

## Sundry Thoughts and Topics.

BY J. SEABURY.

The price of wheat at Emerson is only a trifle under the price of wheat in Minnesota, notwithstanding the U. S. duty of 20 cents and the drawback of 67½c. per barrel on flour manufactured from wheat imported in and afterwards exported in flour. In the face of these obstacles the Minneapolis millers are buying Manitoba wheat, paying the freight to Minneapolis, and then sending it forward to the European markets in the shape of flour. The Minneapolis millers are very anxious to keep this trade in wheat within themselves, from the fact that their flour has assumed a very important position on the Atlantic seaboard of the United States and also in the English markets. It seems to have special excellence, and commands ten per cent. more than any other brand. A prominent Ontario miller also made the assertion not long ago that Manitoba wheat was worth from 10 to 15 per cent. more than other wheat for milling purposes. This is a very important feature for the coming wheat-growers of our great North-West country, and will go a long way towards making up for the extra cost of transportation from that far-away country. This fact alone is of importance, as bearing on the prospects of the Great Lone Land.

Very few are aware of the prominent position that the dairy products of the Dominion hold in the exports of the country, and for the benefit of such we give a few figures. The fact is that the development of this branch of industry has been remarkable during the past ten years. This is especially the case with regard to cheese. The exports of this article have increased over 800 per cent. since 1869.

The following table will show the increase and fluctuations from year to year:—

	BUTTER, lbs.	CHEESE, lbs.
1869	10,853,268	4,503,370
1870	12,259,887	5,827,782
1871	15,439,266	8,271,439
1872	19,068,448	16,424,025
1873	15,208,633	19,483,211
1874	12,233,046	24,050,982
1875	9,330,770	32,563,924
1876	12,392,367	37,885,256
1877	15,479,550	37,700,921
1878	13,504,117	39,371,139

The following table will also show the value of these articles from year to year:—

	BUTTER.	CHEESE.
1869	\$ 2,342,270	\$ 549,572
1870	2,353,570	674,486
1871	3,065,229	1,109,906
1872	3,612,679	1,840,284
1873	2,808,979	2,280,412
1874	2,620,305	3,523,201
1875	2,350,127	3,912,982
1876	2,579,431	4,050,008
1877	3,224,981	3,897,968
1878	2,474,197	4,121,301

Total.....\$27,431,768 \$25,960,120

The value of this trade to the country needs very little comment, as it is plain to the most casual reader. The extreme low prices for both of these articles that prevailed during the early part of the past season will no doubt have the effect of somewhat checking any increase in the production.

No doubt a good many of our farmers who have been engaged in dairying the past few years are seriously resolving in their minds the question whether to continue on in the dairy or turn over to something else, say stock-raising. To such we would say that if you have no other reason than the low prices for your goods the past two years, by all means stick to the dairy business. If your farm is adapted for the dairy, and you have the appliances and help, you cannot drop it and go at

anything else without a certain amount of loss. Besides, beef is just as likely, and we think more likely, to fluctuate in price than cheese or butter.

What is the future in wheat is what many farmers would if they could have solved. We think many farmers are over-anxious on this point, or rather too anxious to get the last cent out of their wheat, and in fact any other produce they may have to dispose of: Farmers, as a rule, should be free sellers. They should lay down certain rules, no matter what they are, and adhere to them, and in nine cases out of ten they will succeed much better than by speculating as to the future of the market. Farmers may not think so, but there are hundreds of them in the country who for the means they have at their command are as great speculators in wheat and other grains as we have in the country.

The movement of all kinds of produce, especially wheat, has been simply enormous. The opinion is prevalent with a good many that one-half, if not more, of the wheat crop of 1879 has now been marketed. How far this is correct time will tell. The best authorities estimate that some eighty-five million bushels of the crop of 1879 have now gone forward, are afloat and in sight; that there are some ninety million bushels more to go forward between now and the first of July, 1880, which, spread over that time, would make ten and one-half millions per month. Added to this, Europe will require some ten millions more per month to come from other countries outside of America; or, in other words, that England and the other European countries will want at the rate of twenty million bushels per month for the next eight months, said supply to come from all available sources. Yet in the face of all this there is very little disposition on the part of English dealers to do business at the moment. How long they will remain in this indifferent position remains to be seen.

## PRIZE ESSAYS.

## A Monthly Prize of \$5

Will be given by the proprietor of the FARMER'S ADVOCATE for the best essay on a given agricultural subject, which will be stated in our columns one month before the essays are required to be sent in.

## RULES OF COMPETITION.

1. Competitors for these prizes must be subscribers to the FARMER'S ADVOCATE.
2. All Essays must be legibly written, and on one side of the paper only; they must bear a distinguishing motto, and be accompanied by name and address of the writer.
3. Essays must not exceed twelve hundred words in length.
4. The essay to which the prize is awarded will become the property of, and be published in the FARMER'S ADVOCATE.
5. We do not undertake to return any manuscripts, unless the same are applied for within one month of the date on which the award of the prize is announced in this journal, and stamp sent for return postage.
6. The essays may be signed by the writers name in full, their initials, or under a nom de plume, but the full name and address of contributor must be known in this office.
7. Persons asking for information not intended for the press must send stamp to insure a reply. Responses will be brief, as our whole time is devoted to the public through the ADVOCATE.

The subject for which the Prize will be awarded in January will be THE BEST ESSAY ON FATTENING STOCK. The essay must be written from practical

experience, and be in this office by the 22nd of January.

We have sixteen essays in reply to "H. M.'s" queries, all of which possess much useful information. Some of them are so meritorious, giving different treatment from different sections, that we have concluded to insert six of the best. Then we will allow the sixteen competitors to be the judges, and will then pay the award. All real farmers will gain much valuable information that must tend to their benefit by carefully perusing the different opinions and results. We will take the liberty of inserting those we think the most deserving. Unless writers should desire us to return their manuscript, we will insert two in January issue and two in February issue.

Our readers should refer to questions asked in the last issue of the ADVOCATE; they will then appreciate the reply in this issue.

## No. 1—Reply to Newcastle Letter.

LIME, SALT, PLASTER, CLOVER, ETC.

SIR,—In a letter from "H. M." several queries are propounded to the readers of the ADVOCATE. I have written the following lines in reply:

His first query is in reference to the use of lime. Now, in order to apply lime intelligently, it is necessary that we should understand its action and effect upon the soil. These may curiously be said to be as follows: It greatly hastens the decomposition of the organic matter in the soil, and in doing so renders it much more valuable to the crops; it alters the texture of the soil to a certain extent, proportionate to the quantity applied; it adds, of course, calcareous matters to the soil. From these considerations it appears that lime is applicable to all cases where there is an accumulation of undecomposed vegetable matter, as in poor old pasture, peat, moss moorland and the like. Lime is not required in soils which are poor in organic matter, nor in such as abound in chalk. *Lime does not add directly to the fertility of the soil, but only increases it by calling into activity organic matter.*

Now, let us consider "H. M.'s" statements, the first one being that he thought of putting it (lime) on the land just previous to sowing the wheat. This will answer, but not so well as applying it with the previous crop. The seed wheat also should be washed in a strong brine for a few minutes (say five), and if necessary on account of smut, should be again washed in a clean brine, when it ought to be mixed with one-twelfth of its bulk of fresh pulverized quick-lime. This kills all smut and ensures a rapid and early growth. Lime, previously slaked and cold, is generally spread by being raked from a cart into heaps about five yards apart, each containing about half a bushel. It must be spread immediately. In this mode of application the difference in the cost of applying slaked or unslaked lime can easily be seen, as slaked lime is twice the bulk of lime in the shell or lump, and in slaking its weight is increased one-fifth. Sometimes the lime is composted with other matters, but this is a calculation as to cost or necessity; if your soil wants calcareous matter apply lime. As to the quantity to be applied, this is variable, and a direct analysis of the soil would give more decisive information. A preliminary trial on a small scale is the best mode of proceeding. In England it is customary to allow for clayey lands from 250 to 300 bushels per acre; in France about 60 or 70 bushels at intervals of seven or eight years. The lime introduced is in a certain relation with the time during which the action of the earth is believed to continue, so that if the dose is small, it must be repeated more frequently. Near Dunkirk they use 50 bushels per acre every ten years; in one of the Departments of France they use some 9 or 10 bushels only, but then they apply it every three years. Salt and wood ashes may be mixed with lime, though the exact proportions had better be ascertained by estimating the deficiency of these constituents in the soil. In applying lime, the insoluble ingredients are set free, therefore we have to return to the soil what has been abstracted by the growing crop in the shape of potash, soda, the phosphates and silicates. Salt, as a manure, on some soils shows no benefit whatever. Wood-ashes are most usefully applied in connection with meadow lands; therefore it has to be studied out by each individual farmer whether he had not better put them on his lay. Of course, where ashes are cheap, hay cheap and grain most profitable, and the piece in grain needs ashes, the first application would be to the grain field.

Should lime be sowed after it is up? is another query. The value of top-dressing can only exist