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ON THE SELECTION OF SEEDS.

The season for spring operations being close at hand, we beg to call the attention of our readers to the importance of a judicious selection of seeds, and the value of root crops.

Much injury is sustained by the farmer, from sowing, year after year, seed grown by himself, or that raised in his neighbourhood from a similar soil. In selecting seed, care should be taken to procure it from a suitable soil and climate, and of a variety adapted to the new condition, in which it is intended to be placed. A change from one kind of soil to another, has generally been found advantageous in all parts of the world; but as regards climate, there appear to be numerous exceptions, even within comparatively limited areas of country. Thus it was found many years ago, that some varieties of oats, cultivated in Scotland with great success, were not at all suited to the drier and warmer climate of the south of England—the seed not properly filling in the ear, and frequently shrivelling up after blossoming. Several of the finer varieties of white wheat, cultivated in the south-eastern counties of England, have been found, after repeated experiments, to be very unsuited to the more humid climate of the western counties, and of Ireland. The same thing may be observed throughout the temperate regions of North America, particularly in Indian corn. How widely different the gigantic varieties that are so successfully cultivated in the south-western States, to the hardier and dwarfish kinds that can be made to yield only a comparatively small return in most parts of Canada. The pea may be adduced as another striking instance—no crop requiring more attention in adapting the variety to soil and climate. There is no portion of this continent, perhaps, so well suited to the pea crop as Canada. It is here much less subject to the depredation of insects than in the neighbouring States; but even here the maggot appears to be increasing every year—a fact which clearly points out the necessity of a strict attention being paid to a proper selection of seed, and a different course of rotation.

In this country, clover and timothy constitute the principal and most nutritious food for cattle,

during our severe and protracted winters. The clover crop might be very much augmented in bulk, as well as improved in quality, by sowing a more liberal quantity of good seed, with a moderate dressing of manure. The great benefit of applying gypsum (plaster) on all the lighter kinds of soils, is too well known to require any urgent recommendation. Every farmer, before sowing clover or any other small seeds, should test their vitality, which is easily done by placing a small quantity of seed in a pan of moistened earth, and exposing it to a gentle heat. It is too much the practice with dealers in the smaller seeds, to mix the old and fermented with the new—a thing which can only be ascertained by careful inspection and experiment. It is far cheaper to pay a high price for good seed, than to get what is indifferent for nothing. In this department of farming, as well as in many others, a liberal outlay at first will bring the greatest profit at last.

Increased attention to the cultivation of root crops, we regard as essential to the improvement of Canadian agriculture. The old Flemish adage holds good all over the world—"Without forage, no cattle; without cattle, no manure; without manure, no corn." Hence the importance of a proper selection of seeds, both as to quality and variety. The seed of turnips, mangel-wurzel, carrots, &c., should be saved only from sound, well-shaped, vigorous roots, that are perfectly free from mixture or impregnation with other varieties.

It is astonishing how the nutritive qualities of roots vary according to the purity of the sorts cultivated, and the nature of the soil on which they grow. Several years since, an improvement was effected in Scotland in a single variety of the Swedish turnip, by a judicious selection of the roots from which the seed was saved, that enhanced its value, it was calculated, upwards of 300 per cent! Now there can be no doubt that in Canada all kinds of agricultural produce might be increased in quantity as well as improved in quality, by paying more attention to these matters. And this might be done without any additional outlay of capital worth mentioning, by a little pains taken in selecting pure and suitable kinds of seed.

As a proof of the facility with which improved and genuine seed may be procured and propagated,