

FARMER'S ADVOCATE

AND HOME MAGAZINE.

VOL. XV.

LONDON, ONT., MAY, 1880.

NO. 5.

REGISTERED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COPYRIGHT ACT OF 1875.

THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE

—AND—
Home Magazine.

WILLIAM WELD, Editor and Proprietor.

The Only Illustrated Agricultural Journal
Published in the Dominion.

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The Month.

The winter wheat west of Toronto has a very promising appearance; the plant is in a fine, healthy condition, and should no misfortune in the way of insects, frosts or rust overtake it, we shall have one of the largest crops ever harvested in Western Ontario. The reports east of Toronto are not quite as favorable. From the Western States the accounts are most encouraging from present appearances, although there are reports from some of the States that insects are already committing depredations. Insects will most probably be unusually destructive this year, as the winter has been so mild. Late spring frosts may check their operations to some extent.

The spring seeding has been progressing finely, and the ground has been in good tilth. The clover has been very badly injured, which will necessitate the sowing of more than the usual quantity of corn and millet, and should cause a more extensive growth of root crops. A liberal use of salt, plaster and other artificial manures might prove profitable this year.

The fruit trees show a good set of buds, and many are increasing their plantations, small fruits especially having been very remunerative the past season; and the price that apples have sold at in England has given a stimulus to their cultivation. Drying establishments are to be erected in Canada this season. The great North-West must be supplied from the east, as the winds and frosts of that section are such that they will never be able to raise fine fruit. They may supply us with wheat, but we in Ontario will be able to pay for what we want of it in fruit, manufactured goods, etc.

The fearful tornadoes and fires that sweep over the western prairies should tend to make those who have comfortable homes consider well before leaving a certainty for an uncertainty.

There is an old adage which we think should be more fully considered by our farmers, councilmen, aldermen and Parliamentary officials, namely, "Out of debt out of danger." Our Ontario Legislature increased the number of paid officials and increased some salaries, adding materially to our unnecessarily large expenditure.

We hope some of our subscribers have profited by the hints previously given, namely, to take extra care of their sheep, and to purchase more if proper care can be taken of them. The enormous price which wool will now command—50 to 60c. for unwashed and \$1 to \$1.20 per pound for fine quality—has never before been heard of. The sheep rot in England has swept away so many thousands that our mutton must command a higher price. Perhaps some of you may find it profitable to purchase a few sheep from those who do not take the *ADVOCATE*. Keep all you can. Do not hoard your sheep or wool. Sell your wool when the market is fairly established, and your sheep that are too old, when you have them well fattened. Read the article on raising lambs in this issue, and try to make yours gain one pound per day. Get some tick destroyer, and do not allow the ticks to worry the profit out of your pockets. Give the lambs a dip about two weeks after the sheep are shorn. We hear that Briggs & Son, of Hamilton, Ont., make a good tick destroyer; we have also heard of bad results from using some kinds.

If your debts are paid and you have not sold your clover, and if you can keep it properly, we would not advise you to sell now. If you have money to spare, it might not be amiss to secure your seed for next season. At the present time we do not think it will be lower, and there are no bounds to what it may command, although there are large stocks being held.

This journal has for years past called the attention of the public to the dangers of allowing the possibility of our farm stock becoming infected with the diseases prevalent in other countries. A dispatch from Washington, April 17, announces that the Spanish Government has prohibited the importation of American pork into that country. Our Government should not neglect our interests. American hogs still come into Canada. We should not for present gain risk the injury of our reputation.

Perhaps some of our Ontario nurserymen may be able to give us some information about Moore's Arctic Plum, so highly spoken of by one of our subscribers, a leading farmer in New Brunswick (see correspondence).

Some of our Manitoba subscribers might find it profitable to try a few seeds of the sorghum plant.

If the season is hot enough and long enough to grow the cane successfully, they might make money, as the freight is so high on everything they import. It has succeeded well north of Clinton, and its cultivation now commenced in Ontario will soon be increased.

CANADA THISTLES.

We cannot too highly commend every proper attempt to check or exterminate any pest, but the amended Act that makes it imperative on pathmasters to carry out the law respecting Canada thistles, will, we fear, in some sections where thistles are bad, be a very severe task on pathmasters, and will drive some farmers off the land, as there are sections where the cost of keeping the thistles down for one year would be more than the whole farm is worth. We have seen such farms, and hardships must result in enforcing this Act in poor, stony, hilly sections.

Currant Culture.

"A Young Farmer and Subscriber" requests some advice on currant culture. This fruit has not of late years occupied the attention even of fruit gardeners as much as previously. Currants are as much in demand as ever, and bring even higher prices, but the great difficulty of protecting the fruit and the bushes from the currant worm and currant fly has discouraged their culture by many who had raised currants before the fly ravages became so destructive. Despite all these difficulties this fruit is too useful and profitable to be disused.

The currant bush will thrive in any fairly good soil. The more fertile the soil, however, and the more mellow, the greater the yield of fruit and the better the quality. Having procured your first supply of young bushes from a reliable nurseryman, you can propagate all you may require afterwards by cuttings. The cuttings, about 18 inches long, from wood of the previous year's growth, are planted in nursery beds about nine inches in depth. We have planted cuttings both in fall and spring, and both seasons have done well. In the second year after planting we have them bearing fruit. Some persons, instead of cuttings, divide currant bushes, using the slips as young bushes, but they never bear so well. The currant fly can be easily got rid of by the use of hellebore, either mixed with water or sprinkled from a dredging box. The borer is a more troublesome enemy, eating the pith out of stems and branches. The only remedy is to cut away and burn all the branches injured. There are several varieties of currants. Of black currants we prefer the Naples; of red currants the Cherry and Victoria, and of white the Grape. There are, however, other good varieties. In order to have abundance of fruit the ground must be kept in good condition—mellow and rich, cultivated and manured every fall.