


AGRICULTURAL REVIEW.

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EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT.

THE IMPORTANCE OF STOCK AND MANURE.

HE keeping of live stock to consume on the farm a large portion of the products raised is an important branch of agricultural economy. It is a very common, but most erroneous practice to grow chiefly grain crops, especially wheat, because they can be most readily turned into cash, and larger profits for the moment realized. To a great extent, hay, straw, and grain instead of being consumed on the farm, and fertilizing material for the land provided, are sold off without any regard to the necessity of keeping up the equilibrium between fertility and yield, by a liberal supply of manure. In the neighborhood of large towns and cities, it is doubtless good policy for the farmer to sell off all he can raise in the market which lies close to his own door; but when he does this, let him take care that for every load of produce he drives into town, a load of manure is teamed back to his farm. If this be neglected, the land will infallibly become more and more impoverished. Both farm and farmer grow poor on such a system. Unquestionably one of the worst characteristics of Canadian farming is the lack of attention to manure manufacture. This feature is so conspicuous as to excite the attention and provoke the comments of travellers. A New York agriculturist makes the following statements on this subject in a recent American paper. They are full of truth and reproach: "I have just returned from Canada, and it is a splendid country. But they are running the land pretty hard. They do not keep stock enough. It is all grain. I was on one farm

of 150 acres, and the whole stock on it consisted of 15 sheep, 3 cows, 3 head of young cattle, and 3 or 4 horses. The farmer had a stack of peas as long as a freight train, but he seemed afraid to buy sheep to eat the straw." New land, rich in the food required by plants, bears this kind of treatment for a time, but must at length succumb to a mode of tillage so exhaustive and suicidal. The early settlers in a new country, finding that abundant crops reward even the most careless husbandry, are very apt to think the virgin soil inexhaustible. But sooner or later, they will discover that they have made an egregious mistake. In proof of this, many facts might be given. For example, the State of Virginia, one of the most fertile of the earlier settled States, yielded at first immense crops of corn, wheat, and tobacco. But no manure being supplied to the soil, a process of deterioration set in which has gone on until now thousands of acres of what was once the best land in the State, have been abandoned altogether, or if worked at all, only give the most meagre return. The same causes are producing like results in various parts of this continent. Even the rich prairie lands of the west show signs of diminished vigor. Many farms in those fertile regions only yield half the number of bushels per acre which were produced at the beginning. Extensive river bottoms in Indiana, that once gave from 60 to 80 bushels of corn per acre, now yield only from 30 to 40. It has been estimated that of the lands now under cultivation in the United States, four fifths have been damaged to the extent of three dollars an acre per annum! This is indeed a prodigious and alarming dete