

say, in the early spring. In this way lands that are not worth more than one or two dollars a year per acre for pasture may be made to yield many dollars per acre in growing maple trees.

The Importance of a Good Seed Bed.

The importance of a good seed bed cannot be easily overestimated; and yet, notwithstanding its importance, it is oftentimes sadly neglected. On soils naturally loose and humid it is not so important as on those which soon dry out, or on soils that are much prone to adhere and form clods. In climates that are naturally moist it is less essential than in those which are dry. And in dry weather it is vastly more important than when the weather is wet.

For spring sowing it is usually much easier to get a good seed bed on autumn-plowed land. The throes brought about by winter weather so ameliorate it that it is much more finely pulverized than it would be if plowed in the spring. But in lands with open and rainy winters the results would probably be adverse to fine pulverization, and, more especially, if the land was of clay texture. There would first be fine pulverization, and then the fine particles would cohere again more solidly than if the land had not been plowed in the autumn. Fall plowing is not an unqualified success in Ohio, nor is it in open winters on the clay soils of southern Ontario. But usually fall plowing is of great service to the more perfect preparation of a seed bed.

When clay land is rough and cloddy in the spring it will not avail to sow grain upon it. Such grain will not come up properly if a spell of dry weather follows. The air will penetrate the spaces between the clods, and will hasten surface evaporation to such an extent that the seed will suffer, more or less, from want of moisture. Unless, therefore, enough labor is put upon such soils to bring them into a fine state of pulverization, or, at least, to make them moderately fine, ordinarily it would be better not to sow the seed. If, however, after sowing it thus, copious rains fall, it would be all right, for saturation would cause the dry clods to crumble down.

Speaking in a general way, seed beds cannot be made too fine; but on certain clay soils they can, in some instances. Suppose a clay soil is pulverized so finely that it resembles dust, and it is sown while in that condition, and then rain saturates it; the particles will cohere and impact the soil to the extent of hindering growth in proportion to the degree of the impaction. For this reason it is thought better not to have a seed bed for winter wheat too fine when the wheat is sown,

lest that degree of impaction shall follow when the heavy autumn rain falls, which will be inconsistent with the best development of the wheat.

We have already said that, in dry weather, a fine seed bed is greatly essential. And a moist seed bed is also important. With the early sown crops we are likely to have both of these conditions, but not so on those sown later, unless we are watchful. Even though lands are plowed in the fall, as soon as the sun waxes warm in the spring surface evaporation begins. If rains do not fall occasionally the drying from the surface will be considerable. With the drying of the soil it cracks more or less, according to its character. These cracks admit air, which still further hastens the drying process. Air spaces from below are formed, through which much of the ground moisture ascends to the surface and escapes. Now, this drying out process can be very much lessened by running the harrow, now and then, over the surface of the soil, and the further advantage will follow that very many of the weeds will be destroyed that would otherwise harass the crop that may be planted there. From what has been said, the importance of treating thus fall-plowed land which is to be sown or planted with such late crops as corn and beans will be at once apparent. And when land is plowed in the spring for a late crop, as millet or turnips, the necessity for harrowing it occasionally between the time of plowing the land and sowing the seed will be still greater. The same is also true of a seed bed which is being prepared for winter wheat. The oftener it is harrowed from the time that it has received the last plowing until the seed is sown, the more moist it will be.

The Value of Fences on the Farm.

Very opposite views are held by farmers with regard to the value of fences in ordinary farming. Some farmers claim that we should be better without any fences; others hold to the view that, ordinarily, we cannot well have too much fencing; and yet others advocate the intermediate plan of dividing the farm into large fields, and in this way reducing the amount of fencing, and yet retaining enough to enable us to pasture all our fields.

The first view is extreme. We cannot do without a considerable amount of fencing unless we soil all the animals that we keep upon the farm. This means that we must pay out a good deal for labor. This system has been advocated, more or less, for years, and yet it does not seem to grow much in favor. There would seem, therefore, to be some serious objections to it as things are at