



Maple Sugar Making.

The time is now at hand when bounteous nature will afford the farmers of Canada their annual opportunity of manufacturing for themselves what our American neighbours are wont to call their "family sweetening." We propose, therefore, to give some practical hints and suggestions in reference to Maple Sugar making. In so doing we wish to bear in mind that we have to write for more than one class of readers. There is the new settler in the bush, who with limited means, and few resources except his own labour, skill, and perseverance, must provide most of the requisites for Sugar making within himself, and is unable to obtain those improvements and conveniences by the help of which Maple Sugar can be made more easily and of the best quality. Then there is the somewhat "before-handed" Canadian farmer, who has passed the earlier stages of struggling in the backwoods, and is beginning to feel easy and comfortable. There is also the wealthy yeoman, whose farm is clear of debt, supplied with suitable buildings, well-stocked, in prime working order, and to whom a little outlay is no object, if it be money well invested. We desire to make THE CANADA FARMER a welcome, useful, and indispensable counsellor to all classes of our agricultural population, and to none do we more earnestly wish to be helpful than to those who are tasting the hardships of pioneer life in the backwoods. The great majority of farmers in this country have sugar bushes, and it is very desirable on various accounts, that as many as possibly can should manufacture their own sugar. Every pound that is made adds to the material wealth of the country, increases the profits of agriculture, and promotes our independence. It is not only good individual management, but wise national policy to produce what we want within ourselves as largely as we can. Why should we send abroad for sugar, and allow the secretions of innumerable maple groves to "waste their sweetness on the desert air?" The season for Sugar-making is one of comparative leisure, there is no mystery about the art, it is a rather pleasant, social employment, and one that

may be engaged in at but very trifling cost, if circumstances require.

The scene which our artist has depicted in the accompanying beautiful engraving, illustrates maple sugar-making in its most simple and primitive style, except in a single particular,—the substitution of wooden pails for troughs. It suggests two or three other points which it may be well at the outset to urge



upon all who propose to engage in sugar-making. Let the sugar bush be cleared of logs, brush and other obstructions to the passage of a team in collecting sap. It will greatly lighten the labour if a team can be used for this purpose. Locate the shanty or boiling-house at the lower side of the bush, that the sap may be drawn down hill, and fix the sugar-camp, if possible, close to a stream of water, to facilitate the cleansing of the vessels used in the boiling process.

We will suppose that a new settler in the woods has resolved to make sugar the present season. His first business will be to provide something in which to catch the sap. For this purpose let him take his axe and proceed to the bush, to make a sufficient quantity of troughs. He should choose trees of about a foot in diameter of some description of soft timber that will split freely and work easily, such as poplar, bass, or cherry. On felling a tree of this kind, let him cut it into lengths of from two and a half to three feet. These must be split through the centre, and the blocks thus formed dug out with the axe and made of sufficient capacity to hold from one to two

pails of sap. The troughs provided, spouts are wanted to conduct the sap from the tree to the trough. To make these, take some timber that splits well and saw or chop it into blocks about a foot in length. These must be split into thin narrow staves. This is best done with a crooked "frow," but our new settler may be obliged to use his axe. If so, a shallow groove must be cut on one side for the sap to run in, and one end of the spout must be deepened to fit the position to be made in the tree by the tapping iron. This to be about a foot long and made of iron tipped with steel, somewhat in the shape of a gouge, the sharp end being about two inches wide. A place must now be prepared to boil the sap. Choose the location as already directed, and build a shanty according to taste and materials at hand: log sides and slab roof will do if nothing better can be had. Fell a large hardwood tree, cut two logs from the butt end, the length to be governed by the number of kettles to be used. If there are only two kettles, the logs may be about six feet long. Place these logs

parallel with each other, with a space between wide enough to hang the kettles. When these are burned up in the process of sap-boiling, others may be cut from the same tree and rolled in to fill their places. At each end of the logs set a crooked stick into the ground, lay a pole across these, and suspend the kettles from the pole. The ordinary sugar kettles are of cast iron, and hold from twelve to fifteen gallons. A large cauldron kettle is often used, and is hung on the short end of a long pole resting on a single crooked stick set in the ground. This pole is so balanced, that when the kettle is full of sap, the other end of the pole will rise up, and let the kettle down to the fire; but when the sap boils low, the kettle will rise out of the way of the fire, and escape the danger of burning the syrup. This is a safeguard, if the person who is attending to the boiling should be absent for some time collecting sap or otherwise engaged. A large barrel or capacious trough must be provided for the purpose of storing the sap when gathered. A good supply of firewood, (dry if possible,) should be on the spot, before operations are commenced. All being ready, when the sap will run, the trees must be