

(For the Farmer's Manual.)

LETTERS OF "A FARMER."

LETTER VIII.

On Meadows.—Having in my last dwelt briefly on the subject of the green crops, or rather roots and vegetables, I would call attention to the importance of the proper cultivation of English grasses so frequently neglected in this country. Some farmers talk of a general decline in the hay crop throughout the Province, without considering the cause, excepting the general remark that the seasons are bad; and I have long witnessed the fact with deep regret, but fully sensible that it was altogether attributable to the neglected state of cultivation.

One farmer states that his meadows does not produce half as much as formerly, and admits that he never recollects its having been ploughed, although he was born and brought up on the farm, and is now more than fifty years of age. Another affirms that twenty years ago his twenty acres interval produced annually forty tons of good hay, but of late not more than twenty tons. In both cases, however, the meadows have been closely pastured in the autumns, and these are fair descriptions of the old meadows in New Brunswick, evidently shewing the great necessity of rotation crops and top-dressing.

If a man has an old meadow, producing a light crop, let him commence ploughing and manuring a part, pasturing another part and top-dressing the remainder.

Of all the manures used in top-dressing, good composted manure is evidently best; ashes of any description are excellent, and the deposits of brooks, scrapings of the streets or ditches; mud, clay, or sand may be applied with good effect. Seaweed, straw, old rotten hay, in short any vegetable substance. Indeed, so valuable is a top-dressing of any kind, that even saw dust is far preferable to no dressing.

Among the kinds of grass cultivated, I am but little acquainted with any but the red and white clover, timothy and herd grass, as it is frequently called brown sop—all which should grow together to make an abundant crop of good fodder. Clover of itself may produce a good crop at the first cutting; but experience has proved that it is more profitable to grow all together. Our alluvials seem well adapted to all these grasses in the same soil, and where they all thrive together; they form a thick close bottom and abundant crop of the best description of fodder. I have found it answer well to allow a piece of good meadow to remain until the grass has ripened before mowing it, then mow, dry thoroughly, and thresh out the seed, which may be sowed in the chaff. The seed may be sown at any season, but does best to sow in the autumn, or even after the first snow comes.

In some situations, I have known meadows to continue very productive for many years, by never allowing it to be pastured in the fall, and even to become richer and require mowing twice in the season; but it is so rarely the case, that meadow land should remain more than seven years without ploughing, and it more frequently requires it to be ploughed every four years.

The Lucerne grass, and the Forion are highly recommended by some European writer, but as the former lasts but a short time, I doubt if it is equal to the clover, and the Forion, or as it is here called, sheepskin grass, is indigenous in this country, having no seed, is only propagated by planting, and only thrives on wet marshes, low intervalles, or

in ditches it is hardly worth our attention to plant it, we can be contented to use it for fodder or pasture, for both of which it is excellent.

It is much to be regretted that so much is annually sent out of the Province for grass seeds, when the seeds of our own country are not only abundant, but also much better. Although we are not yet in the habit of raising much clover seed for the market, yet many who have taken pains to secure their timothy seed, have found it a very profitable employment, which is done in various ways. Some employ persons to draw the ripe stalks from the swath, and bind them for drying and threshing. Others reap the timothy above the under grass, and save it in that way, and in either method it will pay well to hire persons to perform the labor. But the best and easiest method is to encourage the new land settler to sow timothy seed with his English grain, he may then winnow all together, and with a fine sieve, separate the grass seed from the grain, and both may be perfectly clean.

The Agricultural Society of this County, aware of the great importance of good grass seeds to the farmer, give annually four premiums to encourage its cultivation, and some specimens exhibited, far exceed any imported from the United States, and for the sake of encouraging the growth of it in our own country, it refuses to purchase the imported timothy for the Society's use.

I recollect well when hemp and flax grew luxuriantly in this country, and regret that the cultivation of it is now totally neglected, occasioned chiefly by the abundance and low price of cottons; but as the farmers of New Brunswick want something more substantial than fancy cottons, and so much hemp is required to rig out our boats and vessels, I sincerely hope the subject will meet with that attention which it merits.

Besides, there are many persons in our country well acquainted with the management of flax, who are frequently out of employ in the winter. Even some of the inmates of the Alms House are capable of dressing and spinning flax, and there is no doubt but much good might result from introducing the manufacture of linen in the public Penitentiary. But these schemes, however, are rather beyond my limits, so I will endeavour to turn to that which may be more immediately interesting to a

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LETTER IX.

Of Sheep.—Having in a former letter dwelt chiefly on the neat cattle of the different breeds now in New Brunswick, I will now turn the attention to sheep, those useful and agreeable animals, so essential to the encouragement of domestic manufacture, and so agreeable to the palate. Few farmers do without them, but so variable is their produce, that while some flocks produce five or six pounds of wool to a fleece, and some even affirm they exceed ten pounds, others hardly exceed two pounds to the fleece, and indeed by the ordinary shearing time, some have hardly any wool at all. Still the same system has been pursued with very little exertion on the suffering party to remedy the defect in their breed or management, although they can hardly obtain five shillings for a lamb, while some farmers never sell one for less than a pound.

The greater part of the breed of sheep that have long been kept in the country, have long crooked legs, hump backs and long necks, and when fed on hay or grass, and well filled, the stomach and entrails constitute more than half their weight. They are generally great rangers, expert in jumping the