

2d.—Is it best to manure in the hill or drill, or spread it over the field?

Ans.—What is the quality of your soil? And is your manure abundant and well composted? If your soil is light and well pulverized, and you wish to raise a great crop of potatoes, with little manual labour, after it is well ploughed, spread it over with well composted manure to your satisfaction, then make straight narrow furrows, two inches deep and thirty inches apart, then turn a furrow from each side, so as to cover the seed about two inches, leaving the higher part of the furrow considerably higher than that which covers the seed, that the field may be prepared for a scratching with a short light tooth harrow, just as the sprout comes to the top of the ground; then use the plough and hoe occasionally, so as to keep it free from weeds, until the stalk buds for blossoms.

But if your field is of a stubborn, clayey soil, and a part of your object is to pulverize and make it more productive, and your manure also is new dung from the stable, be sure to put it in the hills, attend it well with the plough and hoe, until the time of budding, and then plough it up deep after digging the potatoes in the fall, lest you lose the strength of your manure through the ensuing winter and spring.

3d.—Would not carrots and beets, if cultivated extensively in the fields, be a remunerating crop?

Ans.—If your fields have been ploughed deep, and made rich, they will produce more bushels of carrots or beets than they would of potatoes, though they would require more labour and care in their cultivation. Those roots also bearing a higher price than potatoes, would unquestionably be a remunerating crop. Carrots especially, for feeding, affording more nutriment than any other root, well deserve more attention from farmers than is generally given them. But it should also be borne in mind that many fields which would yield a fair crop of potatoes, would not be worth planting with beets and carrots.

4th.—What crops answer best for a rotation?

Ans.—What field will you commence with? Suppose a green sward, ploughed in the fall. First, oats; second, potatoes well manured; third, wheat or barley, followed with clover and English grass—of which, see my observations in Letter 16, in the Farmer's Manual for January.

But it never should be forgotten, that all rules must vary with the various soils, circumstances and seasons, as well as the facilities which the farmer may possess of effecting his purposes. Experience is a valuable teacher to the careful observer who, recollecting his errors as well as his success, may generally be able in future to avoid the first and improve on the latter.

I feel obliged to my Countryman for his questions, and should like much to hear from him again, and know whether my remarks agree with his observations, what experiments he may have made, and on what particular soils he has operated. To obtain useful information in my profession, to improve it as a science, and to communicate that which may be useful to others, is the chief object of

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LETTER XVIII.

It is much more agreeable to me to applaud than to endure, and it would be far more agreeable to witness improvement in Agriculture than neglect and bad management.

But the great waste of good land and valuable timber exhibited even within twenty miles of

Fredericton, constrains me to protest against a continuance of such havoc of both.

Where once I have seen the groves of maple, birch, and other hard wood, I now see useless groves of evergreen shrubbery which tend to impoverish the soil, render the land useless, and give a bad character to the soil which it never merited. I was once acquainted with two farmers similarly situated, and although one had much the largest farm, the least was large enough for ordinary purposes. The owner of the large farm selected his best hard wood trees for fuel, avoided the evergreens, and neglected to burn his bushes. The other farmer cut the timber clean as he proceeded, and found every tree useful either for fuel, fencing, or timber, and was careful to burn his bushes annually, and then sow grass seed after the fire.

The result was, that the latter had good pasture free from evergreen bushes, and as the stumps rotted out, good fields of an improved soil which had been improved by pasturing; while the former had a great range of useless woods to pasture his cattle in, covered with spruce and fir bushes of such form and quantity as never likely to be useful, excepting that he at length became obliged to use it for fuel after he had completely culled out his hard wood. The seeds of the spruce and fir are very numerous, and most of our hard wood groves have enough amongst them to seed all the land effectually. A fire running over the ground at any time when it is free from frost, effectually destroys the seed, which, being covered with a burr of a resinous nature, burns readily, without injuring the roots of the hard wood trees, which always sprout, and unless they are destroyed by pasturing, soon cover the ground, and by their falling leaves, annually add to its fertility. Hard wood land produces better crops than the spruce land, because the latter is constantly shaded, and thereby being deprived of its powerful influence, contracts moss and noxious grasses while the hard wood land admits the sun long enough to decompose the foliage, by contracting some aeriform gasses, and thus produces a rich manure. The reason that wood land which naturally produced both hard and soft wood, after cutting over, without burning also, now produces nothing but the soft wood or fir bushes, and the cattle feed on the sprouts at a season when it is sure to kill also the roots; but no animal will eat the fir bushes. Therefore, if land is intended only for wood (and many tracts are found fit for nothing else) it is very necessary to commence on one side, cut clean and burn the bushes, it will next produce hard wood only—an article becoming scarce, and unless better managed, will, in the course of twenty years, be very difficult to obtain in our market.

Some extensive accidental fires which raged about 1825, burnt so deep as greatly to impoverish the soil. In most places the spruce forests which were then burnt, are now covered with white birch and poplar, with scarcely an evergreen bush to be seen.

It is the duty of all to caution the new settlers against burning over their land in a very dry time. The fire is most injurious to the hard wood forest early in the season, before the leaves shoot; but in the spruce land, it will not run before midsummer, and then, if it is very dry, the fire will run through the woods very deep. It is high time our farmers were awake to the importance of cultivating hard wood instead of destroying it unnecessarily—in deep ravines and rocky hills, where it will never be useful for arable. How many beautiful groves of the sugar maple may be