

we never find realized in the actual routine of farm practice. That serious and dignified journal the *Mark Lane Express* waxes rather facetious over the matter, advertising to it editorially as follows:—"A scientific old gentleman of somewhat primitive habits once declared that with a little more soil, otherwise dirt, he could grow turnips on the top of his head; while Mr. Shirley Hibberd, in a really interesting paper which he read at the Society of Arts, solves one of the difficulties of the day by growing potatoes on the top of his tile."

There can be no doubt that the paper of Mr. Hibberd, and the discussions to which it has already given and will continue to give rise, will induce more experimenting and have their effect in leading to more intelligent methods of potato cultivation. Besides its interest and value as a piece of agricultural intelligence, Mr. Hibberd's paper conveys a very important lesson and suggestion to Canadian farmers. The lesson is on the importance of drainage. If we do not plant our potatoes on drain tiles, most certainly we ought to lay courses of tile drains under our potatoes. No crop needs well-drained land more than this one, for stagnation of water and redundant moisture are fatal to its health and productiveness. The suggestion is, whether the best method of potato-planting would not be to deposit the sets right on the level surface of the land, and instead of striking a furrow to bury them in, run the plough on each side of the row of seed, lightly covering it with earth at first, and repeating the process in the after cultivation of the crop. Our climate must be far better than that of England for potato cultivation, if Mr. Hibberd's views are sound and correct respecting the conditions required by this plant, in order to healthful and fruitful growth. The average of summer heat is considerably higher than that of London; we have a less rain-fall, and, on the whole, the tendency here is rather to the extreme of heat and dryness than in the opposite direction. Careful culture on fertile and properly-drained land will undoubtedly secure, without fail, one year with another, a remunerative crop of potatoes in this country.

First Prize Farms in Australia.

The Victoria Department of Agriculture have offered prizes for the best farms of a certain size and acreage. The following is the report upon the competition:

The farm of Mr. A. Anderson, known as the Green Hill farm, is situated on the slope of one of the famous Bullarook hills bearing that name, and contains 590 acres, principally of chocolate soil. The situation of the homestead, as far as scenery is concerned, is unrivalled in the district, as it not only commands a fine view of all the surrounding country, including Kangaroo-hills, Kooroochean, Moorookyle, and, nearer home, Birch's Scrub, Forest and Spring Hills, but has two beautiful sheets of water within a short distance, namely, Hepburn's Lagoon, within a mile, and the reservoir of the Clunes waterworks, the waters of which are only separated from the boundary fence by the main road to Rocky Leak. The land is principally laid down in grass, it being the proprietor's intention to grow wool in future instead of so much cereal crops. There are 170 acres of cultivation, including wheat, oats, barley, and potatoes; of the latter there are about twenty acres. The farm is subdivided into a number of paddocks, the whole of which is surrounded by a substantial, close three rail fence perfectly sheep-proof. There is no less than seven miles of good fencing of the 530-acre block, three miles and a half of which have been sown this season with kangaroo acacia. On the north-western side is a paddock, containing sixty acres, laid down in rye-grass last summer, the quantity of seed sown was one bushel of rye-grass and four pounds of red clover to the acre. The crop is a good one, but the clover has not quite destroyed the sorrel, being only its first year, the paddocks which have been sown a few years being tolerably free from this weed. This paddock has been nine years under cultivation, and two years in fallow; the hay crop off it last season yielded two tons to the acre. Adjoining this is a 72-acre paddock in grass, sown with a crop last year. Four hundred sheep of the Cotswold breed obtain the principal sustenance from these two enclosures, and they

evidently thrive well, for they are rolling fat. South of the homestead is a paddock containing 55 acres of wheat, purple straw; the crop is a very heavy one. This land has also been nine years cultivated, and fallowed one year. We next came to a 17-acre field of clover and grass, forming a rich pasture, such a one as cattle like to luxuriate in. This land, which has been cropped in every respect similar to the other grass land, exhibited the advantage of a superior system of draining. There are in this and the other paddocks between 1,100 and 1,200 chains of drains, ranging from two feet six inches to three feet in depth, which are all partly filled up with stones and earthed over. The next field contained 45 acres of grass and clover, laid down two years ago, after five crops had been taken off it. Between 300 and 400 well-bred long-wool sheep are grazing in these paddocks. The adjoining division contains 35 acres of grass, laid down three years ago. The crop is a light one, as the land is poor soil; four crops had previously been taken off it. The next is forty acres of bush land, heavily timbered, and well grassed and watered. In this paddock were quietly browsing three or four capital Clydesdale draught horses of the right stamp, the identical ones which were awarded first prize for a team of four wagon-horses at the recent Agricultural Show at Smeaton. We next came across a forty-acre paddock of grass, sown last year after ten crops and twice fallowed. Thirty-five bushels of wheat to the acre were taken off this land last year, and from an adjoining paddock of thirty acres thirty-eight bushels of wheat were thrashed to the acre the same season. This brought us to a small clover paddock which surrounds the homestead, which consists of a large and substantial comfortable wooden dwelling house with kitchen attached, a small garden in front containing fruit trees and flowers, and a large one at the rear devoted to an orchard. The kitchen is supplied with water from a large brick tank cemented, capable of holding 5,000 gallons of water, raised by means of a force-pump. The barn, which is built of blue stone, is capable of storing 12,000 bushels of grain, and is so admirably adapted for the saving of labor, that a wagon can be drawn up at the rear and then be on a level with the first floor, a staging which runs out from the building enables the bags to be trucked in off the wagon, after which it is emptied out of the bags through the openings in the floor, one of which is over each bin. The front of the barn has the same advantage, as bags can be wheeled out from the bin to the wagon. The other improvements consist of a stable for eight horses, chaff-house, fitted with chaff-cutter, by Bunce, with horse-works; hay shed alongside, capable of holding twenty tons of hay, cow-shed and stock-yard, men's butts (three), wagon-shed, wool-shed, and drafting-yards for sheep, &c. Everything about the homestead betokens order and regularity; there is a place for everything, and everything is in its place. Independent of the numerous running streams and rivulets on the farm, there are two wells, besides the tank, for convenience in watering stock; the water is raised in each by force-pumps. Although there is little danger of getting bogged with a load with such cattle as Mr. Anderson's, yet, as a precaution, he has had half a mile of metal road constructed leading from the barn to the main telegraph road, which has been rolled and levelled by the steam road-roller. The stock consists of six draught horses, one buggy horse, 300 sheep, two excellent milk cows, and several pigs. The machinery is of a very superior description, and includes a thrashing-machine, with eight horse power portable engine, by Ransome & Sims; two reaping machines, by Grant & Nicholson; two double furrow ploughs, by Kelly & Preston; two single ploughs, by Grant; three pairs of harrows, two drays, and one spring cart. In addition to the paddocks enumerated, Mr. Anderson has about 100 acres in cultivation, extending to the banks of Birch's Creek, and recently leased to the late Mr. George Clark, the crops on which are of a very fair character.

Mr. W. Macpherson's farm, which was awarded first prize under 100 acres, is situated at Newlyn, and possesses one of the snugget and most comfortable homesteads of any farm in the district. The dwelling, which is of brick, with slate roof, is of a very superior description, being large and commodious, with brick kitchen attached. Around the dwelling are planted a large number of valuable ornamental trees, from the nursery of Mr. David Anderson, of Dean, whose generous gifts in the tree line help to beautify many a farmhouse in this district besides the one alluded to. The garden, in which the house is situated, contains a large number of fruit-trees loaded with fruit of every description. It is surrounded with an excellent fence, and kept in first-rate order, and has been planted many years. The farmyard is enclosed with a rail fence, in which is situated all the requisites for a well-managed farm, and includes a large wooden barn, wagon and cart sheds,

potato-house, stabling, poultry shed, cattle and sheep yards, &c. The implements consist of a reaping-machine, a double and single furrow plough (the former by Kelly & Preston, and the latter by Davidson, of Newlyn), horse hoe, wagon, dray, spring-cart, harrows, &c. The stock consists of three first-class draught horses and one light harness horse for spring-cart, 73 sheep, 3 head of cattle, and several pigs. The farm contains 96½ acres, in six paddocks, 54 acres of which are cultivated as follows: 22 acres of wheat, white Kent and Frampton, good. This land has been fifteen years under cultivation, during which time it has been fallowed three times. 13 acres of oats, Tartarian, a fair crop, and the eleventh off the same land, and one season fallowed. The principal grazing paddock consists of 34 acres, sown down with rye, grass and clover, the greater portion of it last year. There is also 5 acres of peas, and the remainder of the land in root crop, excepting 10 acres of bush land, which is too swampy for cultivation, but excellent for grazing in summer. Mr. Macpherson intends to place a sixth part of the farm under root crop every season, and to follow a proper course of rotary cropping. Some of the best crops grown in the rich chocolate soil of Bullarook have come of this and the adjacent farms.—*Mark Lane Express.*

Wire Fences.

To build an efficient wire fence it is necessary to procure the best quality of wire. Much that is in the market is brittle and worthless. Number nine is the size commonly used. Set the posts one rod apart and put two or three stays on each space. The end posts must necessarily be large, set firmly in the ground, and well braced, as the entire strain from tightening comes on these. Fasten the bottom wire to the posts, eighteen inches from the ground and three wires above ten inches apart.

This would make the fence about four feet high, which is sufficient, as cattle jump wire less readily than boards or rails. In fastening the wire to the posts, care must be taken to drive the staples so as not to bind the wire, as it must draw through them easily to facilitate tightening. For a lever to tighten use a two by four scantling three feet long, with two pins inserted near one end. Wind the wire around these pins until it is tight enough to support the weight of the lever without sagging. Fasten by driving a staple around the wire into the lever at opposite end from pins. One lever will tighten a strand of a section forty rods long, placed upon the middle of it. Wire fence has many advantages for outside enclosures, as it retains no snow drifts to obstruct the roads in winter or soak the fields in spring. The wind has very little effect on it, and in soil that the posts are thrown out by frost they can be driven in again without removing the wire. Cost of wire and staples for four wires will not vary much from thirty-five cents per rod. Wire fence well built, well kept, and snug, is a tidy, good-looking, efficient fence and an ornament to the farm, but it is decidedly the poorest fence in use for a sloven.—*Cor. Farmers' Union.*

Potato Sets and Planting.

I have raised potatoes for seven years past, from sets cut closer each year. Was educated to plant three or four good-sized potatoes in a hill; and of course my prejudices ran in that way. Was persuaded to try the cutting plan, and have followed it ever since. My practice now is to cut as near as possible to single eyes, and plant them in rows three feet apart and 10 or 12 inches in the rows. My success has been greater since adopting this plan than before. What is essential in growing potatoes as good as everything else, is to have the ground in good condition, plant at the right time, and give the necessary attention afterward. For seven years past, from less than half an acre, I have sold each spring about 100 bushels surplus, after using liberally in my family and reserving enough for seed. Three years ago I planted one bushel each of Early Rose and Brigham Seedlings, and dug of each kind 32 bushels of marketable potatoes. Have been in the habit of cutting my seed, as I wanted to plant and have no trouble about its germinating; think, however, it would be better to cut a few days before using, so that they may become glazed. Of all the varieties I have tried I prefer the Early Rose, and this spring will plant none else.—*Cor. Rural New Yorker.*