

# The Canada Farmer

TORONTO, CANADA, JULY 15, 1875.

## Work for July—August.

The month from July 15 to August 15 is the month of Canadian farmers. In it come the haying and the harvest, the latter crowding the farmer so closely that sometimes it has to be allowed precedence. When this occurs, it is bad in many ways. Hay should be cut before the seed is formed, and the stalks have become woody and lost their nutritive elements. The forming of the seed, too, exhausts the land to a greater extent than is generally believed. The earlier the hay is cut, the longer the time allowed for the growth of the aftermath and the better will be the protection to the roots of the grass during the coming winter. It is bad policy to pasture sheep or cattle on the aftermath, as the roots of the plants are compelled to throw out new feeders to enable them to send up fresh leaves in the place of those which have been eaten or cut away.

Farmers differ on the subject of the right time to cut timothy, the general opinion being that it should be cut while coming into blossom, while some are equally positive [see page 123 this issue] that it should be allowed to get ripe. Common sense would indicate that grass intended to be converted into hay, should be cut before the seed forms, as immediately on the seed being formed the stalks undergo a change and become comparatively valueless. It should be remembered that on no account should timothy be cut below the second joint of the stalk. It will be observed, on examination, that timothy has two kinds of roots, bulbous and fibrous. If the bulbous-rooted stalks be cut below the joint before the tuber has matured, the plant will certainly die. It is to this low cutting, and to the nibbling of the bulb by horses or sheep, that much of the dying-out of timothy is owing. If allowed to mature its bulb before cutting, timothy may be cut closer.

It is quite within the bounds of probability that we may have a catching time for haying or harvest, or both. If it should threaten to be so, a small investment of money in hay-caps, as described in our last issue, may save many an anxious hour. The caps may be extemporized in a few minutes out of yard-wide "Atlantic A" sheeting, to the corners of which pegs may be tied temporarily, and afterwards attached in a more business-like manner when time does not press. The canvas is waterproof of itself when not put "dishing," but, to preserve the caps, it will pay to dress them at leisure as before described. For barley which may lose ten per cent of its value in ten minutes, or may be ruined by being hustled up in anticipation of a shower which may not come on after all, hay caps will be more valuable even than for hay.

The cultivators should be kept going among the corn. Corn is a plant which does not thrive without constant and thorough stirring of the soil. This stirring not only keeps down weeds, but renders the soil capable of attracting moisture from the air, and so enables the crop more easily to withstand drouth. The root crops should also be thoroughly weeded and the soil stirred between rows; the plants should be thinned out to twelve or fourteen inches apart.

Buckwheat may still be sown for a crop, in which case it is not necessary to seed so thick as when it is grown as a cleansing crop to turn under. A light soil is preferable, but it will grow almost anywhere. Very heavy soils, however, do not suit it. In some places, the straw is highly thought of as forage for horses. Chopped and steamed it makes a thick jelly which is very nutritious. The seed should be steeped and rolled in plaster before sowing.

The wheat is ready to cut when there is no milk in the kernels. Farmers should be on the alert this year to see the performances of the various new reaping-machines, and self-binders especially, that will be brought to their notice. It is better to bind barley if the straw is long enough.

The summer fallows should be gone over whenever there is any appearance of weeds. Where wheat is to follow barley, oats or peas, the stubble should be harrowed and lightly ploughed as soon as the crop is off. Then, as soon

as the weeds have started, manure, plough, harrow and roll.

Feed your working cattle and horses liberally and with sound food. A handful of corn-meal or oatmeal stirred in their water will be as acceptable to them as to yourself.

For your own drinking in the field, cold coffee or tea, the former preferably, are better than alcoholic stimulants of any kind. A handful of oatmeal in the drinking pail is now widely recognized as a good thing to work upon.

Advantage should be taken of spare moments and showery days to put the barns and granaries in trim for the storage of the new crops. Rats and mice and such small deer should be hunted out and exterminated. Precautions should be taken against the grain weevil. Scald the wood-work with hot water and then wash with a whitewash made with caustic lime.

At this time of the year, life becomes a burden to the sheep from the presence of its enemy, the gad-fly. A band of tar across the face will protect the poor animals from much torture both now and when the larvæ of the fly are developing. The maggot-fly is also around, and is as pertinacious and dangerous an enemy as the gad. It seeks to deposit its progeny in soiled wool on the rump of the sheep. Wounds made by the shears are also selected. By tarring over the abrasions, and by keeping diligent watch over the sheep, and exterminating the "blows" where found, with some of the washes prepared for the purpose, loss from maggots may be avoided.

It is a good plan to divide the pastures with a temporary fence, so as to allow one part to recuperate while the stock are grazing upon another. Otherwise, upon the feed becoming short, the animals go marching about, nibbling here and there, doing a great deal of damage and securing very little provender. This time of the year is the season that will test the arrangements for water-supply. Cattle want the best of water and free access to it; especially so with milch cows. Cattle will also want shade from the burning sun and protection from drenching showers.

In the orchard, the newly-planted trees should be seen to, and, if moved from position by wind-storms, should be replaced and staked more firmly. Grafts should be looked after and any places where the wax has fallen away should be made good. Shoots from the stock should be cut off. Suckers should be exterminated, for they are diverting from the parent tree the supplies which ought to go toward the formation of fruit and new wood. Fruit should be thinned out where necessary.

Budding and layering may be done now. Budding can be done when the bark will separate readily to allow the insertion of the scion.

Small plants and shrubs which are infested with lice may be cleansed by fumigating with sulphur or tobacco. The plants can be covered with newspapers or cloths while the fumigation is being carried on. Larger plants and trees may be cleansed by syringing with a solution of soda or strong lye.

We do not believe in the shooting of small birds, but it is necessary to protect fruit from their too assiduous attentions. The report of a gun loaded with powder alone will drive them away. Many other devices such as rattles, bells, stuffed hawks, etc., answer well enough till the birds get used to them, when another device must be tried.

Unnecessary shoots should be removed from grape-vines, and fruit-bearing canes should be pinched back to within three or four leaves of the last bunch. The soil should be kept stirred about the roots, and the leaves cleaned by syringing with solution of soda and whale-oil suds.

Currant branches infested with the borer should be cut out and burned, and bushes badly affected grubbed up and destroyed. Powdered white hellebore will "fix" the worms that destroy the leaves.

Trim off the runners from the bearing crop of strawberries unless young plants are required. Growers who have been obliged to send half a pint of sand to market with every quart of strawberries will now appreciate the value of mulch—anyway, the public will. Keep the weeds out of the beds. When the fruiting is over, remove the mulch and manure the plants thoroughly. Young plants may be then raised for new beds.

If any watering has to be done in the garden, see that enough is given, or more harm than good will ensue. A slight watering induces root-growth near the surface. It is better to put the water in a hole near the plant than to let it spread about the surface.

Stop cutting asparagus when peas come in, manure and allow the tops to grow, and in the fall, unless seed is wanted, cut them down.

Keep the transplanted cabbage and cauliflower well watered with liquid manure if it can be obtained. Pinch back the melons. Train tomatoes over a trellis or brush heap. Keep down weeds, and hoe thoroughly throughout the garden.

Take care of your own health and that of your help. Recollect that the work that a man can do is proportioned exactly to the amount and quality of the food consumed. After a hard day's work, a cold bath will be found a wonderful refresher and composer for an invigorating sleep.

## On the Criminality of Overwork.

Slowly but surely, the art of farming is undergoing a revolution. One by one, laborious and back-aching processes are being sent to limbo. Muscles of iron and sinews of steel now perform with almost human intelligence, and with more than human certainty, tasks which our fathers had to accomplish with the most primitive tools, aided only by strong arms and indomitable wills.

The tendency of the age is toward a still further lightening of the heavy work; but there are still left some laborious tasks which in the near future will be superseded as completely as is the old flail. Even in these improved times, some of our best men become old before they are fairly young, and for no other reason than that they overwork themselves.

It is no news to Canadian farmers to tell them that they work too hard. They are too apt to combine the hurry and dash of our neighbours over the line with the pertinacious assiduity of the old-countryman. It needs no proving when we say that these two styles of work cannot be long combined with impunity. A man has a certain store of health and strength just the same as he has (or, if every one had what he wants, would have) a certain amount of money to his credit with his banker. Drafts may be made upon the constitution in excess of the stock of health just as easily as a banking account may be overdrawn; and nature will be just as prompt as the banker to write "NO EFFECTS" across the first overdrawn cheque.

It is during the harvest that this overwork is mostly—we will say—perpetrated. It is now that the farmer can most profitably ask himself the question whether he can afford to work himself out in five, ten or twenty years. It is now that the young giant of twenty-five, rejoicing in his strength and not knowing the feeling of fatigue, can settle for himself whether he will carry his manhood with him to an honoured old age; or, whether, by reckless abuse, he will lay the foundations of premature senility.

Let him go to any old man in his neighbourhood. If the old gentleman happens to be noted for well-preservedness, let him cross-examine him as to how he spent his youth, whether he remembers ever over-working himself without suffering for it since—whether he does not think that he would have been a still better man if he had not driven himself hard when young. Let him ask the first prematurely-broken old man he meets, why did he age so early? The answer will almost certainly be, that he did too much work before he knew that too much work could be done.

As well as many men young in years but aged in constitution, we have among us hundreds of mature—we cannot call them old men, who at sixty or sixty-five can do a day's work which will shame many a youngster. These will be found to be men who have always worked within their strength—who have never worked themselves so hard by day that they could not sleep by night—who have steadily kept pegging away at their work till their frames have become so injured to toil as to be, within certain limits well known to them, absolutely tireless.

A man can have no more honourable ambition than a wish to live hale and healthy for his allotted span on earth. When the primeval curse was uttered, "Cursed be the earth for thy sake," the burden laid upon man—"in the sweat of thy brow"—was mercifully proportioned to his strength—nay, was even a light load. Man is endowed with strength and endurance sufficient, properly used, to enable him to carry his load rejoicing. It is only when His good gifts are misused that the Creator's curse bears heavily upon His children.