

GOOD ADVICE IN SELECTING SEED WHEAT.—But little wheat of any kind, winter or spring, has been raised in Maine this year, for the good reason that but very little was sown. The ravages of the midge heretofore, have discouraged the farmers, and instead of wheat they have sown barley, and fine crops of this last grain are now growing among us.

What little winter wheat was sown last fall, as a general thing, has done well, the berry being plump and bright. The spring wheat is also fine. Some fields have suffered on the margin, or outskirts, but the ravages are not so extensive as last year, perhaps because the fields for it to ravage are not so extensive. If, by a total suspension of the wheat culture for a year or two, we could starve the *critter* out, we should do well.

We find in some articles that have appeared in the *Michigan Farmer*, on wheat culture, good suggestion to those who wish to make selection of new seed to improve their fields, which we abridge for the benefit of those of our readers who may feel any interest in those matters.

One great cause of the failure of crops of wheat, says the writer, is the neglect in the selection of seed.

Known varieties of wheat may be improved by a constant and steady attention to the selection of seed intended to be sown. It is a system of improvement that can be practised by every one, if he will go at it systematically and carry it on some years.

The easiest process for the farmer, who feels that he would like to secure a better grain for seed than he has been in the habit of growing, is by *selection from the sheaf*.

In almost every sheaf in a field of wheat, there are numbers of heads that present all the characteristics of the variety almost in perfection; namely, the straw is short and yet of moderate length, the leaf is broad and long, the head is long, full in shape, and well filled out to the end of the spike; each of the little spikelets that contain the grain should be set upon the main stem regularly, that is to say, they should not be straggling, with vacancies between each; each of these should be sound, plump and healthy. No head should be selected that contains less than forty grains of wheat—all that contain more should be preferred. [We have seen heads in Maine that contained forty kernels, but not of late years.—Ed.]

By selecting heads from sheaves, before being threshed, with some of these characteristics, and sowing only such grain, a few years would bring about a revolution in the quantity and quality of the crop, and this at no great expense of either time or labor. At any rate, it is a kind of labor that would pay, and if followed up would be found profitable; but there is no use in taking hold of it for one season, and dropping it the next.

To do anything towards the improvement of crops or stock, requires a long persistent effort that must run through a series of years; without such effort, no man can do anything to ameliorate the growth of either vegetable or animal. The laws of their growth forbid.—*Maine Farmer*.

THE TURNIP PLANT—ITS ENEMIES.—We learn from the *Agricultural Review*, (Dublin,) that the turnip plants on the light soils in the vicinity of Retford have been severely and generally attacked by an innumerable army of black caterpillars, which devour whole fields of the young plants in a few days. Their ravages are beyond credence, and all attempts to destroy them seem to be unavailing. Some of our farmers are employing children in picking them off, but it is a most interminable and apparently useless task. Others are dragging clothes over the lands to knock them off, but what are knocked off during the day find their way back during the following night. Some are passing a roller over the rows, but we have not heard with what success. We fear, however, the result will be serious to the crop, and the district has not suffered so severe a visitation since the year 1851.

FLOWERING OF POTATOES.—Dr. Manby, an eminent English agriculturist, and the author of a Prize Essay on the cultivation of Early Potatoes, says in that essay, which has recently been published, that "a flower to an early potato is considered a sign of deterioration, the first symptom of *growing out*, it being contended that all the strength of the plant should be thrown into perfecting the tuber, and not into the opposite extreme." He would therefore eradicate them as soon as they appear, and save seed from plants which have shown no indication of flowering. Experiments have shown that potato plants beginning to show a tendency to flower, perfect their tubers less early and perfectly than before that tendency was developed.