FARM and GARDEN.

THE GREAT HENRY WARD BEECHER AS A FARMER.

The following is Mark Twain's article on Beecher's farming :

Mr. Beecher's farm consists of ninety acres, and is carried on on strict scientific principles. He never puts in any part of a crop without consulting his book He plows, and reaps, and digs, and sows according to the authorities—and the authorities cost more than the other farming implements do. As soon as the library is complete the farm will begin to be a profitable investment. But book farming has its drawbacks. Upon one occasion, when it seemed morally certain that the hay ought to be cut, the hay book could not be found—and before it was found it was too late and the hay was all spoiled. Mr. Beecher raises some of the finest crops of wheat in the country, but the unfavorable difference between the cost of producing it and its market value after it is produced has interfered considerably with its success as a commercial enterprise. His special weakness is hogs, however. He considers hogs the best game a farm produces. He buys the original pig for $1,50, and feeds him $40 worth of corn, and then sells him for about $9. This is the only crop he ever makes any money on. He loses on the corn, but he makes $7.50 on the hog. He does not mind this because he never expects to make anything on corn, any way. And any way it turns out, he has the excitement of raising the hog anyhow, whether he gets the worth of him or not. His strawberries would be a comfortable success if the robins would eat turnips, but they won't, and hence the difficulty.

One of Mr. Beecher's most harassing difficulties in his farming operations comes of the close resemblance of different sorts of seeds and plants to each other. Two years ago his far-sightedness warned him that there was going to be a great scarcity of watermelons, and therefore he put in a crop of twenty-seven acres of that fruit. But when they came up they turned out to be pumpkins, and a dead loss was the consequence. Sometimes a portion of his crop goes into the ground the most promising sweet potatoes, and comes up the infernalest carrots—though I never have heard him express it in just that way. When he bought his farm he found one egg in every hen's nest on the place. He said that here was just the reason why so many farmers failed—they scattered their forces too much—concentration was the idea. So he gather those eggs together and put them all under one experienced old hen. That hen roosted over that contract night and day for eleven weeks, under the anxious personal supervision of Mr. Beecher himself, but she could not "phase" those eggs. Why? Because they were those infamous porcelain things which are used by ingenious and fraudulent farmers as nest-eggs. But perhaps Mr. Beecher's most disastrous experience was the time he tried to raise an immense crop of dried apples. He planted $1,500 worth, but never a one of them sprouted. He has never been able to understand what was the matter with those apples.

Mr. Beecher's farm is not a triumph. It would be easier on him if he worked it on shares with some one ; but he can not find anybody who is willing to stand half the expense, and not many that are able. Still, persistence in any case is bound to succeed. He was a very inferior farmer when he first began, but prolonged and unflinching assault upon his agricultural difficulties has had its effect at last, and he is now fast rising from affluence to poverty."

[Mr. Henry Ward Beecher's farm is on the Hudson River. It is tilled under his directions and is said not to be a financial success.—ED. FARMER.]

THE CROPS IN MANITOBA

The following facts regarding the crops of Manitoba, we glean from the crop report of Acton Burrows, Dept. Minister of Agriculture :

Seeding time was favorable and throughout the whole Province the season is fully ten days ahead of last year. A great deal of plowing was done last autumn. In the 355 townships heard from this autumn, plowing amounted to 167,163 acres, out of 369,010 acres under cultivation.

Winter wheat has had but limited trial, only 31 acres being reported. The principal reason given for this is, that spring wheat yields so largely and is so successful that farmers do not feel disposed to run any risk from the uncertainties attending winter grain. The prevalence of prairie fires is also mentioned as a reason for not sowing it.

With few exceptions correspondents of the Department speak flatteringly of the spring wheat prospects. The total area in spring wheat in 328 townships is 247,305 acres, an increase of nearly 40,000 acres over 1883. Seeding began April 24, and ended May 17. The average amount of seed used was one and four-fifths (1.80) bushels per acre, or 1 bushel and 25½ quarts, or 108 lbs. Red Fyfe is the principal variety sown, though some townships report small amounts of Fyfe, White Fyfe, Lost Nation, Red Chaff, etc.

Owing to the unsatisfactory condition of the markets and the want of railway facilities, about 40 per cent less oats have been sown there than last year. In some localities dry weather in May damaged the crop. Barley suffered from the same cause, and this is a deficit of about one-third in the acreage. There is also a falling off in the areas to flax, potatoes, and field roots.

Tree planting is becoming very general in the prairie districts. Arrangements have been made for an Arbor Day next year.——Noxious weeds are gaining a decidedly strong foothold in many places, and the Legislature has passed stringent laws relating to their destruction, and compelling municipal councils to appoin pathmasters who shall see to their enforcement.

Considerable summer fallowing is being done for the purpose of destroying the weeds. It is also found to make a more solid bottom on which to grow wheat and to render soils capable of longer retaining moisture. This is of special advantage in the usually dry month of May.

CULTURE OF FALL TURNIPS.

Turnips do best in a fairly rich and rather moist soil. New soil is good if well prepared. When this kind of land is selected, it should be plowed early and allowed to lie until July, when it should be plowed again, and harrowed until fine. Any soil is good for roots which is loose and loamy. The middle or last of July is the best time to sow the seed, but if the weather is unfavorable, later than this will do. I have sown turnip seed as late as the middle of August, and still raised a good crop ; but generally I would prefer the last of July. I also find it better to sow after a rain than just before it. I have the ground all ready, so that when a favorable time comes, the work can be done without delay. It is advisable to sow the seed mixed with earth or ashes. If sown just before a rain, the do not need to be covered, but if sown after, it would be a good plan to drag a brush over the patch. They need only a light covering to germinate.

I prefer rather a low place to high land, as they do much better in dry weather on rather moist soil. Like all other root crops, they are much better if they can be made to grow rapidly ; they should be crisp and tender. If the growth is slow, they get strong and pithy. The turnip fly is the worst enemy of the crop, and a preventative should be used as soon as they make their appearance. I use "slug shot" for this purpose, and for radishes and cabbages. I find it as economical as any-as anything else I can procure.

N. J. SHEPHERD.

PLANTING POTATOES BY MACHINERY

It seemed to me last year that my potatoes were planted and cared for in the best manner possible, and at the least cost consistent with good work. But some improvements have been made, I think, this year, both in planting and after culture. It never seemed possible to me that a machine could be made to drop one eye pieces of potatoes with anything like perfection, and so I expected to have to do that job by hand always, at considerable cost. But I have planted 24 acres of potatoes this year with a machine that marked out, opened the furrows, dropped the seed (cut to one eye) and covered it all in one operation. This was the Aspinwall potato planter, which I first heard of through advertising columns. One man man and myself plowed and prepared the ground thoroughly, and planted the potatoes, besides doing other necessary farm work, and got through May 14, one day sooner than last year, when I had two more men and and a boy to help in the field. This is quite a saving in labor.

As far as the straightness of rows, depth of furrow and covering are concerned, the machine is near enough to perfection. It is also very simple, durable and easily managed. My machine shows no perceptible wear after doing my work. The dropping is not quite perfect, but it is far better than one would suppose could be done by machinery. I have seen potatoes dropped by hand much more unevenly ; however a skilful hand could beat the machine in this respect. The makers assure me, after four years' trial, that the unevenness is not enough to make any material difference in the yield, and I am inclined to think so myself, after examining the rows carefully since they came up. However, this point can be best settled the fall after digging. Should the unevenness in dropping cause a loss of 3 per cent. in the yield, I think the machine has advantages that will more than overbalance this loss.

When planting, we set the covers so as to make quite a ridge of earth over the rows. After planting, the ground was rolled, as it was quite dry, and pains were taken to have the horses walk between the rows, and not step on them except at the ends when turning around. Some experiments have convinced me that the yield of a hill is slightly injured by having a heavy horse step directly on it before it is up—or afterwards, either, for that matter. The tops grow just as well apparently, but the yield of tubers is always a little less, and they are not so well-shaped. So this year, by having the soil a little ridged over the rows, we have been able to see them and keep the horses between them while harrowing five times, except when turning. It was necessary to cross-harrow once, and then of course the horses stepped on the hills somewhat.

Another advantage of this ridge over the row, ank keeping the horses og it, was that the harrow took hold, and kept the weeds down better in the rows. Weeds between the rows do no harm if they escape the harrow teeth, as the cultivator will take care of them, but if any are left to grow in the row, in drill culture, they must be eradicated by using the hoe and finners, where level culture is practiced, and this is expensive and unpleasant work. I should have hesitated to harrow the ground six times before the potatoes came up, as it was necessary to do to keep the weeds entirely down, unless the horses had walked between the rows, for fear the remedy would have been worse than the disease. I do not think the trampling, in moderately dry weather, does any harm between the rows, where the ground is to be cultivated up loose again, but directly over the hills, where the potatoes are set, and where it cannot be cultivated up loose again, it is quite a different matter. The tubors must have mellow ground in which to expand, and not hard trampled ground. At least this is my theory to account for that which experience has shown to be a fact. T. B. TERRY, in *American Cultivator*.

For the CANADIAN FARMER.

WEEDS.

Farmers should carefully inquire what weeds are local in the section whence they get their stock, as those who knowingly sell foul seeds are liable to heavy damages. When wild mustard, and dogweed, or oxeye daisy prevail, timothy seed should not be purchased. Ragweed and orange hawkweed, travel in clover seed. Where oxeye daisy appears in any particular quantity, it will be the only safe way to plow the field as soon as the pest comes in bloom, and make a very fine summer fallow. If this pest once gets its seeds into the ground, it may take a generation to get rid of it. If mustard gets in, the only sure plan is to pull it as soon as it gets in bloom, and keep the plot in grass till all the seeds will have sprouted ; for if ungerminated seeds get plowed down, they may lie in the land for years, and come into life when they are turned up again. Very much mischief has been done by careless buyers and importers. The only safe pla is for a few farmers in a neighborhood to select their best pieces of clean, newly-seeded grass land, and let the crops ripen for seed, and supply the neighborhood with a clean, guaranteed article which will be worth, and for which they should get a better price than is paid for a bushel of screenings made up of the small weed trash of the country.

Now is the time to select pieces of timothy for seed which, if first crop will yield well.

M. McQUADE.