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RURAL NOTES.

Spring wheat in the Western counties of Ontario has been greatly injured by the great rain storm of the early days of August. Soon afterwards it was attacked with rust, and fields which gave promise of twenty bushels per acre have turned out to be not worth cutting.

Even the skunk may have its uses, for he is credited with being a voracious eater of the white grub. If this is true, it is a reason why the poor beast should be encouraged to live and propagate his kind, instead of being made the prey of every boy, dog, and shot gun in the countryside.

The frequent rains of the last few weeks have caused sheep in some parts of the country to suffer from diseased hoofs. In wet weather sheep should if possible be kept on the highest and best drained parts of the farm, and if this is not practicable it may be necessary to feed them under cover.

The present outlook for grapes is not very cheering. The month of August was too cold and wet, and little or no progress has been made towards the ripening stage. They had made good growth during July, however, and for size they are all that could be desired. Should warmer weather ensue during the present month they may yet mature perfectly; but everything depends on a better than an average September.

The agricultural fairs are near at hand, and for the next month or six weeks the country will be alive with them. The Industrial promises to be better than ever this year, and so does the Provincial. The latter is fortunate in two aspects. It is to be held in the centre of a splendid agricultural country, easy of access from all parts of the Province, and it is helped on the financial side by a grant of \$10,000 from the Dominion.

Corn is the crop generally grown for green-feeding, but many farmers make the mistake of sowing it broadcast instead of planting it in rows in the usual way. When sown broadcast the yield is lighter and the plant is white, tasteless and lacking in nutriment. Planted in rows about thirty inches apart and eighteen inches between each hill it may be got to yield a crop of twenty to twenty-five tons per acre for silage.

Careful experiments have shown that the best way of selecting seed corn is to go through the field and pick the earliest ears just after the grain has thoroughly glazed. Remove the husk, and hang them in a room where there is a fire until well cured, and keep them in a dry place all winter. It is in this way that early and vigorous varieties may be secured, and there is no risk of their germinating if the ground is at all suitable.

A large number of new animals are being imported this year to be placed in the Bow Park herd. This herd now numbers about three hundred, and it is doubtful if such another lot of Shorthorns is to be found on the continent. A nine months old bull, sired by the celebrated Fourth Duke of Clarence, was recently sold to an Ohio breeder for \$5,000, and sales of young ani-

mals are being made to Canadian and American breeders almost constantly.

A few weeks ago Maud S. was tested to beat her own record, and she accomplished the feat by trotting a mile in 2.08½. The first quarter was trotted in 32½ seconds, the second in 32, the third in 31½, and the fourth in 33½. This is remarkable when compared with the best trotting record of thirty years ago, and we shall not be surprised if in the course of the next fifteen years the record is cut down to two minutes. Breeding on special lines produces wonderful results.

American exchanges are complaining of frauds that are practised on farmers by manufacturers of fertilizing compounds. One of these made in Connecticut, and sold for \$30 per ton, has been found on analysis to consist mainly of sand, earth and water, and worth only \$8.26 per ton. Another, made in New York State, and sold at \$35 per ton, has been found to be worth only \$5.99, or at an equal value to a ton of good swamp muck. There are few farms on which an ample and reliable manure could not be made, if care was only taken to utilize what is available for that purpose.

Mr. Wm. Rennie, the wholesale seed merchant of this city, has added to the stock of his farm an importation of three thoroughbred Clydesdales, a yearling and two-year-old filly and a yearling colt; they arrived in fine order. The lot comprises "Nellie Gray," foaled 2nd May, 1883, by "King of Clydesdale" (2,199), dam "Jessie Gray" (69), this is an exceptionally fine two-year-old, weighing 1,625 lbs. "Bella Harper," foaled 5th April, 1884, by "Harold" (2,854), dam "Mrs. Harper" (11). "Harold jr.," foaled May, 1884, by "Harold" (2,854), dam "Jean of Grangemains."

The prevalence of rust on wheat this year, and especially on the spring wheat, should induce farmers to prepare the seed grain carefully before sowing it. Rust is a fungus which grows from spores or seeds, like any other plant, and these seeds may either remain in the soil or be sown with the grain to which they frequently remain attached. If the seed grain be steeped in a brine made of common salt, or in a solution made of four ounces of sulphate of copper in four gallons of water, the rust spores will be destroyed. Smut is propagated in the same manner, and it requires similar treatment.

Too many farmers neglect the straw-stack at threshing time. Straw is valuable for feeding purposes, and after the experience of last winter it would be a great mistake to waste any of it. If a stack is properly made—and this cannot be done without the help of three or four men—nearly the whole of the straw may be preserved dry and sweet for winter use, in spite of storms of rain and snow. Of course it is better to get the straw under cover, but where this cannot be done, a well bunt stack is the next best way of preserving it. Then a feed of cut straw mixed with grain is a diet as good and wholesome as a feed of hay, and the manure heap is sure to be enriched.

In these days of steam threshers it is just possible that work is rushed so fast, and that too much of the grain is not beaten out from the straw at all.

Machines with a record of a thousand bushels a day are good enough for boasters, perhaps, but if they send forty or fifty bushels of grain into the straw-stack, it is obvious that the gain of fast work may be more than offset by the waste. Then another objection to these high records is the risk of explosions. We have heard of two or three instances this fall already, and everybody knows the great risk of getting up a full head of steam, especially with an ignorant man in charge of the engine.

In a very short time now farmers will have the most pressing work of the season over, and an opportunity will be afforded them for prosecuting permanent improvements. To clear off such blots as the cat-swamp, to grub up stumps, to remove stones, to lay down drains, to plant shade trees, to make repairs to stables—works like these should not be neglected, and every day spent upon them is like putting money in the bank. Underdraining especially is an improvement that should be pushed forward with vigour. There are millions in it for the farmers, and we are glad to know that the number convinced of this fact is rapidly increasing. No other investment on the great majority of our farms will yield larger or surer returns.

The seed distribution branch of the United States Department of Agriculture has got into disgrace owing to the bad management of it under the administration of Dr. Loring. Those who favour its continuance plead a fair show for it until it is seen what Commissioner Colman can do. There appears to be no doubt now that Dr. Loring was a great failure. The fact is, he was too much of a "swell" to be successful in anything that called for steady application and hard work, but we doubt if his successor can redeem the character of the seed branch, whatever his energy and character may be. Where private enterprise is so active as it is in the United States, it does seem to be an absurd and foolish thing for a Government to keep on running a seed store.

There is only one effective way of treating black knot, and that is to cut off the affected twig or limb, and burn it. If this is done as often as the disease appears it is possible to keep it in check and to maintain trees in a healthy bearing state. Some good may result from enforcing the law on the statute book, but there are men who cannot be made to do as they ought without a steady application of legal penalties, and perhaps on the whole it is better to let them suffer the loss of their trees. The sooner the trees are dead, the safer will be the orchards of their neighbours, and the man who cannot be induced to care for his trees except upon compulsion, does not deserve to have any fruit. To those who do take an interest in growing plums and cherries we would say: Watch your trees carefully, and whenever the black tumour appears cut it off and destroy it. Should it appear on the trunk or large limbs of a tree, cut away the diseased part carefully, and apply a wash of chloride of lime or a coating of spirits of turpentine. It is well also to give the soil around the tree a liberal application of wood ashes, and so strengthen its constitution to resist the attacks of the disease.