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SPRING WHEAT.

Fifteen years ago about two-thirds of the wheat grown in this Province was spring wheat, and at the present day about three-fourths of it is fall wheat. In the Western half of the Province spring wheat has been to a very large extent abandoned, and the reason usually given for the change is that the grain has run out. It has lost both the qualities of hardness and hardiness, so that while it has become too soft to yield a good sample of flour, it has at the same time become liable to the various diseases which attack the wheat plant. To a large extent farmers have resorted to new and earlier varieties, where spring wheat continues to be grown; but, as all these are soft, they are generally regarded as inferior to fall wheat for milling purposes, besides which they run out in the course of a very few years, and the demand for new seed becomes as imperative as before. But in the Eastern counties of the Province it is found that the old Red Fyfe holds its reputation unimpaired, after many years of cultivation, without any occasion for new imports of it. In the Northern townships of Hastings, and in the counties of Lanark, Carleton and Renfrew it is grown very successfully. The yield per acre is large, the grain weighs from sixty-two to sixty-four pounds per bushel, and the flour product is forty pounds to the bushel of Strong Baker's grade. Now, why do not the farmers of our Western counties procure their supply of spring wheat seed from those Eastern sections? Would it not be better that they should do so than depend on a soft wheat like the White Russian, or even a hard wheat like the Minnesota, or the Manitoba Fyfe? These questions are suggested by a recent letter from Professor Brown on the subject, and certainly they are of sufficient importance to attract the attention of our Western farmers. Let us hope that not a few of them have this year acted on Professor Brown's suggestion, and tried the experiment of growing spring wheat from seed produced in our North-Eastern counties. And if they do try the experi-

ment, let us hope that results will be carefully noted and given to the public. If only for three or four years the high quality of our North-Eastern wheat was maintained, the test could not fail to be regarded as eminently satisfactory; for once the fact was ascertained that such seed-grain could be depended on to produce its like for even a short period of years, the supply of new seed could easily be kept up as required.

A ROMAN HARVESTER.

Now and then we come across very learned papers on the lost arts, and the little that is known of them, as revealed by relics and inscriptions found in the ruins of ancient cities, is apt to suggest to us the idea that the old world was by no means a world of crudities. In agriculture, especially, it is well known that in respect to methods and implements the farmers of two thousand years ago might compare very favourably with the farmers of a hundred years ago, and we are not sure but in some particulars the ancients had reached a stage of progress to which the moderns could make no claims. In England a hundred years ago the literature of agriculture was largely made up of the writings of worthy Romans, and whoever will take the trouble of looking through Adam Dickson's "Husbandry of the Ancients" (published in 1788, two volumes) will find much to interest and instruct them.

The modern reaping machine is regarded as a wonderful invention, and although it dates back to the close of the last century, it was not until sixty years ago that a machine was constructed which proved to be effective. This was Bell's reaper, and the principle on which its cutting apparatus was based was that of clipping by a series of shears, thirteen of which were fixed and twelve movable. By a see-saw movement to right and left the movable blades were brought into contact with the fixed ones, thus cutting the standing grain as it came between them. The reaping apparatus rested on three small rollers to keep it at the proper distance from the ground, the machinery received its motion from gearing attached to the running wheels, and the grain was gathered on an endless web and thrown off on either side. The horses were placed behind this machine, and pushed it forward against the standing grain, instead of drawing it on one side as is the case with the reapers of our day.

Now, let us see what the old Romans were capable of doing in the harvest field. Columella writes of an implement called the "Merga," which appears to have gathered the ears of the grain only. It is supposed that in use the reaper pushed it before him in the standing grain, the stalks being gathered between the prongs of the implement, when the ears were cut off by an upward movement, and thrown into a basket. Pliny