

THE
CANADIAN AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL.

VOL. I.

MONTREAL, MAY 1, 1844.

No. 5.

It is of the first importance that farmers should understand perfectly the quality of the soil which they cultivate, in order that they may apply the soil to, the production of such crops as it may be most suitable for. The soil best adapted for wheat is not the very best for barley. Oats may grow in perfection on any soil that will produce wheat or barley, but it would not be profitable to employ soil fit for wheat and barley to produce oats, which is a less valuable grain. To employ our soil to the best advantage it will be the interest of the farmer to grow the most valuable crops that it will be capable of producing, and it would also be his interest to improve the soil as much as possible to fit it to produce the most valuable crops. There is much valuable land unfit for cultivation, in consequence of imperfect drainage, that might be the best soil in Canada by sufficient draining. In the best cultivated parts of the British Isles, and where agriculture is in the most flourishing condition, regular systems of cropping have been established, and those rotations of crops are scarcely ever departed from, except for the sake of trying some experiment, or some other sufficient cause. These systems may not be invariably the best, but they are generally founded upon the principle of keeping the soil from being impoverished by the improvident or too anxious farmer. It is not always the most profitable plan, to adopt and follow, under every circumstance, a particular system of rotation of crops; many things may prevent this—first, there are so many different qualities of soil, and such a diversity of situations, and the means of procuring suitable manure vary so materially, that to raise similar crops in different situations, would require a twofold outlay of labour and capital in the one, to what would be required in the other—and, secondly, even amongst those who rank among the leading agriculturists of the country, there exists upon many points, such a diversity of opinion with regard to the best system of cropping certain sorts of land, that we need not expect that any general system of rotation will be established, nor is it actually necessary; crops may be varied in a rotation to suit the land, situation, and circumstances of the farmers, and answer all the useful purposes of a rotation. The great object of the farmer should be to improve the soil and fit it to produce the most valuable crops, and this can be effected to a very great extent. The dales and valleys in our Eastern Townships, and other hilly parts of Canada, are not so well adapted for arable culture as for grass, and the most profitable use that could be made of them would be to keep them under grass for the feeding of cattle, and for dairy cows. This sort of land is difficult for ploughing, but makes the best pasturage for cattle and sheep. We

would strongly recommend all farmers to increase their pastures, and means of keeping cattle, where it is possible, and particularly in situations that are far from market. In no way can the produce of a farm, far from market, be so profitably brought to that market as in cattle and sheep, and their products, cheese, butter, and wool. It is time that farmers should understand what is their true interest. The miserable system of agriculture so long practised, should be changed for a better. The management, or rather mis-management, of fine land should be improved. We see farmers throughout the months of May and June, plough up the green sward, and sow it with oats upon the grass furrow, at the rate of three or four bushels of seed to the acre, and if in harvest-time the ground returns a three or four-fold crop the farmer appears quite satisfied. The second, third, and probably the fourth time the land is managed in precisely the same way, and indeed for a longer period, until the grass and weeds absolutely prevail over any attempt at another miserable crop of oats; for so long as the unambitious farmer gets something beyond the seed in return, he consoles himself for the deficiency in corn, by supposing that the straw, being mixed with so great a quantity of grass, will prove an excellent substitute for hay. Hence the land has such an abundance of wild grass, thistles, and other weeds, that it is useless to sow the better kinds of grass seed or clover, as they could not contend with the rubbish already in possession of the soil. There is no means of cleaning the land of this rubbish but by summer fallowing in a proper manner, and burning up all the weeds and rubbish that can be collected upon it by repeatedly ploughing and harrowing. A portion of the soil might also be burned with these weeds, and this would greatly assist in improving the land, as ashes, or half burned clay, makes excellent manure. The ploughing of grass land for oats should be executed in the fall—in order that the green sward should be well rotted before the oats are sown. By this means the rotten sward becomes manure for the oats; it harrows well, and the crop is good. If it were possible, it would be a good plan to plough the furrows between the ridges, and shovel the earth over the oats when sown. We are sure the crop would more than pay for this additional expenditure.

A RECIPE FOR CATTLE HOVEN FROM GREEN FOOD, OR OTHER CAUSES.—To a quart-bottle of cold water, add a tablespoonful of spirits of hartshorn; drench the animal with same; if not relieved in two hours repeat the dose. This remedy I have frequently tried, and have never known it to fail.—*Farmer's Gazette.*