

Enniskillen was a forest wild. It now contains several villages, among which is "Oil Springs," already a thriving little town, not two years old. The *Oil Springs Chronicle* looks as if it has seen at least a dozen years, and enjoyed a wide-spread and well-earned reputation. It has already reached, not its twenty-fifth year, or month, but its twenty-fifth week. Two pages and a half are filled with advertisements chiefly from Oil Springs, a village of yesterday, and Wyoming, the station on the Great Western Railroad, which is situated about a dozen miles from Oil Springs. We find advertisements of hotels, livery stables, houses, stores, goods, &c., just as if the site of Oil Springs was that of an old settled and well established city, and did not recollect being nothing but a forest two or three years ago, where one might find the track of a deer, or come across a wild turkey in a morning's stroll. The *Oil Springs Chronicle* will be invaluable to all who are interested in Petroleum, and it will likewise be of much service to those who have lands or other property in the Western District. We should be glad to see a list of wells dug in the Oil regions, an authentic enumeration of the natural springs which have been discovered, and an enumeration of the flowing wells with their history. No doubt there are many parties at Oil Springs who could furnish this information, it would be acceptable and valuable in many ways.

THE APHIS AVENÆ.

The *Canadian Naturalist and Geologist* for August contains a very useful paper from the pen of Dr. George Lawson, of Kingston, on the Aphis, which has been a source of such wide-spread alarm among the farmers of Upper Canada during the present and preceding year.

Dr. Lawson states that the Aphis Avenæ had not been recognized as belonging to the insect depredations already described as affecting grain crops in America until 1861. Notices of the insect will be found under the following synonyms: *Aphis Granaria*, Kirby; and Fitch, in the *Country Gentleman*, Albany, N.Y., Aug. 16, 1861; *Aphis Hordei*; *Aphis Cerealis*. This American species of Aphis is identical with the European species as determined by Mr. Walker of the British Museum, to whom Dr. Lawson sent some specimens; and also by Dr. Asa Fitch of Salem, Mass., who is satisfied that our Canadian Aphis is of the same species as the well known *Aphis Avenæ* of Europe. We give Dr. Lawson's description of this insect in his own words:

The insect is individually minute, like all the Aphides, but presents a formidable appearance on account of the vastness of its numbers. In some

fields, a few days after its first appearance, the ears of grain became covered with it; in fact the wheat was commonly spoken as "dark with it." The fly presented itself chiefly in the wingless form, the individuals clustering in great numbers in the upper parts of the culms and panicles of wheat, rye, oats and barley, and this season they have been observed on indian corn and various other grasses. Most of them are stationary, but some are usually moving about with rather an awkward motion, resembling that of mites under a magnifying glass. On each panicle or head of grain they are found to be of various sizes, according to age, some scarcely large enough to be visible to the naked eye, others as large as the capital letters on this printed page. They vary in colour; some are pale apple-green, some of a brownish yellow colour and many, especially the older and larger ones are of a rather deep brick-red colour, when they become very conspicuous. In some cases where the whole ears were covered with the insects, the total destruction of the crops seemed to some of the farmers to be inevitable. They looked upon the "new bug plague" (for anything that looks like an insect is called a bug) as the greatest calamity that had ever befallen our fields. It was deemed advisable therefore to publish in the Kingston newspapers an account of the habits of the insect with the view of allaying unnecessary fears. Attention was drawn to the following among other facts:—The aphides do not gnaw the plant's stem and leaves like young caterpillars, nor like the midge, injuriously affect the young grain, but simply suck the juices of the most exposed parts of the plant. The plant necessarily suffers from this injury, its energies are weakened, the leaves and other parts shrivel and blister, and an inroad is formed for other diseases; but, while aphides are highly injurious to thin and succulent leaved plants the compact tissue of wheat and other grains, hardened too by silica, is not so liable to suffer and become deformed, and a vigorous healthy crop of grain will hardly be injured. No doubt the yield is lessened by the presence of the insect in vast numbers, and the quality of the grain perhaps slightly deteriorated, but the injurious effects are by no means so extensive as the formidable appearance of the insect would indicate.

During the present season (1862) the aphis has again made its appearance, and in as great numbers as before. It has naturally attracted less notice, but appears to be widely diffused in all the cultivated parts of central Canada. In August, 1862, I traced it from Kingston, on the scattered farms along the Addington Road, back to the township of Olden, a distance of about 50 miles. When we consider that many of the farms referred to are mere isolated patches of clearing in the woods, widely separated from each other, in some cases by miles of interminable forest and swamp, we see that the distribution of this insect is totally independent of its own limited locomotive powers. In its winged state it is no doubt carried in clouds by