

inducing those to use it who are not fully alive to the real value of its fertilising properties, than with any expectation of making converts of others, who, through ignorance and prejudice, are determined not themselves, nor will yet allow, if they can possibly help it, their neighbours, to be benefitted by it. To such, I fear it is almost useless to write or talk; and yet I have known *time* and *facts* convince even the most sceptical on many subjects, and eradicate the most inveterate and deep-rooted prejudices in the minds of some individuals. It is therefore, perhaps, wise to live and hope!

My first essay with plaster was about ten years ago, upon a piece of Indian corn, grown a good deal about the neighbourhood in which I then resided. It was my first year in the country, and being a perfect stranger to the crop, I sought, as a matter of course, instruction of my neighbours, as to the best mode of cultivation; and, on expressing my doubt as to the land being in sufficiently good heart to carry such a bulky crop through to maturity (having little, or no manure then on the farm), I was told there was no fear of that, with the manure I had, provided I gave the corn a liberal dressing of plaster. I immediately set about procuring the *precious article*,—for such I have considered it ever since, its virtues being sufficiently tested upon that crop, to my entire satisfaction, as well as upon those of the two subsequent years' growth on the same spot, without any additional plaster or other manure; and I will here give the particulars. The corn piece was about five acres; and on learning that cattle, horses, and sheep were extremely partial to it as fodder, I determined on trying what extra quantity I could procure, to cut for that purpose, by leaving the plants twice as thick in the row (for I had sown the part on which the corn was to ripen in drills, about three feet apart, and the one acre for fodder about half that distance), and dressing them liberally a second time with plaster. The result, I need hardly say, more than answered my most sanguine expectations; for I cut between four and five tons, as near as I could guess, by the number of loads we hauled out of the field; and I do not hesitate to assert, that had the land been properly prepared the fall previously, we should have cut fully six tons to the acre; for I have since seen upwards of that weight grown on a favourable location, where the crop has been well managed, and the season a *kind one*; for you well know, Gentlemen, notwithstanding all the experience, skill, and energy we farmers may possess, the *seasons* will occasionally (if I may be permitted to speak plain) make fools of us all! I have two or three times since grown the same crop broad-cast, but not with exactly the same successful result: but I do not attribute it to any fault in the system; it was owing to the soil being greatly impoverished, in one instance; and in another the crop was sown too late; and the third time it had to contend with the hottest summer Canada has experienced, according to the recollection of that veritable personage, "the oldest individual then alive!" It is fully my intention this year, notwithstanding, to sow four or five acres for fodder, if I can accomplish it; being short of grass land, and heavily stocked: but I shall prefer putting it in

with the ribbing plough, as before, or with a drill, the rows eighteen inches apart, and the plants thinned out about nine inches asunder in the row. I may as well here state, that I prefer this system to the broad-cast, as I have not only the plants more uniformly distributed, but I think a heavier crop, besides the advantage it affords of running the ribbing-plough, or cultivator, once between the rows, when the plant is about nine inches high, to keep down the weeds; and then, that rise between and close to the plants are destroyed with the hoe, in thinning out the latter. This leaves the soil as clean, and in as good order for wheat, as the best fallow you can make.

And now for the result of the double application of plaster that was given to the acre, from which the fodder was cut, upon the two subsequent crops, for this is what I wish more especially to call the attention of your readers to, and particularly of those (should this letter, by chance, meet the eye of such) who unscrupulously assert, without having given it a trial, and thereby prejudice their neighbours, that plaster is an *exhauster* of the soil, and therefore does more injury than good. The first crop that succeeded the corn was oats, the second peas. They were both good throughout; but upon the acre that was doubly plastered, the crop was rank in the extreme—a much darker green; and the oats, when ripe, much heavier, and more of them; and the straw nearly a foot and a half higher than the remaining part of the five acres. And, as regards the pea crop, the following year, the effect where the double dressing of plaster had been applied, was, if possible, more plainly discernible. The pea straw was nearly as long again as the other part of the crop—also darker in colour, stronger, the leaves larger, and the pods much more numerous. In fact, I believe the crop would have gone on growing and flowering till Christmas, had the weather permitted; for when we cut it, which was very late (the middle of September), that part of the crop was still in blow, and the other part harvested.

Now, Messrs. Editors, what will the *unbeliever* in the fertilizing property of plaster say to this statement? Did the plaster, in this case, prove an *exhauster of the soil*, or an injury to it? Was *exhaustion* such miserable fallacy heard of—such stupid ignorance promulgated? Is it not equally surprising and deplorable that men will allow themselves to be robbed, as it were, of hundreds of dollars, year by year, because they will not give this cheap and extraordinary fertilising manure a fair trial; when it can be procured, too, at so small a cost? To those who use the article I need not even say, persevere—their own sagacity will lead them to that; but to the who argue themselves and their neighbours out of the benefit arising from it, and thereby lessen the yearly produce of their farms nearly, if not fully one-third (for I do not hesitate to affirm, that there scarcely a crop grown, upon which it may not be applied with success, provided it be *judiciously used*), I would urge most strenuously to give it once a fair trial; and I dare hazard they will be ready, *ever after*, to travel almost to the *Land's end* for it, rather than to be without it. Let Messrs. Editors, ask the simple question of the who erroneously assert, through sheer ignorance, that "*plaster is of no benefit to the farmer*."