

AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL,

AND

TRANSACTIONS

OF THE

Lower Canada Agricultural Society.

VOL. 2.

MONTREAL, APRIL, 1843.

NO. 4.

The period is fast approaching when farmers will be able to resume their work in the fields, and we trust they will make a great effort to have the land in a proper state to receive the seed and to produce a full crop. The experience of last spring should be a warning to all—how essential it is to have arable soil under crop sufficiently drained. No field should be allowed after sowing, to remain for one day without being water-furrowed and drained. A very heavy shower of rain, falling immediately after the seed has been harrowed in, may prevent any chance of a good crop, if the water-furrows and drains are not in good order. Last spring, the loss sustained by farmers, in consequence of the heavy rain in June, must have been immense, and this must be attributed chiefly to the want of perfect drainage. As the snow is now fast disappearing, farmers should carefully examine all their drainage, and put them into perfect order, so that all superfluous water may run off the soil. When there are heavy falls of snow, the drains are very likely to become obstructed or filled up. The work of spring sowing cannot be executed in perfection, or with any prospect of a good crop resulting, upon soil not sufficiently dry. We are convinced that crops are more deficient from defective drainage, and from land being worked in spring in a wet state, than from any other defect in our system of Agriculture. Arable land has been more improved lately in the British Isles, by draining, than by any other means. The level clay lands that prevail so generally in Eastern Canada, require most care-

ful drainage to secure the crops from the injurious effects of heavy falls of rain, during every stage of their growth from the period of sowing. A farmer may soon satisfy himself by making an experiment upon a small scale, that a good crop cannot be produced on strong clay land, if the soil has been saturated with water before or immediately after sowing. The land becomes hard, and if the plants do happen to survive, they are thin and stunted, and produce a very poor crop—grass and weeds take the place of the useful plants. This will be the certain result of an experiment made upon a small scale. The first sowing in the spring where the soil is in a fit state to work, is oats, which cannot be sown too early. We have no doubt that a crop of oats, early sown, on soil in good condition, will yield a produce of double the value of that late sown. The chief cause of the poor quality of our oats is from very late sowing and careless cultivation. The next crop to be put in early is peas, and these should be as soon as all danger of the plants being injured by the frosts would be over. It will not be necessary to sow barley before the first of May—a very good crop may be raised from sowing early in May. Potatoes should be put in as early as the season will admit. It has been proved that the early planted succeed best, and are less liable to disease. Dry gravelly soil is the most suitable, and special manures, salt, lime, ashes, soot, will be found more likely to produce a sound crop than farm-yard dung. Farmers should be content to grow moderate crops as regards quantity, because those