

Agricultural Errors.

There are many agricultural errors among the farmers of Canada, which investigation has often proved to be such, but the knowledge of which has failed in reaching their ears, or has reached them through an imperfect channel. Of these errors that of the transmutation of one plant into another through the seed, is very common. The seed of bad wheat we are told produces ches (Bromus secalinus.) Such assertions are altogether unsupported by facts; these indeed are pretended to be given, but after having been inquired into, have uniformly turned out to be unfounded. Wheat or other grain may possibly, indeed, by a series of unfavorable circumstances be deteriorated, as by a reverse treatment it may be improved, but still the botanical characteristics of the species always remain the same, the form of the flower and ear of the wheat plant, and the general shape and disposition even of the leaves, will be but very slightly altered, and will be as incapable of assuming the loose form of the ear of ches, and its other characteristics, as an apple tree will be of putting on the foliage and fructification of the willow. The apple may indeed deteriorate into the crab, but what a similarity does not even the casual observer note between the two; the same as between the giant and the dwarf. The flower, the shape of the fruit, and that of the leaves, may be said to be the same. Nature abhors violent transition in the moral and physical world. The pea is still as distinctly of the vetch tribe as it was three thousand years ago. The discovery of its seeds in the hands of Egyptian mummies, shows that in that early age it was cultivated. But what similarity is there between the wheat and the ches? The flower and ear are altogether dissimilar, and there is no modification of these organs, no advance of wheat towards ches. The transmutation would be made at once, and be followed by no further change. The plants are not even of the same genus. The *triticum* and *bromus* form quite a contrast.

Another prejudice is against pickling seed-wheat to prevent smut. "What good can it do? Sma will never grow." Here the microscope proves the fallacy of the idea. The seeds of smut are detected on the grain and straw, by it, and smut are found to be distinct living plants, parasites seen existing upon other living

plants, similar to the miseltie on the oak, or the small plant that twines round the flax. The rust is very similar to the mushroom family in appearance and habit. Like many of them it grows rapidly in moist warm weather. Pickling, by destroying the seeds of the smut which are very minute, and lodged in the form of dust upon the grain, preserves the wheat from its ravages, as the seeds of smut are more easily deprived of life than are those of wheat. Many are the experiments that prove the truth of this, and it is almost superfluous to repeat them here. J. M.

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Loss of Agricultural Property by Lightning.

We regret to learn that our friend Mr. Isaac Askew, of Amherstburg, Western District, has sustained a severe loss from the effects produced from lightning, having struck his barn. A number of head of improved stock were killed, consisting of horses, cows, heifers, and a very valuable Durham Bull, and besides, a large quantity of unthrashed wheat, twelve tons of hay, and a lot of farming implements, were all destroyed by fire. Mr. Askew is one of those enterprising English farmers, who settled in the Western District a few years ago, who have been instrumental in imparting a spirit of enterprise and improvement, on the minds of the old Canadian farmers of that fertile District. As a token of the high esteem that is entertained towards him, for the good offices he has performed, in concert with others, in building up the cause of agricultural improvement, his neighbours and friends contributed upwards of £100, with a view of making good a portion of his loss. We mention the foregoing calamity, for the purpose of pressing upon the attention of farmers, the importance of getting their property insured. Farm houses, barns, granaries, stacks, and live stock, are subject to the least risk, of any description of property with which we are acquainted, and therefore, if Agriculturalists could unite in the matter, Insurance Companies might be established exclusively for their property, which would enable them at a trifling cost to obviate such losses as has been sustained by our friend Mr. Askew, as well as the various other descriptions of risks that Agricultural property are more or less subject to. The plan of the Canadian Mutual Insurance Companies, is one that would probably be the