

NOTES FROM GRAND ISLE, QUE.



COUPLE of days recently spent with Mr. Louis Simpson, the energetic and genial manager of the Montreal Cotton Company, at Valleyfield, Que., were full of interest to the visitor. Valleyfield is a manufacturing town made up of some six thousand inhabitants, many of whom are employees of the cotton and paper mills.

Grand Isle is formed by a division of the channel of the St. Lawrence, and is about fifteen miles long by two miles wide. The soil is alluvial; clay loam predominates, with occasional gravel beds interspersed with boulders. The limestone bed rock rarely appears, but here and there, in quarries, are seen excellent examples of the abrading power of the ponderous ice floes belonging to the ice age, the surface strata being beautifully defined. The limestone is found in horizontal

layers of convenient thickness, is easily quarried, and is used in considerable quantities by the Cotton Company in its building operations.

The presence of large bodies of open water during the entire year, has a marked effect on the local climate. This is evidenced by the kind of fruit trees, and the measure of their success, upon the island. For instance, no where in Quebec have I seen the common red cherry—a form of the Kentish—succeed so well, and with so little culture. The roadsides and gardens are sprinkled with well-laden specimens of this tree, which is quite remarkable, considering the off year. Black knot has, so far, been unknown. Cherry slugs have seriously denuded many good trees. This seems a pity, as the slug is easily destroyed with weak applications of Paris green or hellebore, or with a sprinkling of dry ashes or lime.

Although natural conditions, such as soil and climate, are very favorable for farm and garden crops, yet neither agriculture nor horticulture have been developed to an extent justified by the evidence at hand. A very useful work is being prosecuted by Mr. Simpson, in bringing under cultivation, and in moderate sized blocks, quite an area of land adjoining the cottages of the factory employees. This land is being gradually brought into tillable condition; not by the expenditure of large sums of money in stumping and clearing, but by adopting the best methods; the careful management of a limited farm force, and the judicious expenditure of income arising from present cultivated areas. The benefits derived from this system of management are two-fold, viz., economy and the force of such an example upon the surrounding community.