

Notes from "Sarawak."

EDITOR CANADA FARMER:—Now that the harvest in this township is nearly over, and the threshing machines have commenced their annual rounds, I am in a position to give some account of the crops in this part of the county, and, I am sorry to say, that the account will be much less favorable than was anticipated two months ago, owing to the rust and midge, both of which are very prevalent, except along the bay shore, where the crops are not effected to so great an extent as they are in the rear concessions. In some places even the oats are affected by rust, especially when they were late sown. We have had the midge in our wheat for some years, but never so bad as this year, owing, I suppose, to the warm, moist weather which is peculiarly favourable to the midge. I have lately been informed that the Hessian fly has appeared in North Keppal, and in the neighborhood of Wiarton, and I suppose we may look out for another invasion of this dreaded pest, which committed such extensive ravages in the wheat crops in Ontario, Quebec and the United States only about thirty years ago. Farmers will need to look out for the most flinty stemmed varieties of wheat they can find, as it is doubtful whether any of our present varieties of wheat will be able to withstand the ravages of this unwelcome visitor. This seems to be a very bad insect year. The cabbage butterflies have made their appearance here for the first time. Unfortunately, the cabbages being planted at some distance from the house, we did not notice their presence soon enough to prevent their commencing their destructive work. I tried the effect of salt on the cabbages, but it has had none. The potato bugs have been on hand as usual, but a single use of Paris green, together with the moist showery weather, which promoted a rapid growth of the tops, has prevented them doing any serious injury. Of grasshoppers we have had none worth speaking of, although they have been destructive in other places. I have threshed 26 bushels spring wheat to the acre; one of my neighbors has about the same; another reports 51 bushels of oats to the acre; others expect about 5 bushels spring wheat to the acre; and I have been informed that in the southern part of this county the wheat was frozen in July, and in other places it was so badly affected by rust and midge that it was cut for fodder, not being worth threshing. I cannot report the yield of my oats, as, what I may require for seed next year, as well as some spring wheat, is not yet threshed, as I prefer threshing seed grain by hand. Pease are also a good crop. Along the bay shore, where we are not troubled with early frost, the late sown spring wheat has proved the best this year. It always escapes the midge better than the early sown, as it is not sufficiently far ahead for the midge to deposit its eggs until that insect pest has disappeared. It also had a better chance to fill, as the great heat of the summer was over. Smut has proved bad in some places, but I do not think the cause of smut is fully understood as yet. An old neighbor of mine, who has resided in different parts of the province, told me he once knew a farmer who always selected his seed wheat a year beforehand, and put it up in tight flour barrels with dry air-slacked lime, and he was never troubled with smut. A former resident of Owen Sound, who purchased the farm next mine some years ago, summer-fallowed a twenty-three acre field. The field was ploughed three times, the ridges well laid up, water furrows well cleared out, and seed sown about the 18th September. The seed he used was full of smut, and he was advised to steep it in pickle and lime it; but, having no faith in steeps, he refused. We had a fine fall that year. The wheat came up thick the next spring, and, by his own account, he threshed thirty bushels to the acre, and there was not a single head of smut in it. I have used blue stone, but I generally use salt pickle in lime; and, on the whole, I am inclined to think the best way to escape rust is to clean the ground well, keep the water furrows clear, and sow early. In England I have used sea water for steeping barley, and dried it with lime afterwards. About three years ago I procured some Scott wheat, and sowed that and Treadwell in a few fields. I found the Scott wheat stood the winter better, and was not so liable to rust as the Treadwell, but it shells out badly. This year, however, the Treadwell has proved the better sample. I have sown it again, as it seems to suit my soil better than the Scott wheat. We had less rain in this township in the

early part of summer than they had in most other places, so that the hay is not quite so heavy a crop as it might have been, but we have had frequent showers during and since harvest, so that the root crops, Swedes, sugar beet, carrots and parsnips are doing well. Some years ago I had a fair crop of sugar beets, and kept four pigs on them through the winter without any grain, only the leavings from the house. I prefer them to turnips for this purpose. I have repeatedly tried them since, but the seed failed to grow. This year I steeped the seed for several hours in warm water, and mixed dry sand with it to prevent them from sticking together. The carrot and parsnip seed I put into small boxes with some fine earth, and watered them every day for a few days, turning them over every day to keep them damp and hasten their germination, mixing a little wood-ashes with them previous to sowing, and they are growing well. The turnip beetle did more injury to some cabbages growing in the same field than to the turnips. It has been recommended in sowing turnips to sow every third or fourth drill much thicker than the others, as wherever the turnips are thickest the most flies will be found; this gives the other turnips a chance to get in to the broad leaf, and there may still be enough left in the decoy drill, as it may be termed, for a crop, or, if they are Swedes, a few from the other rows may be transplanted to fill up vacancies. Probably my cabbages had the same effect, at any rate I shall feel disposed to try that plan again next year. Taken altogether, the prospects for the country next year are rather discouraging. With fall wheat a failure, spring wheat half a crop, barley the same, only hay, oats and pease good, and prices low, with no chance of much rise, unless in the event of the inevitable general war in Europe breaking out soon. The general panic, which was only avoided by timely rain last year, may be expected next year. The country villages and small towns are overcrowded with petty stores, most of which are probably supported by wholesale merchants as a means of disposing of their surplus stock; but I fear it will be difficult to make collections during the ensuing winter. In this section of the country rain was not so abundant in the early part of the summer as in most other places, so that the hay and straw were very short, and many farmers were under the necessity of raising money on mortgage, and now, what with generally deficient crops, and heavy interest charges, they will not have much left with which to purchase goods, especially as the school and township taxes must be paid. We have too many of those petty stores all over the country, and too many banks. If the weakest bank in the country should fail there would be a general panic and consequent run on the banks, worse than it was ten years ago, as there are more stores and more banks in the country now than there were then. Those farmers who have deposited their money in the banks would act more wisely if they employed it in underdraining their farms and purchasing artificial manures, and thereby increasing the arable produce of their farms, making up for the low prices, instead of leaving the money in the banks to be withdrawn at the first alarm, thereby increasing the danger, besides incurring the risk of loss. The manure heap is the farmer's best savings bank. As for the increasing cattle trade with England, only those farmers who have good grade cattle can take advantage of it, as it seems that only our best cattle will suit the English market; but I would suggest to the cattle dealers that whilst they ship off the No. 1 cattle alive, they should also buy up the No. 2 cattle and kill and pack them in barrels, as, when the general war does break out, there will be a great demand for salt beef for the English navy. Some years ago I saved a field of turnips from the grasshoppers by placing an old turkey with her young brood under a coop in the field, supplying her, of course, with food and water. The young turkeys fared well on the grasshoppers and always returned to the coop at night, and, by shifting the coop occasionally, the grasshoppers were soon cleared off and the crop saved. If a farmer had a good crop of turnips, and the grasshoppers were troublesome, it would be worth his while to buy a lot of young turkeys and turn them into his turnip field. On one occasion Mr. Coke, of Norfolk, England, had a fifty acre field of turnips infested with slugs. He bought up four hundred young ducks and turned them into his turnip field. They soon ate all the slugs, and even afterwards sold in the London market for more than they cost.

SARAWAK.

Judging at Shows.

EDITOR CANADA FARMER:—As the great bulk of our agricultural fairs is now over, no remarks of mine can possibly prejudice judges in judging, or competitors in offering their productions for judgment, at least for this season. It will not therefore be deemed imprudent in me to offer a few observations which, I feel sure, will find many a concurrent echo from every quarter of the province. My theme, introduced at once, is the abolition of judging and premiums in every department if we except that which comes more peculiarly under the care of the ladies. It is a notorious fact, not only here but in Great Britain, that old country which has attained nearer to perfection than any other, that judges do not give very general satisfaction. It is not that they are incompetent, nor yet that they show partiality designedly. On the contrary I believe that in the great majority of cases they render their decisions conscientiously and to the very best of their judgment. But after all, the divergence of popular opinion is so wide upon the same article, be it animate or inanimate, that that of one, or half a dozen, judges is getting to have but little weight attached to it. I have seen, during the present season a vast amount of indignation manifested over decisions rendered, and that not by the parties directly interested, the competitors, so much as among the general public, most of whom, coming fresh from the field of dear-bought experience, are much better qualified than even most judges to discuss the merits or defects of this, that or the other thing. Whenever, at such gatherings, I have found a knot of good, practical farmers favouring a certain man's seed, a certain implement, a sheep, pig, or other animal, &c., I have never failed to improve the occasion by purchasing in accordance with their views—and invariably with success—no matter how or what the delivery of the judges. Nay more, I have repeatedly known the objects of high judicial commendation prove practical failures. Indeed there is no surer guide or more reliable judge than popular opinion, and this is clearly manifested by the action of several exhibitors of late years, who have entered their exhibits labelled significantly "For exhibition only,—not for competition," thus resting their merits solely on the popular verdict which they adjudge favourable or the reverse, according to the number of orders taken on the ground. If it be urged in reply to all this that many persons, from practical ignorance of the objects under consideration, must depend on others for information, allow me to say that they cannot do better than consult their fellow agriculturists. And finally, since judging, in many cases, prejudices the public mind against articles that may be in themselves, and no doubt are, first-class, it should, I think, be done away with on that ground. The main aim and object of all exhibitors is business; shows to them are but huge advertisements. Let them therefore be regarded and treated as such—nothing more or less. The money prize rarely meets half the expense of exhibiting, and the "name of the thing" is in many cases a misnomer.

SUBSCRIBER

Egremont.

Insect-Eating Birds.

[Continuation from last month of Mr. Palmer's Prize Essay, written for the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals].

Increase of Insects.

As a result of the decrease in the number of birds, we find that insects have been steadily increasing; and the aggregate loss through their agency is now much greater than in former years. Since 1860, the damage done each year by such insects as the canker-worm, currant-worm, wheat-midge, Hessian-fly, etc., has been greater and greater, so that in some sections, the cultivation of particular crops has been almost abandoned. New species of noxious insects are constantly being discovered by entomologists and others; while many species before unknown in this country have been introduced by the importation of plants, etc., from Europe. Insects that are abundant in the West are gradually working eastward, as the Colorado potato beetle; and only earnest study and effort will prevent the continued increase of these pests of the land.

There are about thirty species of insects which subsist on our garden vegetables. The grape-vine has about fifty insect enemies; the apple-tree seventy-five; our different