

AGRICULTURAL.

[FOR THE BEE.]

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE STATE OF
AGRICULTURE IN NOVA SCOTIA, AND THE
MEANS OF ITS IMPROVEMENT.

No. 5.

ROTATION OR COURSE OF CROPPING UPON
OLD ARABLE FARMS.

MR. DAWSON.—Sir, Although the scientific farmer would not like to be bound to any fixed rotation unalterably, I shall for the sake of a more definite illustration, prescribe what I conceive to be a rotation best adapted to our circumstances. We shall take a farm of fifty acres of arable land, which divided into five equal parts, gives ten acres to each plat, which we shall designate Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5; when we begin with the course, we suppose the land all to be laid. The first year No. 1 is ploughed up and put in white crop; the second year No. 2 is ploughed up for white crop, and No. 1 is green crop; the third year, No. 1 is white crop, sowed out with hay seed, No. 2 green crop, and No. 3 ploughed up for white crop; the fourth year, No. 1 is hay, No. 2 wheat, sowed out with hay seed, No. 3 green crop, and No. 4 ploughed up for white crop; the fifth year, Nos. 1 & 2 are hay, No. 3 wheat, sowed out with hay seed, No. 4 green crop, and No. 5 ploughed up for white crop. The farm is now under a regular rotation, and in the month of August stands thus: Nos. 1 & 2 hay, No. 2 wheat, No. 4 green crop, and No. 5 oats.

It will now be seen that two white or two green crops do not follow in succession, and that two fifths of the whole, or 20 acres is always in hay. It will readily occur to any one that ten acres have to be changed every year; if it can be so it is well, but if it cannot be managed, the land if good, may be kept in order by applying dung to only five acres every year, which certainly may be accomplished. If the period is thought too short for going over the whole, by pasturing one year the time will be lengthened, and the plat to be changed and dressed, lessened, as there will then be six plats of 8 1/3 acres to each plat.

It is not an easy matter to convey a proper idea of the most advantageous course of cropping to pursue in the circumscribed view I am now under the necessity of taking. I may at some after time resume the subject and give it more in detail.

Yours truly,

OLD RUSTICUS.

From the New-England Farmer.

ON SOWING GRASS SEEDS.—A diversity of opinion exists on the subject of the proper time in the year for sowing grass seeds. Some prefer the fall; but agricultural writers generally recommend spring in preference. European writers direct to sow grass seed in the spring, even when it is sown on ground which is seeded with winter grain sown the fall preceding, and to harrow it in. They say, that although a few grain plants may be torn up in the process, harrowing will, on the whole, prove serviceable to winter grain. The Hon. Richard Peters has so directed to "harrow your winter grain in the spring, in the direction of the feed furrows, or drills, and be not afraid of disturbing a few plants; manifold produce will remunerate for the seed destroyed."

The Farmer's Assistant says—"Clover may be sown with barley, oats, or spring wheat, when that article is raised; or it may be sown with winter wheat in the fall, if the land be dry and warmly exposed; or in the spring, when it should be lightly harrowed in."

The Domestic Encyclopedia asserts, that "experienced farmers generally prefer sowing clover with wheat rather than with barley or oats, as in dry seasons the clover frequently overpowers the oats or barley, and if sown late, in order to obviate this evil, it often fails, and the crop is lost for the season."

Probably the diversity of opinion respecting the proper time of sowing clover seed may arise from the difference in the nature of the soil on which trials have been made. An experienced agriculturist, (Edward P. Field, Esq., of Philadelphia county,) assured Dr. Mease that he repeatedly failed of a crop, when he sowed his clover in autumn or winter, and that he was

uniformly successful when he sowed in the spring. His soil is a light loam.

On the other hand, an experienced and scientific cultivator, whose remarks on this subject were published in the New England Farmer, vol. vi p. 238, dated Weston, Mass., and signed J. M. G. says, "Dear bought experience has taught me the inefficacy of sowing grass seed in the spring with grain; it is a custom imported with the ancestors of the country from old England, where the cloudy summers and moist climate will warrant a practice, which under our clear sky and powerful sun is altogether unsuitable. I must add that grass sown in the fall imperiously requires to be rolled in the spring as soon as the ground is in fit order; otherwise the small plants, yet slightly rooted, and heaved up by the frost, will suffer much, perhaps total destruction; and truly among the many uses to which the roller may be applied, none perhaps would be more valuable than to roll all grass lands in the spring. The plants suffer from the wind and from the heat, and this being the case more or less every spring, it may necessarily bring on a premature decay, which the yearly use of the roller at that season might prevent."

We cannot reconcile these authorities, but it is probable that both in fall and spring sowing of grass seeds there may be successful and unsavourable results, according to circumstances of soil, season, &c. Fall sown grass seeds are liable to be winter killed or destroyed by frost; spring sown grass seeds may perish by drought and heat. B. whenever sown, there will be less danger, either from frost or drought, if the seed is well covered with a harrow, and the ground pressed on it with a roller.

[From the Complete Farmer & Rural Economist]
FENCES.

The kinds of fence and manner of fencing should vary according to the difference of soils and the kinds of materials for fencing. In new lands logs are and ought to be most used. When built of white pine, they will last about twenty years. Other sorts of wood, such as pitch pine, hemlock, ash, oak, &c., will endure for a considerable time if not placed too near the ground. If a fence be made partly of white pine and partly of other wood, the former should be laid nearest to the ground. If logs are peeled they will last the longer in fences.

It has been practised by some farmers to make posts for fences very durable by the following simple process. They bore a hole in that part of the post which, when set, will be just at the surface of the earth, with such a slope as will carry it downward an inch or two. They then fill the hole with salt, which will preserve the timber a long time from decay.

In many parts of the country posts and rails will be found the cheapest materials for fence. In making fences of this description, it is advised by Mr. Preston, of Stockport, Pennsylvania, to set the posts with the top parts in the ground, and he asserts that they will, in that position, last three or four times as long as when they are set with the butt ends down. He advises, also, in making fences, always to place the rails with the heart side up.

The best timber for rails, according to Dr. Deane, is red cedar. It is easy to split, light to carry and handle, sufficiently strong, and the most durable of any. In the transactions of the Society of Arts, in England, there is an account which states in substance that posts of oak, and others of chestnut, were set down in Somersetshire, where they had to undergo repairs in eighteen years. The oak posts were then found to be unserviceable, and the chestnut very little worn. The oak posts were renewed, the chestnut remained, and in twenty-five years afterwards they were not so much rotted as the oak.

If the lower ends of posts are scorched in a hot flame before they are put into the ground, they will last the longer. Some recommend soaking them in sea-water to keep them from rotting. The posts should be set at least two feet in the ground. Some farmers cut them so long, and mortice them in such a manner,

that they can turn them upside down, when the lower ends become rotten.

It is said in the Barnstable Journal, that 'Deacon Winslow Martin has on his farm a kind of fence, which for durability and beauty can hardly be exceeded. On each side of the road adjacent his dwelling are rows of large button-wood trees, set ten or twelve feet asunder. Into these, when young, cedar rails were inserted, as into common posts. As the trees increased in size, the wood formed closely around the ends of the rails, and firmly secured them in their places. It is certainly a durable and cheap fence, because it will require no repairs at least for one generation, and is moreover constantly increasing in value. Were our roads lined with this kind of fence, it would add not a little to the beauty of the country and the comfort of the traveller.'

The Farmer's Guide observes, 'that post and rail fences and board fences are very good where the soil is dry. In a wet soil, the posts will be moved by frost. Red cedar, locust, and chestnut, are best. Butternut, black walnut, and oak, are pretty good, lasting about fifteen years. For the rails, cedar is best, lasting perhaps an age. If timber be scarce, and the ground level and free from stones, post and rail fences, set in a bank of the earth of two small ditches, thrown up together, ought to be preferred. If the posts are too small to have holes made through them, the rails may be flattened at the ends, and fastened to the posts with spikes, or with wooden pins well secured.'

When ground is wholly subdued, and the stumps of its original trees quite rooted out, stone walls, properly made, are the best and cheapest fences. On hard, sandy or gravelly soil, a wall will stand many years without repairing. On a clay or miry soil, the foundation should be laid in a trench, nearly as low as the earth freezes. But a wall of flat or square shaped stones will stand pretty well on any soil on the surface.

A writer for the Genesee Farmer gives the following directions for 'Planting Posts for Garden Fences, &c.'

'Instead of filling the holes up with the earth taken out in digging them, I would recommend filling in around the posts leached ashes instead of common earth, and topping off with five or six inches of unleached ashes above the surface of the ground: for it is generally between wind and water, as the sailors term it, that garden posts begin to decay.'

My reason for recommending ashes is, that I have frequently found pieces of boards, hoops and staves buried under heaps of leached ashes, which had lain there many years, and were quite as sound as when first buried. No doubt many of your readers have noticed the same, in removing old ash heaps near potash works.'

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