

FAILURE OF THE POTATOE CROP.

The potatoe crop has received great damage, from a disease hitherto almost unknown in this country, previous to the present season, which is called *dry rot* in the United States and *curl* in England. It is known from the leaves of the stem becoming shrivelled, when the roots are found in a state of partial decay, and finally turn rotten. Considerable speculation has arisen among the farmers to discover its origin and cure, and we have yet to learn to what malady it is to be positively attributed, or how it is to be fully remedied. Among the various theories upon this disease that have been published, we shall mention a few, which to us appear the most sensible. Many ascribe the failure of the potatoe crop to the frost, that the tubers are not propagated sufficiently frequent from the small seeds which grow upon the haulm, others, that the tubers for seed should be frequently taken from land which has been lately cleared from the forest; and a writer in the *English Agricultural Gazette*, while treating upon the subject, states that, "the main point to be attended to for insuring a good crop must, of necessity, be the having good and properly saved seed. My method is this;—At the usual season for raising the potatoes, I cause them to be ploughed or dug up, and the quantity I reserve for seed is strewn thinly on the surface of the ground, in any shady place. Here I suffer them to remain exposed to the varied influences of the atmosphere, until they become quite green, and the texture of the potatoe perfectly firm, which will commonly be in about three weeks; during this time they require turning occasionally. I pay no regard as to whether the tubers be ripe or unripe when they are taken up, as I consider that the above treatment is an efficient method of ripening or harvesting the seed. When they are perfectly fit to store, I put them in a cool, dry place, covering them with plenty of clean straw, and here they remain till the time for planting arrives."

Another correspondent in the same valuable paper, in summing up the influences that have a bearing upon this difficult subject, offers the following suggestions: 'Thoroughly pulverising the land, by repeated ploughing and harrowings; never use unripe tubers for seed; never pit seed potatoes, if it can be avoided; never cut them, if it is possible to obtain medium-sized ones; make the drills much

wider apart from each other, and deeper than is generally practised; use well fermented barn-yard manure, employ the horse-hoe and plough as little as possible after the plants have made their appearance above ground; and remove all flowerers as soon as they make their appearance. If the foregoing remarks should not prove to afford much light upon the matter, it may, at least, elicit enquiry from those who have received injury to their potatoe crops. Obtaining seed from new land, and the introduction of new varieties, and also preserving the seed as recommended above, are considerations worthy of a fair trial. When potatoes are affected with this disease, they are unfit for the use of either man or beast.

THE CULTIVATOR GIVEN AS PREMIUM.

We have observed with much pleasure, that a number of the Agricultural Societies have advertised that the third prize of each class shall be a volume of the *British American Cultivator*, and this, too, in addition to the copy supplied to each member, in accordance with the scheme published in the December number, which, we are happy to add, is being pretty generally adopted in Western Canada. It is certainly gratifying to observe the growing interest that is taken by all classes in relation to the circulation of our journal; and in no instance have we been more highly flattered than in that of having our work awarded as a reward for merit, to those of our brother farmers who may be successful competitors at either the local or general shows. As this noble example has been so wisely and liberally begun, we trust that it may be generally adopted throughout the entire Province, which would not only encourage us to persevere in the cause, but would be of incalculable benefit to every institution that adopts it, and also to the successful competitor who received it. If any practical farmer would carefully read and practice all the useful suggestions in a single volume of the *Cultivator*, he would receive a greater amount of benefit than if the whole of the funds of the richest Agricultural Society in the Province were given him. This being the case, the Societies that have been foremost in the adoption of this principle deserve great credit, and we doubt not but that their exertions to advance the cause of agricultural improvement will be duly appreciated by the agriculturists in general in their respective localities.

AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATIONS IN THE WESTERN DISTRICT.

We are highly delighted at the manner in which, the farmers in the Western District have at last come out, in favour of a general movement, for improving their Agriculture. This district, first on the list as regards its natural resources, could scarcely boast of having a single Association for the encouragement of Agricultural improvement twelve months ago; but we are happy to say, that, through the exertions and influence, of a few spirited individuals, there are at present at least four established; and we have reason to believe, from information received from a private correspondent, that, in the course of the coming autumn and winter, an attempt will be made to establish Township Societies, throughout the District, upon the plan adopted in the Home District. We have no desire to see one District advance faster than another in Agricultural improvement; but, as the one under notice consists of that extreme Western portion of the Province which is susceptible of a high degree of cultivation, and as it has advantages in climate and richness of soil which are scarcely equalled by any other District in Canada, we would, at least, wish to see it improve, by artificial means, in ratio with other portions of the country.

In an ably-written Editorial article, in a late number of the *Western Express*, the Editor has, in a most lucid manner, pointed out to his Agricultural readers, the advantages that would accrue were TOWNSHIP AGRICULTURAL SOCIETIES established in each Township in the Western District. When Editors of political papers, Honourable members of the Legislative Council and House of Assembly, Officers of the British Army, Lawyers, Doctors, and Merchants enlist their influence and means in the cause of Agricultural improvement, as has been the case within a very late period in the counties of Kent and Essex, we would cry shame to the farmer who would be indifferent in these matters.

Without adding another remark further than our best wishes for the success of the several infant Agricultural associations established in the above two counties, we beg to subjoin the following letter, upon the same subject;—

Amherstburg, 43th July 1844.

SIR,—You will, no doubt, be much gratified to find that we are awakening from a state of lethargy in the "Far West," and that a Union Township Agricultural Society, of the Townships of Malden and Anderdon, has been formed, which from the support already tendered, bids fair for becoming a Society of some importance, indeed, when such men as the commandant of the Western Frontier, the Assistant Commissary General at this post, the Hon. James Gordon, James Douglass Esq., &c. &c. &c., came forward on such an occasion, and tender their aid and influence, it does them much credit, and