

### Quality of English Wheat.

The quality of English wheat is engaging the attention of the National Association of Millers, and the committee is carrying on a series of experiments in wheat culture in different portions of the United Kingdom, writes our English correspondent. The results so far attained were the subject of a paper at the Chester meeting of the Association, entitled "Ideal British Wheats." An ideal wheat was defined as that which best suits the requirements of the grower and miller, with due regard to the customers' preferences in bread. The consumer wants a large and shapely loaf, well aerated. To produce such bread, the flour must contain a high percentage of nitrogenous matter, and such flour is colloquially termed "strong" flour.

In the last thirty years the standard of strength has increased, but the strength of English wheat has decreased. The result is that when English wheat is plentiful, the price is low compared with the better grades of foreign wheat. Flour made exclusively from English wheat is usually a drug on the market. The Association is trying to remedy this state of affairs, and bring about a combination of high quality and great yield in home-grown wheat. It is claimed that experiments prove that under average English weather conditions, wheat of great strength can be produced with no sacrifice of yield or quality and quantity of straw; in some cases the straw was even improved.

To test the result of environment, two well-known varieties of wheat—Square Head's Master and Red Lammas—were grown under similar conditions on seven soils. The environment did materially affect quality, but the better wheat (Red Lammas) was least affected, and soil for soil yielded better quality in greater or less degree. This shows the hereditary influence of breed to be of immense importance. A great many foreign wheats have been tested, but very few maintained their original strength under English conditions. Amongst the few, Canadian Red Fife was the best of the strong foreign wheats, and seems to be able to maintain its great strength indefinitely. White Fife, on the other hand, degenerated rapidly, and this is attributed to its being a recent hybrid, as yet unfixed, so far as heredity is concerned.

That the wheat plant has an inherent selective capacity in absorbing nutriment from manures is well established, and certain mineral salts affect the "strength" of the gluten. What seems easier than to improve wheat by manuring!—but so far Nature has asserted her authority and barred the way. On the Rothamsted plots, where manuring experiments have been carried on for so long a period, the manuring sometimes slightly improved the quality. In some cases the effect was disastrous, and, judging by baking tests, the best flour came from the continuously-unmanured plot. The manuring tests are to be continued.

It is often said that by cutting early, or on the "green" side, wheat is improved in quality, on account of the supposed excess of starch in dead-ripe grain. Careful experiments show that wheat of several varieties, when allowed to become dead ripe, did not show a diminished proportion of nitrogen to starch. Microscopical and bakehouse tests confirmed the general results of the chemical analyses.

Quick-ripening is said to cause great strength, and some Manitoba wheats seem to confirm the impression, though Indian wheat shows no such strength. To test whether the strong wheats are those which grow quickly, a dozen varieties were grown which could be planted either in autumn or spring. There was no difference in strength in the spring-sown grain, so spring sowing cannot be regarded as a means of bettering the quality of wheat in England. Fife wheat maintains its fine quality in England, no matter whether spring or autumn sown, and it is a distinctly spring wheat in Canada.

He was told by the young woman about his fine coat, and called her attention to a calf perched far away. "That calf is only a few weeks old," he said. "Isn't he a beauty?"

"Only six weeks old!" questioned the young lady, "and walking so soon?"

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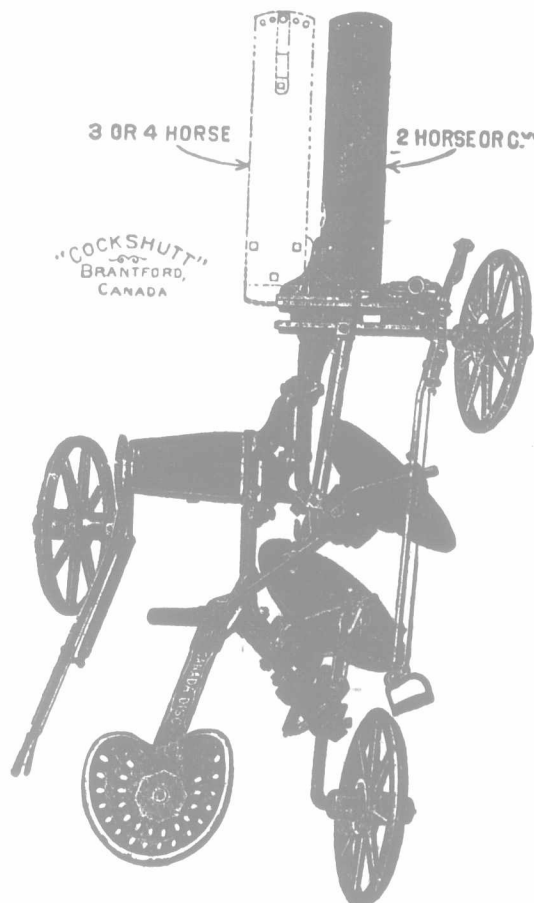
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