

Soiling.

(To the Editor of the CANADA FARMER.)

SIR,—Your article on the subject of soiling (Feb. 15) is opportune. The advantages of a good system of soiling are too obvious to need consideration; and our wisest course is to consider at once how the difficulties incident to such a change may be best and soonest overcome. In my case it is chiefly the question how to insure cleanliness, and the preservation of the manure; for I am unable to acquiesce in your suggestion to "feed with cut food in a yard or in a bush," which could only be done at the cost of cleanliness, or with loss of the manure, more than half of the advantage being thus sacrificed. To spend the time and labor necessary for producing and feeding these bulky crops would leave very unsatisfactory results, with the manure wasting in the bush, or with the cattle filthy with the dung of a yard.

The cattle must be tied up, either in the ordinary closed sheds of the yard, which would require much alteration to keep them warm in winter and cool in summer, or in sheds built specially for the latter purpose. There would, however, still remain the question of cleanliness, which can be only imperfectly secured without litter. The area for wheat and barley, which, upon well conducted farms, is now necessarily comparatively small, may perhaps be somewhat extended as the land becomes richer, and an increase in the growth and quantity of straw would be a result; but how could the quantity be doubled, so as to cover the demands of a larger number of live stock, both in winter and in summer, for litter? A plank floor without litter (an uncomfortable and dirty arrangement), seems to be the only resource for summer.

I should be very sorry to appear to wish to set up obstacles to a project so full of promise, for it seems, looking closely into it, worthy of all our energies. But its complete realization would create a change of prospect scarcely dreamed of in the philosophy of those who have not examined its possible results.

My only steps in the direction of soiling have hitherto been to fold sheep on the land upon green crops, and to grow 4 or 5 acres of fodder corn as an equivalent for full pasturage. Even these are worth doing, and they show me how much better they might both be done on a larger and complete scale.

In England sheep soiling is not now, I believe, limited to turnips, but is being extended to summer green crops. I am persuaded that in this department there is much to be accomplished here, a fair balance being held between cattle and sheep. Mr. Macdonald mentions the statement of a farmer, that his yearly produce for sale is 220 pounds of flesh for every acre of his farm.

Yours faithfully,

DANIEL D. SLADE.

Oshawa, March 21, 1873.

How to Lay Out New Townships.

(To the Editor of THE CANADA FARMER.)

DEAR SIR.—Farmers are beginning to learn the value of trees. We are told that trees increase the rain fall, and many instances are given where the destruction of the neighboring forest has changed a fruitful land into a barren wilderness. Trees afford protection from the cold and noxious winds. The early settlers, in their small clearances, surrounded by bush, could raise better melons in the open air than we can under glass. They raised better crops of every kind, the fertility of the soil being equal. Where now are our level winter roads? Gone with the bush. A storm is king. One million of dollars would not compensate the Canadian farmer for the damage done by drifts on roads and wheat-fields left bare of snow.

In the case of unsurveyed townships, it appears to all, the remedy is simply let the government reserve for ever a belt of bush land from two to three acres in width round every 1,000 acres. The full grown timber, when it becomes valuable, might be carefully cut, from year to year, and sold for the benefit of the schools of the Township.

Farmers in general build on the concession, consequently, if they want wood or grain from the rear of the farm, it involves a trip of two miles. I would suggest, as an improvement, that the concession line should run across the centre of the lot; this would give the farmer fifty acres on each side of the line, and would save him one mile. Whenever he had occasion to visit the rear of his farm. In townships where the Government still own land they might be petitioned to reserve a certain number of lots, and on roads where the snow drifts down, and the council should see that cedar hedges were planted.

I am, &c.,

R. L.

The Canada Farmer.

TORONTO, CANADA, MARCH 15, 1873.

The Soiling System.

We publish with much pleasure the letter of Mr. Slade on this subject which appears in another column and to which we direct the attention of our readers. It will be seen that Mr. Slade has tried the soiling system to a certain extent. He grows 4 or 5 acres of green corn to make up for deficient pasturage in the heat of summer; and he folds sheep on green crops in the field. And his verdict upon the system, from these practical tests, is that "its advantages are too obvious to need consideration,"—the "project is full of promise,"—"worthy of all our energies,"—and "its complete realization would create a change of prospect scarcely dreamed of in the philosophy of those who have not examined its possible results."

We heartily thank Mr. Slade for hastening to send us this certificate of his experience—and we hope that many more of our readers who have tested the soiling system, will follow his example, and give us their suggestions upon it, whether favorable or otherwise. Statements by practical men of practical results, will go further to get this great reform generally adopted than pages of persuasive argument; and we are satisfied the system is so sound, so practical, so capable of modification, and so profitable when tried, that the more critically it is discussed, the better will it appear.

Mr. Slade objects to our suggestion that farmers who feel afraid that their cattle would be cramped and injured by confinement, can feed in summer with "cut food in a yard or bush," and he does so because he thinks this could only be done at the cost of cleanliness, or the loss of manure. As to cleanliness—that would depend entirely on the extent of the yard or bush, but in regard to the loss of manure, we entirely agree with Mr. Slade—and our suggestion was only made for the half-hearted soiler; firmly believing that he who once enters on the right path, will follow it on to the end.

There are fortunately various degrees of modification of the soiling system, any of which may be profitably adopted (in comparison with pasturing) by those who desire to test its merits before going thoroughly into it.

1st. You may continue to tread down the grass on your pasture lands, and merely raise green corn to tide over the weeks when the pastures are burned bare. This will benefit your cattle.

2nd. You may grow one acre of green rye, one acre of peas, oats and tares mixed, and one acre of clover, for every 10 or 12 head of horned cattle—which on fair land, well manured, will carry them safely over until hay is cut; and then you can commence treading down the pasture grass. The rye, peas, oats, tares and clover on this plan may either be fed to the cattle in a yard or bush; or it may be fed in the stable. If fed in a yard or bush, this plan will benefit your cattle and greatly increase your hay for the coming winter; but if fed in the stable, it will benefit your cattle, save the hay, and give you a great pile of first-class manure.

3rd. You may grow, 1st, green rye; 2nd, peas, oats and tares; 3rd, clover; and 4th, Indian corn, so as to provide in regular succession, full supplies of green fodder for all your stock, from the first opening of spring until winter feeding commences. You can feed in the yard or bush—or you can feed in the stables. If in the former, the cattle will be well fed, and all the grass lands will be mowed for hay once, or twice if you so choose; but if in the latter, the cattle will be thoroughly well cared for, the supply of hay for winter will be abundant and the manure-heap will be enormous.

4th. You may select any one of the foregoing plans, and modify it by keeping the cattle, in cool weather, all night in the stables and all day in the yard or bush; and in hot weather, all day in the stables and all night in the yard or bush.

5th. Or better than any other mode, in our judgment formed from practical experiment—you can have your stables built with double rows of loose boxes, a feeding passage up the centre, and a door to each box into an open yard along the side of the stable, where the cattle can be turned out in good weather for two or three hours daily, with plenty of fodder in racks for them to pick, and full supplies of pure clear water.

There is but one obstacle in the way of adopting the fifth of these plans; and it is the one on which Mr. Slade puts his hand—the difficulty of providing bedding sufficient to keep the cattle in thorough cleanliness all the year round. One ton of straw may be made to bed a full grown cow or steer for a year, but to do it as it should be done, a ton and a half are required. No doubt to provide this large quantity of straw is a difficulty; but it is by no means insurmountable—especially when we consider the vast supplies of manure obtained from the soiling system, and the large grain crops that can consequently be grown. Of course, as Mr. Slade suggests, we have the resort of sparrow floors, but we agree with him that bare boards are an extreme resort. Where saw-dust can be had or tan-bark, there is no difficulty; and when sand can be had on the farm for under bedding, it is greatly lessened. But the most natural and profitable remedy available to us in Canada is to pile the manure on the fields and grow large crops of rye. We have never seen an acre of rye straw tested by the scales; but grown under all the advantages of good soil, good culture and heavy manuring, the crop of straw as well as of grain, is sure and very large. We should say that a good crop of rye-straw must weigh about two and a half tons.

But, in truth no obstacle can ultimately stand in the way of the soiling system. Its advantages are palpably so great that be the drawbacks what they may, a way will be found to overcome them. We are all yet at the mere threshold of practical enquiry as to the best mode of prosecuting the system. We know that the thing is theoretically admirable; we know that all who have tried it, advocate it heartily; we all feel that if there is no great drawback yet to be disclosed, everybody should go in for it; but we hesitate to move until more is known. What is wanted is a thorough test. Who then will volunteer to solve this grand question? How many farmers in Canada will agree to plant this spring, one acre of oats, one acre of oats and tares; one acre of oats, tares and peas; one acre of clover; and one acre of western corn—all specially grown for green fodder, and keep a record of the mode of tillage, the weight of each crop, and the number of days sustenance put for a full-grown animal from each acre? Can we get twenty good men and true, who will do this thing for the benefit of their country?

Short-horns.

Mr. Thornton's *Short-horn Circular* for the quarter ending, December 31, has notices of the prominent sales of the coming season. They are not so important as they were last year, yet there are promises of several draft sales of great merit, and of some good herds of serviceable cattle to be dispersed, though not at present any rival announced to the great scrambles of 1872. Mr. Cheney's draft sale in July, has very fashionable blood to offer, and will no doubt be largely attended. The first sale will be a draft of some young bulls and heifers largely inheriting Douth blood, at Mr. Bolton's, The Island, Wexford; this will be March 4; and will be followed, March 11, by a similar one, Mr. Crabbe's, Ardfer; and in the next week by the dispersion of the late Lord