

The Illustrated JOURNAL OF AGRICULTURE

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THE ILLUSTRATED

Journal of Agriculture.

Montreal, August 1, 1897.

The Farm.

FARM-WORK FOR AUGUST.

Harvest—Bands—Grain—Stubble—Cleaning—Stock.

The work for this month on a farm is, and must be, governed almost entirely by the demands of the harvest. This year, the season is so backward that a good deal of the timothy will still remain to be cut, and the late sown oats will hardly be ready for the reaper till September. As for the root-crop, a good deal of singling and hoeing is finished in July, but the late white-turnips must not be neglected.

If the OATS are to be sheaved, we hope our friends at Sorel and other places have given up going into the bush to cut "des harts," or withes, to make "bands," as our Kentish folk call "bands." A couple of handfuls of the outstraw, neatly intertwisted, will do perfectly, as the sheaves should not be made too large; the lateness of the season makes it almost certain that there will be plenty of moisture in harvest-time, and every one can see that a small sheaf will dry after rain sooner than a large sheaf.

BARLEY, as we have often said in this Journal, if intended for the brewer, must not be cut till it is dead ripe. No hope of good malting barley on narrow ridges high in the crowns, as the grain on the lean flanks cannot possibly grow as fast on the deeper soil of the crowns. Why should malting barley have three dewes on it after being cut? Such is the practice in the S. E. of England, but we never could see the reason for it. That it should sweat in the stack is easily understood, as the grain is thereby mellowed, and the conversion of the starch in the process of malting expedited.

As soon as the grain is in the barn or stack, set to work on the vacant STUBBLES in preparation for hoed-crops next year. If you have no grubber, use the plough; at all events break the stubbles up and get rid of the couch-grass, and other root-weeds, somehow or other. One day's work under the hot sun of August will do a world of good, and the following ploughing in October will set the work forward in a way that you will be glad of in the spring.

The STOCK will need about the same care and attention than they had in July. Look well after the sheep, and clip the wool round the fundament if the fly is troublesome. Smear the heads with grease and carbolic acid if the skin is broken by "box'ng." If you intend to breed a few lambs for the Montreal market, see that the ewes are in good condition; they will take the ram all

the earlier for it, and the number of twins will be increased.

The HOGS will be "shacking" in the stubbles towards the end of the month. Take care that they are well ringed, and that the fences are secure. Plenty of skim-milk and whey, we hope, after the wonderful rain-fall of the 12th and 13th of July.

Of course you will have plenty of green-fodder for your MILK-COWS this month. A rather curious instance of bad punctuation occurs in the last paragraph of our article on "Farm-work for July," in the last number of the Journal, whereby it would seem that we recommended sowing rape and Hungarian grass in October for cows. The sentence should read: We have sown a mixture of rape and Hungarian grass for our cows in October; but of course any one who chose to take the trouble to think a little would see that the mistake was accidental.

As we said in our last number, never take the trouble to earth up corn, or root-crops, except potatoes, and earth the last up as little as possible. We see that this was recommended by a lecturer at the last meeting of the Dairy-men's Association, but it is a great mistake. Why confine the roots of plants to 18 inches when they can utilise the whole 24 or 27 inches? It is a superstition derived from the days when the land in the dripping climate of Scotland was undrained. It never obtained in England South of Trent, where almost all roots are sown on the flat except here and there a few mangels.

LATHYRUS SYLVESTRIS.—The seed of this plant can be obtained at the leading seedsmen. M. Hamel, of Pont-rouge, writes to the "Journal d'Agriculture" to say that, though the alternate frosts and thaws of last winter destroyed almost the whole of his meadows and pastures, the lathyrus sylvestris (gesse de bois) survived, and had begun to grow again. Sorel sand would suit this vetch well, or rather the plant would suit that soil and its farmers. We hear wonders of it from England and France. A perennial plant that does well on the lightest sand should be a valuable acquisition, especially on such barren soils as the right bank of the Saint-Lawrence, a few miles before Sorel is reached, which we take to be the most hopeless bit of sterility we ever saw; we doubt if even the "Bad Lands" of some of the Western States can surpass it in undesirable qualities.

DRAINING.

(Continued.)

From what I have said as to the way in which water gets into the drains, it will be evident that to cover the conduit, whether it be of pipes, stones or bushes, with a mass of porous material, will be time and labour wasted. The more thoroughly the duct is closed above the less likely is it to admit extraneous matters, such as sand and mud. My own practice, copied from the example of Mr. Parkes, the best draining engineer of his day, has always been to use a reasonably small conduit (condensed or tightly packed streams always run faster than free, broad streams); and to have the first layer of earth over the duct as firmly trodden down as possible. I gave six inches by four inches as the size of the bush drain.—0 inches by six,

for broken stones—because the materials will become compressed, in the first case, by the superincumbent weight of earth; and in the second, the return of the soil into the drains, however well managed, will always, more or less fill up the interstices of the stones. In pipe drainage, we always used 1 1/4 inch—Parkes used 1 inch, but at that size our clay would not stand drying without warping—and I hear from friends in England, that 1 1/4 pipes I laid in 1849 are acting perfectly now. It may seem curious to some, how so small a duct can run off a heavy fall of rain in 24 hours, as it ought to do. I cannot carry in my head the exact figures, but I remember well that the conclusion arrived at by Morton, Inspector of drainage for the government loans, was, that a pipe the size of a lady's thimble, kept perfectly clear, is enough to carry off all the water that can fall on an acre of land during 24 hours. The object is, not to carry the water off with a rush, for that would, besides running the risk of choking the duct, draw along many of the most valuable parts of the soil; but to allow the water to sink gently and placidly through the ground, as the water acts in an ordinary domestic filter.

As to the fall to be observed in drains in ordinary fields in this province, any one who can make a ditch can be trusted to make a drain. I cannot help saying, that throughout the French-country the ditches are admirably made; and if the people in the Eastern Townships would take a lesson from the inhabitants in this art, they would be none the worse for it. In a loamy soil on gravel, and in a black peaty soil, I have often seen a field of 10 acres dried completely by a four feet ditch at each side.

Where, however, there is a doubt about the level of the bottom of a drain, a few pints of water thrown gently in will often decide the question—where springs exist, their own flow will settle the doubt. The uniformity of the fall can be tested, if though worth while, by three levelling staves, two of which should be about 2 feet high, and the other extending, with cross-heads 9 inches long. One staff is held perpendicularly at each end of the drain, and the extending one is adjusted and moved up the drain; the head drafter, or manager, can easily see from one end whether the fall has been equally followed or not. But in practice, these accurate measures will seldom be found necessary; besides, I object (in toto) to a foot being set in the bottom of a drain, unless it is absolutely necessary. Some people are of opinion that the whole length of each drain should be bottomed out before the pipes or other ducts are laid. This is, doubtless, a correct practice during summer, or in dry weather; but when the land is full of moisture, I prefer placing the ducts and filling in, bit by bit, as the drain is dug; and for this reason—the carving in of the earth may, and most likely will, displace the sides of the drain, and it will have to be re-battered out—always a troublesome and annoying job, and very likely to be carelessly executed, unless the supervision be much more efficient than it usually is.

"Stone drains" are so expensive, on account of their necessary width, and the quantity of material required, cartage, etc., that I do not suppose many people will make them. Pipes are, after all, the cheapest in the long run. The only awkward part of the matter is, that they have to be paid for with cash. The price here has always seemed to