

FARM AND FIELD.

WALKS AND TALKS AMONG THE FARMERS.—NO. XIII.

I AM obliged to own as the result of my observations that farmers generally are a "stiff sot" class of people, instinctively averse to innovations. It is not easy to convince them that a particular course of action will be an improvement, and even when convinced of this, they are apt to doubt if it will "pay." So, I was well pleased the other day on calling at a certain farm to find that a suggestion of mine had been adopted with the most satisfactory results. It was in regard to a cistern. A large barn with extensive roof capacity had been built. It was a bank-barn, and I pointed out what an advantage a capacious cistern would be, and how easily it could be so constructed as to supply the entire basement with water. The plan was adopted, and after a winter's trial of it, my friend was enthusiastic over its merits. A drinking tub had been placed in the cattle stable, and another outside in the shed, the latter being protected from frost. At these daily, and several times a day, the cattle had all winter quenched their thirst. They had never thriven so well, or been taken care of with so little trouble, as during the past long, severe winter.

I DO maintain, Professor Brown to the contrary notwithstanding, that an ample water supply, and plenty of good dry fodder, is far ahead of turnip feeding. The chief advantage of a turnip diet is that cattle get an abundance of moisture, little and often, which is the true way of satisfying their thirst. Even in summer, when there is a running stream flowing through the field, they drink small draughts of water many times during the day, and if this is their wont when on green feed, how much more do they need free access to water in winter when on dry forage? There is no getting round the fact that turnips are ninety per cent. water, and it is cheaper to supply the water from a cistern, spring, or creek, than it is to raise a bulb which is really only a cup full of water, the cup furnishing ten per cent. of food. Let us grow clover for that ten per cent., and make cisterns or utilize springs to furnish the ninety per cent. of water. The clover will keep up the fertility of the land, and it is far easier to handle a ton of clover than it is to manipulate several tons of water and turnip fibre.

THERE is a question of humanity involved, as well as one of labour saving and profit. Cattle that are only watered once in twenty four hours must suffer much from the pangs of thirst. When driven, as is often the case, once a day to a pond, creek, or stream, they suffer from exposure to cold, and are compelled to drink water at an icy temperature. How often I have pitied the poor creatures that I have seen during the past winter, trying to drink at a hole in the ice, shivering and shaking in every limb in the many-degrees below zero weather, of which we had so much. This matter of water supply must receive more and better attention from farmers. In many cases it would require but little trouble and expense to utilize a spring, and make it feed a reservoir in the stable or shed, at which cattle could drink with not much loss of time on the part of an attendant and with no exposure or suffering to themselves. Where no spring is available, recourse can be had to a cistern, the cost of which need not be very great. If we are allowed stock to the best advantage, drink as well as fodder must be provided. The care of stock in winter is laborious enough when every facility is obtained; why should we add to it by the

want of such facilities? It is in the interest of both man and beast that this matter should not be neglected.

ANOTHER lesson on drainage has come to us with the tardy spring, if spring it can be called, which we have had this year. Winter and summer have been strangely mixed. Talk of winter lingering in the lap of spring! There has hardly been a spring at all. Our first spell of warm weather brought our mercury up to seventy degrees in the shade, and the second brought it up to eighty, with intervals of keen, sharp frost. With a blazing summer sun over head, there was cold mud under foot. In what sloughs teams have had to work on many farms, and what a nasty job seeding has been! The soil has been harrowed up into cannon balls and bullets, and the grain has had to find a seed-bed among them as best it could. On low-lying lands there are extensive marshes and water stretches at the date of this writing, May 16. With proper drainage all this would have been obviated. We have had scarcely any rain, and the water-logging of the soil has resulted from the melting of snow, and the thawing of ice. How quickly all the superfluous moisture would have run off, with the help of ditches and drains. There are vast areas of land that can only be put into late crops, where there might have been reasonably early seeding with adequate drainage. It is not merely heavy land that needs this betterment. Soils reputed light, and even hill-sides, are apt to be springy, and when thawed ice and snow are added to the natural supply of water, the land is over-charged with moisture, only to be got rid of by artificial means. The undrained farm is at the mercy of the season, while the drained farm is independent of circumstances, and ready to work when the time comes.

NO sooner are the sheep turned out to grass than the newspapers begin to talk of dog ravages. I have read a great many paragraphs detailing havoc and loss in valuable flocks, thus early in the grazing season, and we have all summer before us with the same peril staring us in the face. What is the use of goading farmers into keeping more sheep when there is this formidable obstacle in the way? Only the other day I read an article in one of our agricultural papers reflecting severely on farmers for keeping so few sheep. It stated that if the whole country were put on a mutton diet, the sheep would be all eaten up in a month. Very likely, but sheep will only multiply on condition of the dogs being diminished in number. I wage no war against useful, well-trained dogs. A good dog is man's faithful friend; but nine-tenths of the curs that prowl around the country are nuisances and pests. They are a heavy tax on the resources of the country. I saw a calculation some time ago showing that the dogs of the United States cost more than the clergy of the great republic, and it would be a sorry thing if the clergy were no more beneficial than the canines! Why do not farmers rise up *en masse* and demand a more stringent dog law? With ample power in their hands to correct this evil, it is worse than folly tamely to submit to such a formidable hindrance to sheep husbandry. The foot of the sheep brings fertility, but we cannot have the foot of the sheep because of the murderous mouth of the dog. By hook or by crook, the dogs should be decimated until only an elect few remain, and those such as demonstrate by their usefulness to man their right to live. The poodle folly among city ladies is far exceeded by the cur folly of the other sex. Poodles are useless, but harmless. The prowling country dog is both useless and mischievous. In too many cases he is a wolf in

a dog's hide, and the sooner he is treated like a wolf the better it will be for agriculture, one of whose most important branches is crippled by these wild beasts of prey. "BEWARE OF DOGS."

W. F. C.

PERMANENT PASTURES.

A correspondent in the last RURAL CANADIAN made some very appropriate suggestions in reference to this all-important subject—suggestions which it would be well for some of our Canadian farmers to test the value of, viz.: the substitution upon their hay and pasture lands of a larger variety of grasses for the old time mixture of timothy and clover. That this latter combination has been a valuable one has been sufficiently demonstrated by the fact that it has been almost the only one availed of both here and in Europe for the last hundred years at least, and may be always ordinarily depended upon for valuable, if not "permanent" results. But that any combination can be relied upon to secure the desirable condition of a "permanent pasture," is just where the mistake is made. There is no such thing possible as permanent pasture save such as Nature herself provides, to be depastured only under such conditions as are also provided by her. Our extensive prairie lands are Nature's permanent pastures for sustentation of the immense herds of cattle which, numerous as they are, only crop the herbage afforded by them once, or perhaps twice, in a decade—the expanse occupied by these natural grasses being so illimitable that the herbage over enormous areas or tracts of country has seldom been depastured at all, but performs all its functions of growth, decay, deposition of seed, and reproduction undisturbed by either man or beast. But from the artificial production of grasses there can result no such thing as a "permanent pasture," all the conditions being opposed to such a result. In the first place, the grasses are not "to the manor born"—are not natives of the soil—and do not always take kindly to it, except under such conditions as are sufficiently stimulating and encouraging, secondly, they are cut down before their natural functions have been completed, and leave no seed behind them for the reproduction of their kind, thirdly, all attempts made by nature for recovery of the *status quo ante* are rudely nipped in the bud by the varied herds and flocks which the exigencies of the farmer compel him to place upon the aftermath. How it is possible then, under these circumstances, to look for permanency is something which it is impossible for us to conceive. To our mind it makes little difference what the peculiar character, variety, or combination of seeds may be—whether the old fashioned timothy and clover, or the meadow fescue, blue grass, sweet vernal, etc.,—all alike must fail in the production of a permanent pasture where the conditions essentially calculated for a successful cultivation of it are so ingeniously and studiously eliminated from our agricultural practice. If then, we cannot afford or permit ourselves to have permanent pasturages let us see what is the best thing to do to make them as permanent as possible:

Let us set out with the fixed conclusion that we cannot have everything because we want it, and without taking the slightest means or labour to secure it. If we expect our fields and meadows to produce herbage for the sustentation of our cattle through the winter, we cannot expect them to fulfil that requirement and add to it the other one of supplying them also with herbage during a portion of the summer, and that *permanently*. If the seeds which we plant are not permitted to reproduce themselves and to find conditions under which to develop their future growth upon the land whence they spring, all that we have