

Thinning of Turnips.

A correspo. of *The Farmer* (Scottish) writes as follows on the above subject:

"Turnips have for a long course of years been generally thinned with the hand hoe; and in thinning great care has been taken to have the plants left all laid flat upon the ground, with only a very feeble hold of the soil. The method is still in full practice by a number of farmers at the present day; but a considerable number have found, from experience, that this is not the best mode of management. The new, and at present best method, is the *hand thinning*, which is gradually growing in favour, and countenanced by several extensive farmers. It is allowed to be as speedy a mode, when performed by expert hands, as the common old hand-hoeing system. This new method is performed by the thinners; boys and girls can do the work admirably, and at little expense and at every proper distance for a plant to be left, a good-sized one is seized by the left hand, while the right clasps and pulls out what are unnecessary. By this system the plants are left less injured and with firmer hold of the soil than when thinned with the hoe, which causes them to come forward more rapidly than when laid prostrate and loosened. For swedes the plan has been found to be advantageous. It is but natural to suppose that, where the plants are laid over and loosened, even allowing them to take but a short time to rise again, those never laid over must be a stage further advanced by the time the others have got upright, besides they are less liable to injury by being tossed about by high winds. The experiment has been tried by several farmers, and the result has proved favourable. The use of the hoe in cleaning is, nevertheless, necessary, and this is a light matter and easily performed. One trial will be found convincing."

Whereupon the Editor observes:

"The mode of thinning turnips mentioned by our correspondent may be new in his neighbourhood, but we adopted it more than twenty years ago, not indeed from any idea that it was an improvement, but because we were so situated that we could not get hands who were expert in the use of the hoe. We found, however, that it was a good plan, and continued to practise it; but the ground must be gone over with the hand-hoe very soon after the plants have been thinned."

The New Double Furrow Plough.

This recent invention was tried on Saturday last, through arrangements made by Messrs. Benjamin Reid & Co., on a field at Rubislaw, near Aberdeen. The plough is the invention of Messrs. Thomas Pirie & Co., millwrights, Longside, Aberdeenshire, by whom it was patented and first exhibited at the show of the Royal Northern Agricultural Society in July last. There it received commendation from the judges, and was set aside for trial in autumn. At the trial, which took place on the farm of Auchterloun at the same time as the competition in reaping-machines, held under the auspices of the Society, its merits were seen and appreciated. One man can superintend the plough and also drive the horses. By means of two iron handles or levers, fitted with regulating screws—one regulating the first plough, the other for regulating the second—he directs the depth of the furrow slice, which can be altered at any time without stopping. A third lever is used to move the front or steering wheel, by which the plough is readily turned. On this occasion, the size of furrow was six by nine inches. The coulter and mould boards are of cast-steel. Applying the dynamometer, the draught was found to be favourable as compared with that of the single plough. Here the average draught was nearly six cwt., and the common plough, when tried on the same ground, averaged four and a half. Tried immediately after on land after turnips, the difference was rather more marked; so that it may be stated generally that the double furrow plough on such land is much about the same as the common plough on lea. Of course, the same dimension—six by nine inches was allowed to in making the comparison. Trials made on heavy clay lea, in different parts of the county, show a similar difference of draught between the double and the single plough. On such, it is calculated, three horses draw the former with more ease than two can do the latter. And then, as the amount of work done, with two horses in eight hours, one double plough turns over two imperial acres of light loamy lea, and as an instance in point, on the farm of Tipperary, near Elton, some weeks ago, with three horses, strong land in lea was ploughed with a furrow of seven inches by nine and a half inches, at the rate of two and a half acres in ten hours.—*Farmer* (Scottish.)

Top-Dressing Grass, &c.

The agricultural correspondent of the *Inverness Courier* says, with reference to the use of artificial manures for the purpose of top-dressing grasses, &c.: "We see that everywhere, almost, top-dressing is now the rule for much of the grass. Nothing pays better when a proper opportunity is taken for doing it, and suitable manures are applied, because whether for pasture or hay a thick sward, and a vigorous start, is half the battle won. If for hay, we have a prompt return in the stack; if for pasture surely it is wiser to increase the growth on one's own land than to send half the cattle away to enrich a "superior grass park" let by somebody else for your money and their manure. We know very little land that would not repay the farmer for top-dressing his first year's grass at any rate. For of course all the conditions that hold good for increasing crops in general, hold good as regards grass; the better, and richer, and drier the soil, the more will the profit be, notwithstanding the fact that very enormous crops of grass grow in the sea-sand, where, as a rule, cereals with the same treatment would do no good. It was their experience of this fact that brought those Ayrshire farmers to grief, of whose wonders we heard so much ten years ago. Not that they were farming sea-sand, but that they mistook the effects of over-enriching cereals by top-dressing. In our own time we have succeeded in illustrating the process. On a farm of the lightest soil—if it might be called soil at all—we broke up four or five-year-old lea, and with a little labour and a great dose of guano, got a spanking crop of turraips. We gave the whole crop to sheep, sowed barley, and had the most beautiful and bulky growth the eye could desire. Very proud we were of our farming, and we went on talking largely about our precious field till harvest approached. One day we made the startling discovery that some of the long and handsome ears happened to have no grain in them, and we pursued our researches long enough to become aware that perhaps the less we said about the whole affair the better; for, in fact, that field which looked five quarters did not thrash out two bushels! We had stimulated the poor weak soil into a fever, and grown grass (in fact), and left in it no strength for growing grain. Of course it is very possible to waste top-dressing even on grass, for if a long drought succeeds the time of application the manure will be nearly useless."

The Barberry as a Hedge Plant.

P. ALLEN, of Benton Harbor, Mich., writes to the New York Farmers' Club as follows:

"I want to say a few words about the barberry. One fact is worth half a dozen guesses, and I have experimented on barberry for ten years, and cannot see its character as so do. Ten years ago, or about that time, I planted one hundred barberry bushes in Delaware county, Iowa. The following winter, on thirty different days, the mercury sunk down from 10° to 30° below zero, and it did not injure the barberry. This ought to establish its hardiness. Four years ago I planted ten rods of small barberry plants for a hedge on my place. That hedge now appears much like a perfect fence. Man or beast would try more than once before passing through it. Two years more of such growth as it had last year would make it hog-tight, horse-high, and bull-strong. As to its blasting crops, I have raised wheat, corn, sugar cane, and many varieties of fruit right along beside the barberries, and the only thing I ever knew blasted even when far away from the barberries. A Massachusetts man complains of the seedlings springing up. I will pay him \$100 for 20,000 such plants, delivered to me next fall. One writer complains of their sprouting at the root, and becoming a nuisance. I deny that one plant of the barberry ever sprouted from the root. It does, it is true, throw up each year straight sprouts from the collar of the plant. These second year said shoots throw off lateral branches, which lock and interlock with the previous growth. All of these sprouts unite below the collar in one central root, which at the depth of eight or nine inches branches out into proper roots, but I have never seen one bud on the root of any plant of the barberry. Let no one send me for seeds or plants, for I have neither for sale. I do, though, fully believe that the barberry is yet destined to become the great hedge plant of America."

THE EARLY ROSE POTATO—Our American exchanges give a very flattering account of this new potato. Specimens of this year's growth are described as large and of excellent flavour. It is thought it will take the lead of all the early sorts.

New and Simple Potato Digger.

A POTATO-DIGGING machine, easy of construction and light of draft, is thus described by a correspondent of the *Country Gentleman*:—

It consists of a wooden bar four feet long, into which are inserted from the bottom five steel teeth. These teeth, which are of bar steel, rounded on the upper surface and brought to a point at the working end, are put through the wooden bar and secured by nuts, so they are easily removed. From the wooden bar to the principal curve in the teeth is about five inches, and from this curve to their outer extremity they form an angle of about fifteen degrees. An iron rod, rising about two feet and a half from the wooden bar, and fastened to each end of it, forms the handle. Trace chains, from six to ten inches long, pass from each end of the bar, by which to attach the horse to the machine, which is done by hooking these chains to the traces, so no whiffletree is used.

As to the efficiency of this digger, it is alleged that it does its work well and rapidly, inasmuch that two men dug forty-three bushels of potatoes with it, and put them in a waggon, in three hours, last fall. This labour, by the same men, would dig and put in waggons over 140 bushels in ten hours.

Ashes for Wheat.

A correspondent of the *Rural Gentleman*, in Delaware, writes strongly in favor of ashes to prevent rust in wheat, and from experience has found them of great value. As to the effect of ashes, he says they have, like Shakespeare's "sherry sack," a "three-fold operation;":

1. The ashes operate as a manure upon the wheat, even in the limited quantity of eight bushels per acre.
2. They push the wheat forward several days, and in time to escape the hot, sultry days which often prevail about the time of the "heading out" of the wheat; and
3. They strengthen the stem, giving it substance and solidity.

I may add one or two more properties of the ashes; they afford just that kind of pabulum or food which is best for the development and perfection of the grain, and will, in my opinion, also prevent the ravages of the fly in wheat. I would here venture the remark, that whoever once tries this experiment will thereafter spread his wood ashes upon his wheat, as above indicated; and, in so doing, he will effectually guard against and prevent "the rust" in his wheat.

GREAT YIELD OF BARLEY.—A California farmer by the name of Gridley, who cultivates some 3,000 acres of land, recently harvested fifty acres of barley, which it is reported averaged eighty bushels to the acre.

IRISH OATS.—We were pleasantly reminded of the "old country" the other day by seeing a magnificent sample of oats brought to our office by a gentleman, who had just arrived from Ireland and brought the specimen to show Canadians what could be raised in spite of drought and adverse seasons; for crops of all kinds have been exposed throughout the whole of Great Britain to the same scorching ordeal that we have experienced in this country. Such, however, is the abundant moisture of the "Emerald Isle," that we are informed they have suffered less from the drought than the sister country; and certainly the sample before us speaks well for the fertility of the soil and the skill in culture that could produce so luxuriant a growth. The straw is between six and seven feet long, stout and strong in proportion, and the heads are heavy and well filled. The sample was taken from the farm of W. Watson, Esq., of Ballanrath, near Edonderry, in King's County, and was brought over by Mr. R. J. Tackabury. Mr. Watson, we understand, does not trust solely to the natural richness of the land on his estate, but makes a liberal use of manure. To produce like results, we must treat even the virgin soil of Canada on the same principle.