

Editor Farmers' Advocate.

Hints on Draining.

DEAR SIR.—It is now and then well to interchange facts and ideas, and to admit and correct our errors. It is a subject one cannot forget. As farmers with so smart a reminder as the two rainy summers just passed, I think a few more hints on this all-important subject—draining—may not be out of place. As the summer is drawing near, every farmer should have all his plans drawn up in battle array, ready for the summer's campaign; also all the material required for the work should be drawn and laid as near where it will be wanted as possible. I hope a large number of your subscribers will have headed their plans with how much draining they can do, and also what is the best material they can procure to put into the drains.

I will first give a few hints on the digging of drains. As I don't expect every farmer will purchase a ditching machine at present, those that cannot purchase one had better not wait for luck, but commence draining at once. Those whose land is free from stumps might do considerable with the plow; but first prepare yourselves with some good draining tools to begin with, and take hold of the spade yourself, with all the hired help you can command, and put all the time to it you possibly can. You will not regret it afterwards. The drains should be three feet deep, on an average—taking the unevenness of the land into account—in low wet land four feet would be better. In consequence of the land being flat and low, it will have a large quantity of water in the subsoil, which would prevent shallow drains from doing the good that would be expected of them. I have no doubt that this is one cause why some farmers have not found so much benefit from draining as they expected, for that depth of drain you will require to cut the top of the drain 18 inches wide, or a little more, and slope the sides in a little at the top; by doing so you will have sufficient room to take the bottom out without dirtying yourself. I don't like to see drainers muddled from head to foot, looking as though they had been rolled in a mud-puddle. Try and do your work clean and tidy, and in a systematic way. When you commence to drain, make them as straight as possible, and get a good outfall drain first, a little lower than the lateral or cross drain; and when you commence, throw all your dirt out on one side, and keep the other side clean, to lay your tools when not in use; also, material to put in the drain. You will then look like a practical drainer; and if some of it is pick work, so that you cannot do without standing in the bottom to finish, plant your feet down level and firm, and move them as seldom as possible to do the work; and don't be sticking them in heel and toe and paddling about, as if you were dancing a polka, till the bottom of the drain is a perfect lather of mud. If you want to dance, come out and jump around on the top,—only leave the bottom level and smooth, as though you had never walked along it. Now that you have cut some good drains, don't be niggardly about the material to put in—don't go on the common plan of making anything do that comes to hand. After so much labor, it would be a great piece of folly—almost an act of insanity.

I will now state as near as I can the probable cost of the material per rod. As it will be the best understood measurement I can give, 2-inch drain tiles, at \$7 per 1000, will cost 12 cents per rod; 3-inch tiles, 20 cents per rod; from that up to 6-inch tiles, at \$36 per 1000, will cost 60 cents per rod; the scantling, 2x3, will cost 13 cents per rod; 2x4, 18 cents per rod; 2x5, 22 cents per rod—that is, allowing \$3 per 1000 for pine lumber—hemlock could be purchased for something less. Those having logs of their own—it would only cost them from 3 to 6 cents per rod, and providing the cover would cost from 3 to 4 cents more.

The board or trough for a drain.—One board should be cut 4 inches and the other

5 inches; the next size, 5 and 6 inches, which will cost about 10 or 12 cents per rod; and if the bottom of the drain should have any soft places, the trough will require a board underneath it, to keep it from sinking, which would add a little more to the cost. I cannot state exactly what it would cost to make a stone drain; for those having stone will have to gather them off the land; and they can take them and lay them where they are wanted to drain as easily as lay them in a fence corner for the sheep to climb up and skip over the fence into a neighbor's field. So the only cost would be in putting them in the drains. It is generally advocated here to throw the stones into the drains until it is filled up some 8 or 10 inches, and let the water filtrate amongst them the best way it can. Now, I consider that a very poor—I might say a lazy system. It would be much better for the land to leave a proper opening at the bottom of the drain, so as to let the water escape more freely. This could easily be done with a little extra labor, by placing the stones properly along the bottom of the drain. The lumber to make boxes for sand-draining will cost from 20c. to 25c. per rod. The other material which you prepare to put into the drains will cost very little more. That will depend in a great measure upon the distance you have to haul it, and how you are situated for procuring the material you wish to put in. I have not added the expense of teaming, because I do not think there is any need for it. The farmer's teams generally have a little leisure time in the month of March, and it would be much better for them to be drawing material for the drains than standing in the stable, besides being more profit to the master. I may add an opinion upon the distance to place the drains. As it will depend upon the kind of soil to be drained, those having a close, stiff, tenacious clay subsoil bottom will only require to have their drains 30 or 35 feet apart; and where the subsoil is a porous, open bottom, the drains might be placed 45 or 50 feet apart. As the water will be able to percolate so much farther in a loose, porous subsoil than in those tenacious blue clays, I think every farmer ought to be able to form an opinion, when digging the drains, how far they should be placed apart, because he is then able to tell what kind of a subsoil he has to put his drains in. There are so many different opinions respecting the proper distance to drain, that I do not think there are many farmers able to tell which is the proper distance for drying the land and making the most profit.

Yours most respectfully,

UNDERDRAIN.

Elma, Feb. 17, 1871.

Editor Farmers' Advocate.

MR. EDITOR.—In your last No., your correspondent "Homespun," in a letter on Chess, says he will account for Chess growing where I planted wheat. He says that it is a well known fact to botanists that there are certain weeds indigenous to particular soils; admitting so, that did not make Chess grow exactly just in the very spot where the twenty grains of wheat were planted, and nowhere else; he "Homespun," says that Chess grew so luxuriant that it smothered the wheat. If that had been the case it is common sense that Chess would have shown itself on the same ground, but not one spear of Chess appeared but where the twenty grains of wheat were planted, and it would be remarkable if Chess should pop up just where the grains of wheat were planted, and nowhere else. His argument, Sir, is a very lame one, for if it had been dug up it would have shown itself elsewhere than where the grains of wheat were planted. I was brought up on a farm in England of about six hundred acres in extent, and if I did not learn something in farming I must have been a dull scholar. Mr. Editor, your correspondent "Homespun" says that a farm joining his in England was clean, and had been for sixty years, and by

ploughing one inch deeper than it had been ploughed, the field was covered with wild mustard or charlock. Now Sir, I have had a clean field, and by changing my seed got it covered with wild mustard, and I think that is more likely the way that that farmer got the wild mustard in his field, for I have been caught twice that way, and the first time it cost me four seasons before I got rid of it.

GEO. THOMPSON.

Komoka, Feb. 16, 1871.

Editor's Farmers' Advocate.

SIR.—In looking over the February No. of the "Advocate," I see an article from "A Wellesly Farmer," on the principle of Insurance. I am glad to think that I have one kindred spirit with regard to the system of Insurance. I have long seen the folly—as I think—of our farming community in supporting Insurance Companies when a more safe and profitable plan might be adopted. I greatly approve of the Township system. Six or seven years ago my mind was quite taken up with that very subject. I went so far as to have a public meeting called, which was well attended and favorably thought of. However, one or two wiseacres killed the matter at that time by holding forth that we could not organize until \$10,000 was subscribed, and a charter obtained from the Government. My opinion was, and still is, that it may be accomplished in a different manner. I suggested at that time to select a Board of Directors, and each 100 acres to deposit say \$3 as a fund, then in the event of a fire occurring, to take up an assessment according to the values insured to pay the loss; the interest of the fund to be used as part, and four Inspectors to be chosen to investigate the damage done, and report to the Directors. Now, Sir, I am aware that my plan may be greatly amended by a consultation of wiser heads. This is only a sketch of the matter, and as "Farmer" says, goes free. I anxiously wait to hear that every Township has its own insurance. Please let us know if a charter is required. If you think this worth a small space in your valuable paper, I hope the desired object may be obtained.

Yours, etc.,

ANOTHER FARMER.

Mayfield, Feb. 16, 1871.

Editor Farmers' Advocate.

A Grunt from a Growler.

WM WELB, Esq.,—

SIR.—I have hesitated for some time whether I should send you another list of subscribers for your paper—the FARMER'S ADVOCATE. I will just mention a few of the many reasons for this hesitation. The first is: the evident Yankee tone of the paper from first to last.—Its pages are mostly filled with extracts from American papers. Some of them are very good, but a majority of them are unsuited to our circumstances and our climate. Then again: the paper professes to be non-political, while some of its pages are filled with the most powerful political articles written by yourself, criticizing and stigmatizing the sayings and doings of the present ministry, and particularly the acts and doings of the Hon. John Carling, your own city member, a man of whom any constituency in Ontario might well feel proud—one of the best, if not the very best Minister of Agriculture Ontario ever had. I will now tell you what we down here in glorious old Norfolk think of your course in this matter. It is this: that it is a nasty bird that fouls its own nest. Please accept of a little unsought-for advice: Never purchase land from any one that cannot make you a good title; and cause your subscribers to pay in advance, and your paper will be worth more to those who pay punctually, and save you the trouble of writing those everlasting "duns." Accept our thanks for the great amount of good you have done the country in the dissemination of the good and reliable kinds of seed sent from the Emporium, and also for the masterly manner in which you handled the old Provincial Board of Agriculture for the bad use they made of the funds committed to their care. They

were a bad set of fellows up to the time you were awarded that fifty dollars at the last Provincial Fair held at London; but from that time to this they have been good men and true—perfectly harmless, from the President downwards, and innocent as sucking doves! I don't know what you will think of this when you read it, but I hope the growls it contains will not knock you endways, nor the praise lift you too high. The advice I hope you will treasure up and act upon.

I am sir,

Your obd't servant,
YORKSHIRE LAD.

Windham, Jan. 31, 1871.

P.S.—Enclosed you will find three dollars and seventy-five cents for subscribers to the FARMER'S ADVOCATE.

Y. L.

We have continually requested our readers to write for their paper, and have even told them that we would insert articles even though they should be written against our undertaking. Thus we feel in duty bound to insert the annexed letter, although it may be as a sharp rod on our back. The writer furnishes us with his proper name. We have received "grunts" before this from other persons who have been either afraid or ashamed to give us their proper name. All such communications are doomed to the waste-basket.

In answer to the first charge, we state that we are compelled to do this for the following reasons: The absence of sufficient Canadian correspondence; being frequently told that we write too much ourselves; and not finding sufficient useful or suitable matter in our Canadian exchanges, without borrowing—or stealing. Most of our readers take some other Canadian paper, and, by our clipping from them, we would be termed a "re-print." We have, and still intend, to make extracts from these numerous American agricultural exchanges which are kindly sent to us by those gentlemanly editors, and believe the majority of our readers will be better satisfied with that proceeding. If our judgment is not as good as it might be, or our time too fully occupied to select as well as we could had we not so many things to attend to, please forward us more suitable matter for insertion.

We deem it our duty to touch politics when in connection with agricultural interests. If we have ever exceeded our duty through five years of editorship, is it to be wondered at. We had no training for such a calling, and Carling may be all you say, but if we were to write even half of what we know, it would astonish you, and you would, if not too ultra-biased a tory, admit that some omissions and commissions were to be found.

We never purchased land but what we were fully satisfied that the deed was as good as the law could make it, notwithstanding the Law of Limitation robbed us of our land after we had purchased, and the Government have never in any way (and they have had opportunities enough) remunerated us for the expense and loss they occasioned.

Some have made great complaints because we stopped their paper at the expiration of their time. Hundreds have thanked us for continuing their paper for one and two years after they had been due. If people would always pay punctually, no "duns" would be necessary. We are sorry to say there are too many needing them at the present.

We think you are under some mistake in regard to the Board of Agriculture. We