

THE COLONIAL FARMER,

DEVOTED TO THE AGRICULTURAL INTERESTS OF NOVA-SCOTIA, NEW-BRUNSWICK,
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GRASSHOPPERS

It is now past the middle of June, and we still have light rains very frequently; a continuance of this weather through the month is generally sufficient to prevent the Grasshoppers from breeding in any considerable numbers. The grassland that was much injured by them the last season, will be found to produce an extra crop this year if they do not return. We have seen the hay crop considerably reduced in quantity, the after grass devoured, and the leaves stripped from the adjoining trees and bushes by these insects; but as the fall was favorable a short growth sprung up after the Grasshoppers had died of old age; this was not pastured, and the following year there was an extraordinary crop, fully making up for the loss on the preceding season.

WORN OUT LAND.

Col. Taylor, in Virginia, having a large tract of land impoverished by long cultivation, succeeded in his attempt to restore its ancient fertility without bringing any manure from elsewhere. For this purpose he ploughed the poor grassland, throwing it into high and very narrow ridges, with the intention of doubling the depth of the surface soil. Upon this he planted Indian Corn, followed the next year with Wheat and Clover seed manured with little Gypsum. The Clover was neither mowed nor fed-off, no cattle being admitted; the first years crop rotting on the ground, and that of the second year after ripening seed, and turning dry was ploughed in; the Corn was then planted, followed as before with Wheat and Clover—the soil in the meantime improving, and the crops increased, he increased his stock of cattle, thus procuring a quantity of stable manure to add to that formed by the Clover. Thus he had one year a crop of twenty five bushels of Corn to the acre on a field of eighty acres, which had produced but two thirds that quantity the preceding rotation, and a crop of twenty bushels to the acre on another field of two hundred acres which had produced but twenty five bushels the preceding rotation, but the field had some dung spread over it, as well as a clover crop ploughed in.

We have in the Province much exhausted land which might be improved in a similar manner, substituting Potatoes for Indian Corn, and ashes for Gypsum, for ashes are here as favorable to the growth of Clover, as Gypsum is in Virginia. Buckwheat has been much used as a manure by ploughing it in when in blossom. On most soils a grassfield laid down in good order, will

give a crop of hay for a number of years, if only once mowed, and never pastured. Close feeding of aftergrass always greatly diminishes the following crop. When land is naked it is always losing, but when thickly covered with herbage it is gaining. Poor slate gravel when pastured for fifty or sixty years, becomes so barren that even the poverty grass (*Lena spicata*, or animated Oat,) and strawberry disappear, and it is overrun with trailing Juniper, but under the close shelter of the Juniper the soil improves, and after the lapse of a few years becomes capable of supporting a growth of fir, which will finally make the land as good as it was when first cleared, for the roots of trees striking deeper than those of grasses, bring up a portion of fertilising matter carried down by rains while the leaves and dead twigs falling on the ground serve to form a layer of mould or turf on the surface, which being a bad conductor of heat prevents the ground from freezing early, and from being affected by the thaws in winter. We might take a useful hint from this provision of nature for the security of roots. There are many bleak hills on which Clover and Timothy are often winter killed; were the grass top dressed with compost containing a large proportion of swamp soil, or rotten sods, and the after grass left unpastured, this mischance would seldom happen.

FRUIT TREES.

A number of Apple trees have been injured by the past winter, undoubtedly by the great thaw in January. Had the ground about them been covered with straw or fir boughs, this had been prevented.

CABBAGE.

Water Cabbage when planted with pickle of fish or meat mixed with six times as much fresh water—repeat the watering for the two following weeks, and they will be little troubled by the maggot, as the salt will prevent the eggs of the fly from hatching.

VINEGAR.

Many persons have been puzzled to learn the reason why two years are often necessary to make a barrel of Vinegar, while a two gallon keg of the same material changes to vinegar in two or three months. The fact is that the air is too much excluded from the barrel. The cask, if large, should stand on its end, the upper head being filled with holes made of the size of the ordinary bung hole of a barrel; this will greatly hasten the operation. To exclude insects a coarse cloth should be fastened over the head of the cask. In establishments for Vinegar where very large casks are used, it is customary to place leaky tubs over the tops of the casks, containing a quantity of the cheapest kind of raisins; and a bucket full of vinegar is daily drawn from each cask and turned into the tub; this in addition to hastening the process, gives the flavour of wine to the vinegar. No wine vinegar is superior to that made from maple sap, by boiling three barrels to one. Very strong vinegar may be made by adding a pint of good molasses to a gallon of luke, brook, or rain water.

For drawing vinegar, the old-fashioned wooden tap and faucet should always be used; brass or pewter cocks are dangerous, as a considerable portion of the metal is dissolved by the acid.