

thistle, so that farmers have to wrap leather round their horses' legs when cutting grain infested by it. It has now spread over an area of 30,000 square miles, and is abundant and troublesome over two-thirds of that area. Mr. Dewey says in his bulletin: "In the badly-infested areas more than 940,000 acres are devoted to wheat raising. The average loss on this land, which may be attributed to the Russian Thistle alone, cannot be less than five bushels per acre; and 3,200,000 bushels at the minimum price of 50 cents per bushel (which is considerably less than the average price) indicates a loss to the farmers in the two Dakotas of \$1,600,000. The loss in other crops, the injuries caused by the spines, and the fires caused by the plants jumping fire breaks, will bring the total loss to something more than \$2,000,000 for the year 1892.

"These figures may seem alarming, but they are based on conservative estimates. If they are alarming to the farmers, it is well, for it is only when alarmed that most men will take effective measures to avoid danger."

ORIGIN OF THE WEED.

The above facts pointing out the possible dangers of allowing this plant to become established in Canada were given in the annual report of the Experimental Farms for the year 1893, at page 192, and western farmers were urged to be on the look-out for so dire an enemy. In consequence of that notice I have received a large number of specimens and inquiries concerning noxious weeds.

"The Russian Thistle originated in Eastern Europe or Western Asia. It has been known in Russia many years and has quite as bad a reputation in the wheat regions there as it has in the Dakotas. It was introduced in Bon Homme county, South Dakota, about fifteen years ago. There is little doubt that it was first brought in very small quantities in flax seed imported from Europe. The few plants, grown from the foreign seed, grew, produced seed, and increased slowly and almost unnoticed until about six years ago (1886). They were then thoroughly acclimated and naturalized and seem to have partaken of the conquering spirit of the West." (Farmers' Bulletin No. 10, U. S. Dep. of Agr.)

DESCRIPTION OF THE WEED.

Prof. Bessey gives the following description of the plant in Bulletin No. 31, Nebraska Agric. Expert. Station, December 20,