

Farmer's Department.

Preparing Land for Wheat—Selecting of Seed—Mode of Sowing, &c.

Farmers are now busily engaged in harvest operations, and from the present, to the completion of wheat sowing, they will have no leisure for the perusal of lengthy dissertations; our remarks, therefore, shall be brief and practical.

The present wheat crop may be pronounced a good one upon the whole throughout Upper Canada; and the accounts we have received from the Lower provinces, as well as from various sections of the United States, must be considered favorable. A benignant Providence having crowned the husbandman's labors with success, we earnestly hope that those labors will be amply rewarded, by a remunerating price. No class of men are more deserving a liberal return for their toil, than the honest and industrious tillers of the soil.

No sooner are the golden fruits of autumn gathered in, the results of a year's expenditure of thought and toil safely stowed away, than active preparations have to be made for securing a similar result in the year which is to come. It being true in the natural, as in the moral world, that men reap what they sow, we will proceed just to remind our readers of a few plain principles in regard to this very interesting and important portion of the agricultural year.

In the cultivation of wheat, as of any other crop, the first consideration is the state and composition of the soil. It should be remembered that plants can no more live and thrive without their appropriate food, and that in proper quantity, than animals. The soil too must be brought in to the requisite mechanical condition, and possess all the necessary constituents of food, which the plant requires for its healthy growth, and which it imbibes through the agency of its roots. These two conditions of the soil—which may be termed the mechanical and the chemical—are in all successful practice intimately connected, and to a large extent mutually dependent.

The first step then in the cultivation of wheat—and indeed of all other grain—is to obtain a clean and deep seed bed. This can, in most instances, be accomplished only by the repeated application of the plow, the roller, and the harrow. A certain proportion of fine earth, in what we may term the active soil, is essential to the germination of the seed; yet it is to be found in practice, that wheat sown in autumn, especially on adhesive soils, generally succeeds best in a tilth of moderate fineness; clods when not too large act beneficially, by rendering the soil pervious to air and moisture and by crumbling down under the action of frost, during winter and spring, they form a useful protection and covering to the young plants.

Surface drainage by means of open furrows and ditches is a matter of essential importance in the cultivation of fall wheat. In cases where land is naturally dry, or rendered so by a sufficient number of underground drains, furrowing may to a great extent, be dispensed with. But when it is considered how large a portion of our cultivated fields is rendered in part, or wholly unproductive by stagnant water, during portions of the year, the attention of farmers requires to be repeatedly called to so grievous an evil. We say then to all wheat growers, see that you effectually get rid of all surface water, either by narrow ridges and deep furrows, or what is infinitely better, whenever practicable, by under drainage. No field where fall wheat is sown, ought to be left until this vital object has been, as far as practicable, secured.

A soil then deeply cultivated, free from noxious weeds, and rendered firm and dry, either by nature or art, is in a proper mechanical condition for the reception of the seed. But this is only a first step. The soil must contain all that the plant requires for healthy growth and maturity, which is not obtained from the atmosphere. And here we are directly led to the great and complicated subject of manures, upon which our space compels us to be very brief.—Repeated cropping with wheat without manure, soon renders the generality of soils incapable of producing a remunerating return, by exhausting them of such necessary ingredients as the silicate of potash, phosphate of lime, &c. When land

has not been exhausted by constant cropping, its productive powers may in general be easily retained by changing the kinds of crops cultivated, laying down to pasture, with now and then a judicious manuring. Good, well-preserved farm yard dung, especially when it is the product of animals highly fed on grain, linseed, &c., contains, in general all the ingredients, more or less in relative amount that are required for the growth of plants. Upon most of the cultivated lands of this country, the application of lime, or bone dust, (the latter containing a large quantity of lime, in combination with phosphoric acid,) would be exceedingly beneficial to wheat, and indeed to all the cereals.

But one of the most important points of all, yet remains to be mentioned: the selection of pure seed. This is a matter so sadly neglected by a large number of farmers in this country, that the loss entailed thereby is incalculably great. What has a farmer a right to reap, but what he sows? If imperfectly ripened or diseased grain, or the seeds of various kinds of weeds be sown, what can he expect, when the harvest arrives but to reap the same? The plain truth is, that the gross neglect of the principles of good husbandry, or of the laws of nature, which in this instance are the same thing, is a sin which is certain to bring its own punishment the first-year. It is an old adage, that which is worth doing at all, is worth doing well. Whatever pains the farmer bestows in procuring pure and healthy grain, for seed, will amply repay him in the first crop. We also strongly recommend the practice of steeping; a practice that comes to us recommended by an extensive experience, and the example of the best cultivators, in all parts of the world. A strong solution of salt, or of blue vitriol, or both mixed, in which the seed may be thoroughly soaked, and afterwards dried by the application of slaked lime, is an old practice strongly to be recommended.—Our readers are, doubtless sufficiently informed, respecting the various steeps that have been recommended and practised, as to render it unnecessary for us to descend to particulars; our object at present being simply to offer a few important, seasonal hints; just to remind farmers of what most of them already well know, however much they may neglect to practice it. Like moral conduct, this is an affair as much, or more, belonging to the will, as to the understanding.

It is time to bring these remarks to a close. As to the mode of sowing wheat, whether drilling, ribbing or broadcasting, must, in some measure, depend upon the condition of the land, and the resources of the farmer. In well cleared up farms, free from large stones, we advocate for drilling; believing that a less quantity of seed will suffice, by the regular manner in which it is deposited by this process, and the greater certainty of its germination.—Besides in a climate like that of Canada, drilling has other advantages; the plant being generally fixed at a uniform and sufficient depth below the surface, it is much less liable to be thrown out by the action of frost in spring. These and other matters, such as the quantity of seed per acre, require to receive more systematic attention, and careful record of results from the best practical farmers of Canada, before we are entitled to draw very positive general conclusions. And, after all it will probably be found, in the most advanced state of our future agriculture, that farming like other industrial arts, although governed by primary principles and general laws, will require ceaseless modifications, to meet the varying conditions of climate, &c., upon which it is more or less dependent, in its practical operations and results.

This however, is certain, and within our present reach; that deep and clean cultivation, draining when necessary, proper manuring, &c., judicious rotation of crops; with the selection of clean grain for seed, and carefully deposited in the bosom of mother earth; will yield in the long run, an abundant return to the skillful and industrious cultivator. Under a compliance with the above simple conditions, we should very seldom hear of a miserable ten or a dozen bushels of wheat per acre. Rust, weevil, smut, and the fly, even, would only be heard of occasionally; and as to these intolerable pests, which so frequently disfigure our fields and choke our grain plants—thistles, twitch grass, and the whole catalogue of weeds, why, they would be all but entirely banished from the fair surface of the earth.—Canadian Agriculturist for August.

MILCH COW FOR SALE. A GOOD YOUNG COW and CALF for sale. Apply at this Office. St. Thomas, August 14, 1850.

PROSPECTUS OF THE Waverley Magazine.

A New Volume.

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We are continually receiving letters from all parts of the country, requesting us to send No. 1—and many say if they cannot have the whole they don't want any. Travelling Agents say, "If we only had No. 1, we could obtain more than three times the number of subscribers that we now do. You must reprint it." A Wholesale dealer at a distance says—"For Heaven's sake, send us some of No. 1—we are run down for them."

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We have therefore fully considered the matter, and have come to the conclusion that it will be no inconvenience to old subscribers, and be a great favor to those who have not a regular file—and at the same time enable us to obtain more subscribers than we otherwise should, by closing this and commencing a new volume.

We therefore shall commence Vol. 2 of the Waverley Magazine sometime in August. Its continuation being now certain, we shall give it such additional attractions, as our means will enable us to do, and such as the public taste requires. Some of the best writers will be procured to enrich its columns. We intend to embellish it occasionally with a fine engraving of some scene or object of interest, perhaps portraits of some eminent, both male and female, and perhaps those of some of our contributors.

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Published weekly, by Moses A. Dow, at No. 27 Devonshire street, Boston, to whom all letters and communications should be addressed. (Post-paid.) Single subscribers by mail, \$3 a year, \$2 for eight months, \$1 for four months. Two subscribers, sent at one time, \$5 a year, \$2 50 for six months. All those subsequently added, at the same rate. Subscriptions must all be paid in advance, and they will be stopped when the time expires for which they are paid, unless previously renewed. We shall take no subscriptions for any less than \$3, unless there are more than one sent to the same office—and in no case less than \$2 50.

List of Letters

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