, of the value of 500 francs, for the best Memoir on Sea Weed, considered both as regards its agricultural uses and employment in the Arts. The Society will award silver medals to the authors of Memoirs, who, without completely resolving the questions proposed, nevertheless afford information sufficiently useful to merit the distinction. The Society reserves the right of publishing the memoirs entire, or extracts from them. The memoirs are to be written in French, Latin or English, and are to be sent prior to 1st July, 1868, to M. le Dr. A. Le Jolis, Rue de la Duchee, 29, a Cherbourg (France). The chief points to which attention is called, are, the proper time for collecting the sea weed from the rocks, so as to favor their production, and, at the same time, meet as far as possible, agricultural wants, whether it should be collected twice or only once a year; whether it should be torn from the rocks, or cut, &c.; the means of reconciling, as far as possible, the requirements of the agriculturists with those of the manufacturers of iodine and of kelp; the best mode of increasing the manurial effect of sea weed; the employment of a mixture of lixiviated soda ashes with the fresh seaweed; methods of composting or maceration necessary to combine the valuable mineral matters contained in the residue with the organic substances required for vegetable nutrition. It will be seen from these hints that the subject is an extensive one, and that the Cherbourg Society is desirous of having it treated in a thoroughly practical manner.

THE CANADIAN AGRICULTURAL FAIR.

This great exhibition will be held during the week commencing 18th Sept. next. Entries of stock must be made prior to 12th August; grain, roots, &c., prior to 26th August; and horticultural produce up to the 9th September. The judges will commence their duties on Tuesday, the 19th, and visitors will be admitted to the grounds only. The exhibition building will be open to visitors on Wednesday morning, The ploughing match will take place in the neighborhood of London, on Tuesday. In the men's class, the first prize will be a clover machine, offered by the late Mr. Joseph Hall, of Oshawa, and valued at $300; and besides this there will be other six prizes of an aggregate value of nearly $250. In the boys' class, the first prize will be $100, subscribed by the citizens of London and the farmers of Middlesex, and there will be other six prizes of an aggregate value of about $120. The Canada Company will give, as in many former years, a prize of $100 for the best 25 bushels of fall wheat, the produce of Canada West, being the growth of the year 1865; also, a prize of $24 for the best 112 lbs. flax, scutched. The Prince of Wales prize of $60 will be given for the best bull of any age or breed.

Everything promises well for a most successful exhibition.

AMENDMENT OF AGRICULTURAL ACT.

We are sorry to find that some of the Secretaries of Societies have not read, with sufficient care, the amendment of the Agricultural Act printed on the first page of the June number of the Journal. It is not too late to do so now.

BUTTERFLIES.—There have been great swarms of butterflies during the last few days on the railway track between Four Mile House and the Prince's Lodge.—They seem to be attracted by the purple flowers of *Centaurea nigra*, an English plant which abounds on the railway embankments.

SKUNKS have this season become very common in the parish of Sackville, and have proved troublesome and destructive in the poultry yards.