Selection of Grasses for Pasturage or Hay.

There are perhaps few things of greater importance to the agriculturist than a proper selection of grasses for pasturage or hay, and there seems to be nothing more generally neglected. It is but of late years that even in Britain, a mixture of different kinds of grasses has been found almost to double the productiveness of pasture, and on this side the Atlantic the subject seems to have been entirely overlooked. In the mother-country the rye-grass appears to have been adopted by accident, without reference to the disadvantage; and here the same has happened in regard to timothy.

Scientific agriculturists are well aware of the extreme difference in grasses, in regard to nutrition, productiveness, time of flowering, and after growth. A sod composed of the earlier grasses speedily loses its verdure, and is much inferior to one composition. A more favorable mixture has been observed. The springing up of the natural grasses, it is true, always in some measure, compensates for the loss, but this is a work of time. One cannot but feel surprised that timothy should be the solely cultivated grass in Canada, since it is so very deficient in aftermath. Every farmer is aware how little pasturage can be expected from a field sown with timothy alone. This is most to be lamented as, in this province clover is so very frequently destroyed by winter snow or spring frosts. What a loss in many years is sustained by this misfortune! What a derangement of the rotation of crops by its occurrence! The farmer has no resource but to plow up the fields (then rendered otherwise unproductive,) for grain crops, how unfit soever they may be for tillage, how inconvenently soever he may be situated by having so large an extent of fallow, and so limited an extent for hay. His stock too will in all probability be disproportioned to the extent of pasturage, as in the best parts of Canada the commons are already over-stocked.

To remedy an evil of such magnitude, is surely worthy the attention of the Directors of the Provincial Agricultural Society. In the present state of things, no regular rotation of crops can ever be acted upon, no certain amount of stock can ever be raised. And, in the present depressed state of the grain markets, who is there that will maintain that growing wheat is more profitable than the pursuits of the grazier or dairyman? What is the remedy? Experience, of course, can only certainly tell. Grasses that at home are found to be productive, may not be so here. The difference of climate is such, that we can well conceive that no certain data can be gathered from British experiments. Certain however, it is, that without trial we can never hope for success. We may suggest that, as plants of the same natural families are frequently similar in their properties, we might make trial of the Alopecurus pratensis (fox tail grass,) so similar to the Phleum pratensis (timothy.) Its hay is equally nutritious and abundant, and its aftermath is very luxuriant, in which the timothy is so deficient. It might be found in common with many other grasses to be hardy during winter.

If space would allow, we might enumerate other grasses as much recommended or more, but at present we forbear. It is not as a mere substitute for clover that other grasses should be introduced. Look at the present state of our woodlands. Covered, and that only for about ten or twelve short weeks in summer by a growth of flowering plants, they are comparatively profitless except for timber, and this state of matters is in itself a great temptation for the owners to have the wood cut down, for few are willing to forego present advantages for probable ones at the end of 15 or 20 years: and to what a state such a policy must reduce Canada at no distant day requires no prophet to foretel. In France one-tenth of the realm is covered with forests; if this be required in that fine climate where winter can scarcely be said to exist, where no wood is required for fences, and where coal has been found in some districts, what would we require in this hyperborean climate with little else to depend on for fences and fire-wood; for the geological strata of Canada forbids us to believe in the existence of bituminous coal except in the farthest south-west extremity of the province, contigious to the Pennsylvania coal-fields. Who can say that even one-tenth of our Canadian woods is reserved by its proprietors for wood, when one-seventh at least would be required.

The fact is, that emigrants are practically ignorant of what wood is needed in an old settled country. Few of them have spent over twenty years in the province, and that under circumstances altogether dissimilar to the present, or future, and it is experience after all that guides mankind The rapid rise in the price of fire-wood in Toronto and Montreal durin the last five