

Exterminating Weeds.

To the Editor of THE CANADA FARMER :

Sir -I am aware that the subject of this letter has become almost threadbare; but it is so all-important, and so much neglected, that there is need of reiterating the same counsels again and again. Though not a man of learning or a "ready writer," I am a practical farmer, and as such my experience may be of value to younger men, who, perhaps, know more than myself from books, but over whom I have the advantage in a longer acquaintance with the farm. Allow me, then, to offer a few practical hints.

There was an Act passed by our Legislature in eighteen hundred and sixty-five, to prevent the Canada thistle from maturing its seed, making it the duty of every landowner to cut his thistles before the seed ripened. And the same law applied to path-masters as regards the thistles on the highway. Now the seed of the Canada thistle is allowed to mature on almost every road in this part of the country, as well as on very many of the farms; and no one seems to think it his business to enforce the law. It may truly be said of this, as I have often heard it remarked, "what is everybody's business is nobody's business."

Now, sir, we can not only keep these thistles from spreading by keeping them cut to the ground, but my experience is conclusive evidence, to me at least, that they can be entirely destroyed much easier than is generally supposed.

I have heard of receipts being sold for five or ten dollars, instructing to cut in a certain time of the moon, and sundry other humbugs to no effect. But there are ways in which they can be destroyed, and the most practical, perhaps, is frequent ploughing.

My plan is to summer fallow, ploughing from two to four times, and, perhaps, putting on the cultivator between times, if they should venture to show their heads. And in this way I get my ground in the finest order, and a good crop of wheat is the inevitable result. In cases of this kind I sow the ground the year before with peas or oats, as the pulverizing becomes more complete than in ploughing up sod, and the smothering effect of the after cultivation is greater.

I have also killed them by digging them out, and leaving the hole for the water to stand in. The application of strong beef or pork brine is sure destruction to them. I have killed small spots of them, by salting my sheep and cattle on them; but all the methods except ploughing are impracticable on a large scale. There seems to be but little encouragement, however, for a farmer to try to keep his fields free from thistles, when his neighbours upon every side let them go to seed upon their farms. Some pretend to argue that the seed will not grow, but I am well satisfied that it will.

Now, with all the antipathy towards the Canada thistle, I should rather have it on my farm than rag weed; for when the land becomes once seeded with that, there is but little hope of ever getting rid of it, as the seed will lie in the ground almost any length of time, and when brought under the influence of warmth and moisture is sure to grow. However, it is advisable to keep it down as much as possible, and arrest its extension to farms which are as yet happily exempt. This may be done by preventing the seeds from maturing. My old farm, that I cleared up myself, I have succeeded in keeping pretty free, though I bought fifty acres cleared land adjacent, which was well seeded with rag weed. But I have found it required a good deal of care, as the stock would bring it on the old place. I make it my business to pull out all that I can see on my place every year; and though I were riding by my field on horse-back, if I saw a stalk I should dismount and pull it, for fear it might be neglected.

Now, sir, it is a sad fact that our farms in this country are being overrun with all manner of foul stuff, and it behoves us as farmers to check every advance of this common enemy.

While I am writing, I should like to learn the experience of your readers regarding the washing of fruit trees with soap suds. Last summer I washed my pear and apple trees several times with the soap

suds from the house, and I found, when digging around them this spring, that the roots were turned black, the bark rough, and one limb after another dies until the whole tree is dead.

Now, does my experience, in this matter, agree with that of others, or is mine an exception, and must the decay be attributed to other causes?

PETER SHISLER.

STEVENSVILLE, Oct. 8th, 1867.

Public Leas for Pasture.

To the Editor of THE CANADA FARMER:

SIR, -In England, more particularly in Cheshire than in any other county, there is a regular system of leas for cattle and horses. Landowners take in a certain number in their parks at a fixed price per head for the season, from May 10th to October 10th. I have often thought that if such a system could be worked in this country it would be a great boon to farmers who have more stock than pasture for them, and consequently turn them out on the "long pasture," or public roads. Perhaps, you will say, we have no extensive landowners or parks to begin with. Granted -but we have a class of landowners who are not able to cultivate the land without hired labour, which is very difficult to procure and costly to pay for; consequently, they get the land farmed on shares, often a very poor plan for both parties. I believe if such land were laid down to grass for the above purpose, it would pay as well or better than tilling worn-out land -besides renovating the same. If such outlets could be had it would enable the farmers raise more stock, by providing forage for winter, such as hay, roots, etc.; and he would be able to raise more beef, milk cows, and horses, without having to sell them in a half-grown state, because they were a source of annoyance to himself and his neighbours on account of their breechy habits.

FARMER.

Lake Side, Co. Oxford, Ont.

About Ploughs.

It is frequently the case that a farmer will buy two ploughs of the same make and pattern, and one will prove to be a much easier running and holding plough than the other. Why? It may be that the castings are warped and do not fit together well; but far more generally, because the iron in the two mouldboards is not of the same temper -the plough with the softest mouldboard being the poorest of the two. The furrow adhering more closely to the soft mouldboard, makes the draft of the plough heavier, and likewise pulls the plough around to the right, away from the land, therefore making it run unsteady. As an illustration take two pleasure sleighs; the one having on hard-cast shoes, and the other soft-cast shoes. When these two sleighs run over a piece of bare ground, the one with soft shoes draws very much the hardest, and has the most side draft. It is quite difficult for furnacemen to make their mouldboards always of the same proper temper, and especially is it so where they melt soft machinery iron at the same heat with hard plough iron. As a general rule the best and most uniform ploughs come from those firms who make that particular tool a specialty and a study. Their mechanics become familiar with selecting and melting iron for that purpose, and their castings are apt to be fitted together with extra care. -Northern Farmer.

The coast range of mountains in California is rapidly being stripped of its forest of red-wood trees, and in consequence the country is drying up and becoming barren. The crops this season have proved a failure where the wood has been cut away, notwithstanding the heavy rains of last winter.

PLANTING NUTS -In reply to an inquiry as to the best time to plant nuts for growing trees, the German-town Telegraph says it should be done as they come from the burr or pericarp, and, of course, before they get dry. This includes the chestnut, the shell-bark, walnut and acorn, as well as some seeds like the paw-paw, &c. Hence they must be planted in the fall.

POULTRY MANURE.-The celebrated Vanguelin says that when the value of manures is considered in relation to the amount of azote they contain, the poultry manure is one of the most active; and when, as a means of comparison, the following manures are taken, in parts of 1,000, it will be found that:

Horse manure contains.....	4.0 parts of azote
Guano as imported.....	49.7 "
Guano when sifted of vegetables and stones..	53.9 "
Poultry manure.....	83.0 "

The Dairy.

Rancid Butter.

During the extreme heat of the Canadian mid-summer, the difficulty of preserving milk and cream sweet, for even a few hours, the proneness of all animal matter to decomposition, and the semi-fluid state to which, without ice, butter is apt to be reduced, may furnish some excuse for the bad condition in which this product of the dairy is brought to market. But during the months of September and October, when for the most part the weather is moderately cool, and when all other circumstances are so favourable for producing butter of the best quality that prudent housekeepers select this time for laying in their winter stock, there can be no excuse for supplying the market with butter that is curdy, over salted, rancid, or otherwise unfit for the table, or indeed for any other use except as grease. It is the fact, nevertheless, that even at this season it is the rarest matter to meet with a good sample of butter in some of our city markets. This can scarcely be the result of ignorance, and can only be attributed to gross negligence on the part of farmers or their wives and daughters. The requisites for making good butter have been so often explained that it seems idle to revert to the subject again; but with such detestable stuff as is still persistently offered, in place of what should be a sweet and wholesome article of diet, it is difficult to refrain from reiterating the often repeated cautions that are evidently still so neglected.

In the first place, the cows should be properly fed on nutritious and sweet food. Those who like the flavour of turnip-tops, or wild garlic, or any other abomination, may give them to their milch cows in their domestic dairies; but, in supplying the market, bear in mind, such flavour is not generally palatable.

The chief cause of bad butter is want of cleanliness; and without the most scrupulous cleanliness in every part of the process, it is really impossible to obtain a prime article. The milk pail should be thoroughly cleansed and free from the smallest particle or taint of old milk. The cow's udder should be divested of loose dirt before milking; and after all due pains to keep out impurities, it is surely needless to add, the milk should be strained before being put into the pans. It should also be allowed to cool before being consigned to the dairy. The milk should not be suffered to turn sour before the cream is removed; and in performing this operation, the cream alone should be separated, leaving all the milk behind. The careless dairy-maid often dashes more milk than cream into the cream pot. This curdles, and besides imparting its taint to the oleaginous portion of the mixture, interferes with the separation of this element in the process of churning. And is, no doubt, often a main impediment to the "butter coming."

The stock of cream should be kept in a cool and well ventilated apartment, should not be kept too long, and should be stirred with every fresh addition. The most scrupulous cleanliness should characterize all the operations of butter-making. When the butter is all separated and collected, great pains should be taken to work out all the buttermilk. This is best done, we believe, in the churn, by repeated applications of cold water, using the dasher rather than the hands to effect the separation. If any buttermilk is left, it is sure to impart a disagreeable flavour to the butter, and will cause it to become rancid. In salting, use the best salt in moderate proportion, and not in the excessive quantities that are frequently employed, probably in the vain hope of covering deficiencies and smothering unpleasant flavours.

To prepare butter for winter use, the following mixture of salt will be found to make good salted butter, from which all its buttermilk has been previously most carefully washed out: -3 ounces of best salt, 4 ounces of saltpetre, 4 ounces of the best white loaf sugar. All these ingredients to be well pounded down, and thoroughly mixed together. To every pound of fresh butter, take of this mixture one ounce, and work it well into the butter.