



VOL. X. No. XIX.
(NEW SERIES.)

TORONTO, CANADA, OCTOBER 15, 1873

\$1.50 PER ANNUM.
SINGLE COPIES 8 CTS.

The Field.

Fall Ploughing.

These fine October days are all that can be desired for fall ploughing. Neither too warm nor too cold, exercise is pleasant so that both man and beast perform their labors with a sense of comfort and satisfaction. To toil in the exhausting heat of mid-summer, though an unavoidable necessity, is a disagreeable one, and we instinctively hail these calm, cool, delicious days that seem gently to hit the course of work, and make it no hardship that in the sweat of his brow man must eat bread.

Of spring, summer and autumn, it is difficult to say which is the busiest season to the really good farmer. During the brief period of seed time not a moment is to be lost. As a rule the earlier crops are got in the better they will be. Two or three days of dilatoriness in early spring may entail serious loss. So there is no rest for the farmer in seed-time. He is scarcely less driven during the period of growth and ripening. There is a little breathing spell "when seeding is done," but soon there are potatoes to plant, turnip ground to prepare, and then grass and grain to cut. Meantime the roots and corn must be hoed. No sooner is the hay and grain safely housed than fall wheat must be thought of, and when that is in the ground, there is the fall ploughing, which, with the harvesting of the roots, will keep things lively until Jack Frost appears on the scene, and locks up the land in icy fetters. By good management the work of spring, summer and autumn may be so evenly distributed, that while there is felt to be constant need of persevering diligence, there shall be no over-driving or unpleasant hurry. To be always pushing his work without its over pushing him, will be the aim of every wise and thrifty farmer.

We know of nothing that so tends to make the duties of the year move on with clock-work regularity in this country, as the accomplishment of a large amount of ploughing in the fall. Spring is late in this climate, and sometimes bursts upon us with great suddenness. The quick change from bracing cold to enervating heat, just after the comparative rest of winter, makes work very galling both to the farmer and his team. Often, too, though the weather is adapted to early spring ploughing, the land is not fit. The frost is not sufficiently out of it, or it is in a heavy, spongy, wet condition, and cannot be worked. These difficulties do not present themselves in the fall. The slow process of ploughing does not contrast painfully with the hurried rush of the season, as in spring, awakening anxiety lest the meek of time for sowing should be missed. Nature is settling down to repose instead of rousing up to most intense activity. The spring is virtually made longer by

every acre that is ploughed in the fall. Its hurry is lessened, while its possibilities are increased. If the spring is early enough, and long enough to admit of another ploughing, the crop will be so much the better for it; and if the season is brief and hurried, the crop can be put in on the "double-quick," with cultivator and harrow. On the principle, therefore, of "taking time by the forelock," every good farmer will get as large a breadth of ploughing done in the fall as he possibly can.

Another important consideration is the beneficial effect of the elements on the newly turned-up soil. It is a well settled fact, that simply exposing soil to the action of the atmosphere, tends to enrich it, as well as to improve its condition mechanically for cropping. Hence the agricultural proverb, that "tillage is manure." Simply to stir the soil at any season of the year, and let it in the air among its innumerable particles, is to do it good. But in addition to this beneficial influence, fall ploughing subjects the soil to the action of frost. Alternate freezing and thawing are of great use, especially to stiff soils. The more thoroughly they are disintegrated, crumbled and fined down, the better state are they in for producing crops. Winter is no doubt very valuable in its action in this respect. There is no disintegrator of soils to compare with frost in the completeness with which it does its work. It not only fines down the earthy particles, but unlocks and sets free the various nutritious elements that form the food of plants. Nor must the snow-fall be forgotten. This brings to the soil a certain proportion of ammonia, the most important ingredient in all manures. Fall ploughing facilitates the access of the snow to the soil by loosening it up, spreading out the utmost possible surface, and making myriads of interstices through which the ammonia-charged snow-water can trickle down into the well-stirred ground.

Finally, fall ploughing confers on land some of the advantages of drainage, giving the surface-water a better chance of setting into the ground, or of running off in the dead furrows and ditches, thus putting the land in order for seeding sooner, in some cases, than it could possibly be ploughed, had it been left untouched until spring. Even in the case of drained land, this advantage of fall ploughing is not to be undervalued; how much more when so much land, as far as drainage is concerned, remains in a state of nature. If undrained land were subsoiled as well as surface-ploughed, this advantage would be greatly augmented. Land thus thoroughly prepared in the fall, would be in first-rate order for seeding in the spring.

These considerations have only to be well pondered by common-sense man, to induce the determination to keep the plough in active operation during all the workable time that may intervene between these mid-October days and the final closing in of winter.

A German Farm.

The farm of which we are about to speak is a fair average representation of German cultivation of the soil and the carrying on of mixed husbandry. It lies by the Oder in the vicinity of the walled town of Custrin, which received some of the first French prisoners during the late Franco-German struggle, and is about forty-five miles, east of Berlin, in the Province Brandenburg. The country is rolling but not hilly, and the soil is a productive sandy loam.

The farm consists of 160 acres, most of which is upland, but some of it is in the fertile valley of the Oder, and this latter has not been so long under cultivation. The upland was once a pine forest, and was first cultivated the year 1552. Mine host, Mr. Lendecke, whose pride is the thriftiness of his acres and stock, and the well being of all around him, is the tenth man that has owned these possessions. Although the land has been in cultivation 320 years, a judicious system of cropping, rotation and manuring has preserved its virgin fertility to a wonderful degree. The farm has 130 acres under cultivation, 15 acres in meadow and the rest is occupied partly by buildings, but most of it is raw land in the valley, which yields some pasturage and also some turf for burning. There are 40 head of cattle, 100 sheep, seven horses and some swine upon it. Fifteen of the cattle are being fattened for market.

The rotation extends over a period of eight years, and is as follows: 1. Potatoes, well manured; 2. Barley, 3. Clover; 4. Rape, well manured; 5. Wheat, 6. Rye and one-half potatoes or oats; 7. Peas and green fodder, well manured; 8. Rye.

The farm is thus in eight years well manured, (the manure being spread mostly in the winter season,) besides the good that is effected by the rotation, which yields a proportionate amount of articles for the market and for the necessities of the people. Another rotation that is used by many in the vicinity is also thought to be good. It is as follows: Potatoes, well manured; 2. Barley; 3. Beets, well manured; 4. Barley; 5. Oats, 6. Clover; 7. Rape; 8. Wheat.

Clover does well the first year, but not the second, hence is it ploughed under, after one harvest. Rape, which is grown principally for the oil, brings a round price in the market. Beets are grown to some extent for food for the stock, but mainly for the production of sugar.

The first thing that an American notices are the absence of fences and the almost universal manner of the farmers and laborers congregating and living together in small villages, with their not large farms extending out all around, and perhaps an avenue of poplars extending through the centre leading to another village or city. The dwelling is of brick, with tile roof, and is scarcely ever more than one and one-half stories high. It fronts on a street of the village, and is surrounded on the other three sides