

## SHEDIAC MUSSEL MUD.

*For the Maritime Agriculturist.*

Some interesting facts were gleaned by your correspondent, in Shediac, relating to the so-called mussel mud, found in the harbor bottom at that place. A casual observer passing through that pretty place and outlying districts, will notice the quantity of shells of almost every description, scattered over the fields and in some places heaps piled on the sides of the road. On enquiring, he found that what appeared to him to be oyster shells, was the somewhat famous mussel mud of Shediac.

This substance, which is gathered in winter, through holes cut in the ice, and elevated by means of a large frame work supporting a shovel worked by horse power, is the accumulation of centuries, deposited on the harbor bottom, and is largely the product of decayed oyster beds and shell fish.

In conversation with Mr. S. J. Welling, an extensive and successful farmer, who has used this fertilizer for the past sixteen years, he received many valuable hints regarding its use and effects.

Mr. Welling said he drew about two hundred double loads of this substance on his farm every winter, and had tried it on almost everything and in almost every way. He found that the effects from it were most clearly seen on the high lying parts of his farm, the soil of which was a stiff reddish clay. In wet land he noticed that the oysters shells, which composed a considerable quantity of the substance, did not decay as on dry land, but remained year after year in their hard state. He applied about twenty double loads to an acre, drawing it at once from the harbor upon his fields and spreading it. He believed that by piling it up, some at least of its virtue was lost, and mentioned in support of this view, the untenable nature of the salt which it contained and which must in some slight measure be of service to the crop. He believed in its efficacy on all grain crops, declaring that he could not raise wheat without it.

Mr. Welling's crop of wheat this year can bear witness by its luxuriant and forward condition; in fact the crops generally, not only on Mr. Welling's farm, but on those of others, to the value of mussel mud. The difficulty, if such it may be called, with its use on grain fields, was that it made the stock grow too stout, however, it ensured a perfect catch of grass, which in Mr. Welling's

experience, retained its strong growth for three or four years, before showing any very marked retrogradation. The difference, however, between each cropping is quite apparent. He has, side by side, three fields of grass, which very effectually illustrate this fact. The first, which is newly seeded land, is, although last winter's severity has nearly extinguished all the clover, about as good a catch as any farmer could wish. The next, which was mowed last year, is thicker at the bottom, but not quite so strong in growth, while the third field following the gradation is below the second about as much as the second is below the first. But perhaps the most striking feature of the illustration is in the difference between these fields, and a head ridge running along the top, upon which no mud has ever been put. The growth is scanty and very short, serving in a most marked degree to show the grass producing qualities of this fertilizer.

A curious fact in connection with it, and one which Mr. Welling is now testing, is the reported injurious effects upon potatoes, causing them to become scabby, and although not injuring them much in size, spoiling their quality and marketable appearance. Some affirm, on the other hand, that for the first year it does not effect the crop.

The general effect on the land, Mr. Welling believes to be, besides its own added qualities, a letting loose of the fertility. He is borne out in this by his experience in re-ploughing land that has been cropped. By the application of this mud the land seems to have been injured, the fertility gone. He has never tried the application of more mud upon this seemingly worn-out land, but finds excellent results from the application of farm-yard manure; more than one would expect from land untouched by "mussel mud." "It seems," Mr. Welling said, "to need farm-yard manure to bring it too again."

As a top-dressing for meadow, he has found the results for the first year very satisfactory, but does not think that much benefit is obtained in following years.

The charges for this fertilizer are 8 cts. for single and 16 cts. for double loads, the purchaser doing the hauling.

It has gained for itself a local celebrity, and is beginning to be known farther from home; some enterprising farmers of other parts of the province having given it a trial, and, while, without doubt, there are those to be found

who consider it unprofitable, still the general verdict is satisfactory, and the mussel mud of Shediac may be said to have gained for itself a place among modern fertilizers.

[At the Expt. Farm, at Nappan, N.S., there is being tried on measured plots a quantity of this material, and it will be possible to ascertain its exact value as a fertilizer and its action on the soil.

It certainly is to those who are without easy access to Shediac, a source of cheap fertilizer, the lime in the shells being worth the price asked, if lime is wanted in the soil.—Ed.

## A VALUABLE WORK.

It is with pleasure that we call our readers attention to the latest work of that able entomologist, Prof. J. Henry Comstock, of Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y., a copy of which we have received. It is entitled "An introduction to Entomology," and comprises the advance edition of a most exhaustive work, which will be issued at a later date. There has been a want among students and farmers for a text which would not only give the names of injurious insects, and the methods of meeting their ravages, but also present a key whereby they could be easily identified. By his work Prof. Comstock has filled this want. The opening chapters are devoted to the naming of the different parts of the anatomy of insects, their appearance, modifications and functions and fully illustrated by engravings. As the work proceeds the systematic classification of the insects into the orders, sub-orders, families, genera, and species, with the different characters of each are shown. As the text is more especially devoted to those insects proving injurious to farm crops, they are fully treated and illustrated, and the most practical and effective remedies for their ravage given. We feel confident that when this work is completed it will be equal to any now in print, and should receive a popular reception, at the hands of those interested in this branch of nature's work. A note worthy feature of the work is the general excellence of the illustrations, the majority of which are original, being drawn and engraved especially for the work by Mrs. Comstock, who is a thorough entomologist and a skillful artist.

We ask our readers to carefully peruse our letter, which appears on our cover page, and give it their favorable consideration.