

there is much damp, or frost, the grains cannot form, and the crop will be a most, if not entirely, a failure. On the contrary, if sown thin the stems may lose their first flowers without injury, because the plants have other resources. They are vigorous, consequently the lateral branches soon form and give birth to flowers which produce good seed. There will then be two chances of success with thin seed plots or plantations, even when we do not reckon upon the vigour of the plants forming the greatest quantity of grain.

Buckwheat sown thick pushes out a stalk, which flowers and fructifies quickly, as if it felt its weakness; but, supposing the first flowers do not come to perfection, which is frequently the case, no lateral branches are formed, and the harvest is next to nothing.

I have heard it remarked, that weeds develop most rapidly when seed is sown thin or in rows; but it appears to me that it would be better to destroy the weeds by second hoeing or cleaning than to run the risk of spoiling your crop, which there is great danger of, if it is left to fight its way amongst the weeds.

This year the seed is sown under very favourable circumstances. The winter having been mild, our wheats are as thick as meadow grass. The question is, Will the harvest be the better for it?

Why not sow early in good sound land, bury all the seed, and put in only the necessary quantity? What economy—what increase of produce may we not obtain for France? Doubtless numerous objections will be made by various cultivators—such as these: "My soil is so meagre, that in order to obtain sufficient stems I must cover it with seed." "What advantage can be gained from sowing three hectolitres of seed in order to gather six or ten?" "Would it not be better to bestow upon one hectare the manure and labour we should have spent upon two? We should sow three times less, and gather double."

Some time ago it was remarked, with reason, "*The worst weed for the corn, is corn.*"

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THE FARMERS, THE ROOKS, AND SMALL BIRDS.

We find the following communication from an old sportsman and experienced agriculturist in a recent number of *Bell's Weekly Messenger*, (English). The reader will find in it something to gratify a rational curiosity. There can be no doubt but birds are often of the greatest service to the farmer in all parts of the world by keeping in wholesome check the ravages of insects, and thus assist in maintaining the balance of creation. In new

countries like Canada, where wood largely preponderates, birds as well as other wild creatures no doubt sometimes require to be kept down by human artifice; but no where can an indiscriminate slaughter of birds be carried out without inflicting irreparable injury to crops whether of the farm or the garden:

In the *Royal Agricultural Journal*, Mr. Spence quotes from a provincial paper, *The West Briton*. In *The West Briton* it was stated that Mr. G. Pearce, of Pennave Goran, had saved an acre and a half of turnips, sown to replace wheat destroyed by the wire worm, and attacked by hosts of these larvæ, by setting boys to collect them, who, at the rate of 1½d. the hundred, gathered 18,000, as many as 50 having been taken from one turnip. Thus at the expense of only £1 2s. 6d., an acre and a half of turnips, worth from £5 to £7 or more, were saved, while, as the boys could each collect 600 wireworms a day, 30 days' employment was given them, at 9d. a day, which they would not otherwise have had. To have earned that sum in 30 days one boy at 9d. per day in 12 months, excluding Sundays, would earn £11 14s. 9d. For hundred wireworms weigh about an ounce, two hundred and two meal worms weigh about an ounce; and I have estimated that thirty boys gathering 18,000 wireworms a day would be 531 years and 295 days collecting 468,000 lbs. or nearly 209 tons weight of wireworms, reckoning 313 working days a year, excluding Sundays.

Volume the 5th of the *Royal Agricultural Journal*, p. 208, Mr. Clitheroe, in the *Gardener's Magazine* so quoted, observes that the county of York, in the neighbourhood of his native place, there is a rookery belonging to W. Vavasour, Esq., of Weston-in-Warwickdale, in which it is estimated that there are 10,000 rooks. One pound of insect food a week is a very moderate allowance for a bird, nine-tenths of their food consisting of worms, insects, and their larvæ. Here, then, there is the enormous quantity of 468,000, or 209 tons of worms, insects and their larvæ destroyed by rooks of a single rookery in a year. Each rook in this calculation is supposed to have picked up 1 lb. of food per week, nine-tenths of which was of insect matter, wireworm and larvæ. I have kept a tame, and to my certain knowledge they consume more than the quantity above stated. In 12 months, then, 10,000 rooks destroy 468,000 lb. of the most destructive foe to the farmer, and effected, at a trifling cost to the farmer in grain taken at seed time and sown, what it would have taken 30 boys, £11 14s. 9d. each per year, to have done. 531 years and 297 days. One rook will collect 299,820 worms in one year, and