THE CANADA FARMER

VOL. I. No. 24.] TORONTO, UPPER CANADA, DECEMBER 15, 1864. [POSTAGE FREE.

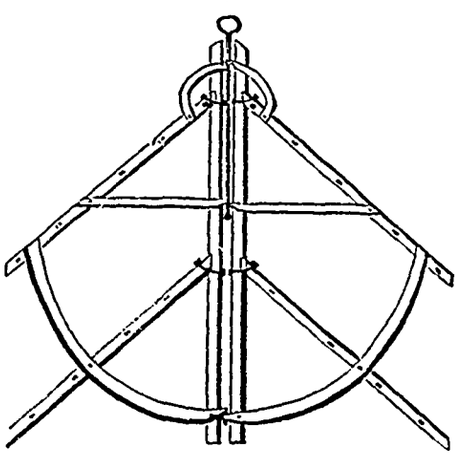
The Field.

War against Weeds.

We have a decided impression that weed-growing is one of the heaviest of the many taxes upon agricultural industry. One might almost imagine that they were among the most profitable things that can be grown, from the apparent care to retain them in the land, and to grow them, which is taken by many who aspire to be called farmers. Slovenly cultivation is the source of an incalculable amount of loss, for what will support a thrifty weed will support a valuable and useful plant. When one considers the immense crop of weeds annually raised, what a pity it seems that the productive energies of soil and air wasted on them were not turned to better purpose. Many farmers have battled against the weeds infesting their land until they have lost heart; and perhaps all the time they have been endeavouring to rid themselves of these vegetable pests, every field has been surrounded by a seed-bed, and the margin of land along the fence has been the constant source whence a reinforcement has come. Thistles and other weeds have light downy seeds which the wind readily wafts about. Birds and other creatures spread them in their ordure and otherwise. You will sometimes see a field preparing for fall wheat bordered round with a magnificent growth of thistles, all in seed and ready to take advantage of the loosened earth to establish themselves. Our crooked fences furnish too much chance for this nuisance to perpetuate itself. Time spent in mowing down all weeds on the margin of fields before they go to seed would be time well employed. Could we adopt a system of farming that would enable us to dispense with all but boundary fences, it would facilitate the extermination of weeds very much. One argument in favour of soiling cattle is that it renders clean cultivation more practicable. But even as things are, much may be done by waging incessant war against weeds. Thoroughly rotting manure, repeated ploughings and harrowings, frequent use of the cultivator and hoe among crops that can be tilled by these implements, "autumn cleaning,"—as late fall ploughing is very fitly styled in the old country,—these are among the tactics by means of which this war is to be carried on. And if it be real war, war in earnest, it will assuredly be crowned with victory.

Prairies in Winter.

We have more than once had occasion to remark that there are disadvantages and inconveniences about the prairie country; that western paradise, as many regard it. Among these must be ranked its bleak, desolate appearance in winter, and its exposure to high winds which sweep across those vast expanses with great force. On this subject the *Prairie Farmer* says:—"If any man can look abroad over the vast expanse of western prairies at this season of the year, and not be impressed from their dreary monotony, with the importance of planting belts and groves of evergreen and deciduous trees, hedges and wayside shrubs, then must that man indeed be dead to those emotions that surroundings beget in the minds of most mortals. The prairies are right royal in their magnificence when covered with the green mantle of spring, when the zephyr winds of summer wave their glorious covering of vegetable growth, or when decked with the varied hues of autumn. But now when frosts and storms and sunless days have changed their grandeur into the dullness and dreariness of a desert, men are led, or should be led, to look about for means to diversify and beautify the landscape."



Another Good Harrow.

To the Editor of THE CANADA FARMER:

Sir,—In No. 19 of THE FARMER (Oct. 15th), you gave an extract from the *American Agriculturist* containing a plan and description of a harrow made by Mr. W. D. Morton, of Lapeer County, Michigan. I send you a plan of a harrow which I made and have used for these seven years past. I do not claim for this harrow all that Mr. Morton claims for his—that it will give perfect satisfaction on both rough and smooth land; but I do say, that for new, stumpy land, it is almost complete, and has given perfect satisfaction to all who have tried it

For old, smooth, level land, I have seen nothing yet to equal the double square wooden harrow. This harrow, Mr. Morton's harrow, and all the iron harrows I have ever seen tried, are all too dead when in motion; they lack that peculiar quiver or shake, or hursal, as they call it in Scotland, which the double wooden harrow always has, when the ground is in proper tilth, and which rejoices the heart of the experienced farmer to see, for then he knows that he is not only preparing a good seed-bed, but he is also sure that his harrow is working as it ought to do. I will leave to more scientific men to define more exactly whence this shake or quiver arises; my own opinion is, that to secure it there must be a certain amount of wood in the harrow, and it must not be concentrated too much, or too heavily loaded with iron.

I have harrowed a whole day with this harrow, on new land, and never put a hand to it to lift it, driving it through between stumps two feet apart. I doubt Mr. Morton's draught bar would be badly in the way in such a narrow passage. And, furthermore, the slats in the Morton harrow would fare badly among snags and underbrush stumps. The advantage of this harrow, in this respect, can be seen at a glance. The fastenings are all on the top; it is therefore not so liable to catch, and if caught, it can stand a good jerk.

I claim for this harrow, that it is simpler than Mr. Morton's, that it can be made cheaper, is stronger, and will therefore last longer. It is spreading fast over these United Counties of Huron and Bruce. Like Mr. Morton, I am so convinced of its being a complete harrow for stumpy land, that I offer it freely, through you, to all who need a good, strong, useful article—a harrow that will double over a cradle knoll, adapt itself to a hollow, and will not stick at a stump.

The circular-hinge bands should be iron, 3 inches wide and ¾ thick. The centre and shoulder draught bands, 2 or 2½ wide, ¾ thick. The draught rod, one inch in diameter—the front end formed into a ring to hitch to, and a 2-inch nut on the other end, behind the centre draught band. The harrow should be made of 3x4 3-inch scantling and bolted between each tooth, with screw bolts, not rivets; for when any of the wood gives way, unscrew the bolts and they will do again. This is another advantage which this harrow possesses—if properly made at first, any farmer, almost, with very few tools, can mend it, or make it over again, as long as the iron work lasts, without calling on the blacksmith.

The wood work is worth about $2; and a good blacksmith ought to make wages at $8 for the iron work.

Should this article on harrows suit you, and you give it a place in your valuable columns, I may at some future period give your readers my experience and opinions of the ploughs at present in use in this part of Canada. L.

Hay, County of Huron, Nov. 11th, 1864.