

Flax Works at Norval: Harvesting Flax.

To the Editor of THE CANADA FARMER:

Sir,—I observed in the *Leader*, a few days ago, a statement from the respectable firm of Messrs. Gooderham and Worts, on the failure of the wheat crop, from the ravages of the midge or weevil, throughout the United Counties of York and Peel. It is to be regretted this is not the only section of country from which you will have the same complaint, while at the same time it is gratifying to know there are sections where the farmers are not blindly wedded to a crop of wheat, and many are turning their attention more to raising of stock, and the cultivation of other crops.

In the counties of Haldon, Wellington, and Waterloo, much attention is being given by the farmers to the raising of well bred stock, especially sheep. Flax is also largely cultivated. I visited the mills of Col. Mitchell, of Norval, last week, in company with a large flax grower and manufacturer, from the North of Ireland. We found him busily engaged, with a number of hands finishing up last year's stock, and preparing for the new crop coming in. My friend was much pleased with the machinery in those mills, and said in many respects they were equal to, if not better, than many such works he had seen in Ireland. We visited a field in company with Col. Mitchell, not a quarter of a mile from the village, in which the flax was over three feet long, and pronounced by all parties present to be worth from \$40 to \$50 per acre. We were told there were other fields not far distant, even better than this. It was sown early in the month of May, and is quite ready for pulling this week. The drought of course has affected this crop the present year, but there are few fields that will not produce even double the amount wheat will do; and while I see farmers preparing their fallows for fall wheat another year, I cannot help asking if they had not better pause and make the enquiry whether they would not act a wise part in sowing flax? Visit the different flax growing districts, and ascertain the facts. If farmers will only give the same attention in the preparation of their land for flax, that they do for fall wheat, they will soon learn the difference in profit in producing flax in place of wheat.

Col. Mitchell deserves a large share of credit for introducing the steeping process, as by this system the best qualities of flax will be produced. While the weather is warm it will only require some four or five days in the vats, and a like number of days will be sufficient on the grass. Those who have followed the dew-retting process, now so common in this country, will do well to get into the way of steeping, as a much finer quality and better colour is produced, and such fibre as will command the highest market price.

Now that the season is on for harvesting, I would take the liberty of offering a few hints to those who are new beginners and are making the first trial this year. When pulling keep the butt ends as even as possible. Make your beets or sheaves small, and tie with a small portion of the flax itself, as soon as the seed is taken off, which is done by a ripple or simple comb for the purpose. The flax should be spread on the grass immediately. If allowed to stand any length of time in the stock, the outside of the beet will become discoloured from the action of the sun, which is most injurious to the quality when dressed. While on the grass turn it over once in the course of five or six days, allow it to remain other six or seven days, until ready for lifting, which is best known by rubbing a few of the stalks between the fingers. When the woody parts will leave the fibre freely, it is ready. It is better to have it over than under done, but great care should be taken to take it up at the proper time. It may then be taken to the barn, or stacked up, and the longer it remains in this stack before scutching the better the fibre becomes. In Germany, Belgium and many other flax growing countries, flax grown this year is often left to the following year before it is manufactured. The farmers should be careful not to allow their flax to become too ripe, as they had better be content with a less quantity of seed and more fibre. In Ireland where the finest flax is produced, the seed is never allowed to more than form, and in a few years when we have a little more experience in this country, I have little doubt this will be found to be the most profitable system.

JOHN A. DONALDSON.

Spring Mount, Weston, July 11, 1864.



The Dairy.

Dairy Farming in Gloucestershire.

In a dairy of 60 to 90 cows on one of the best dairy farms of the Vale an exact record of the produce of milk, cheese, butter, and bacon, has now for nine years been kept; and the lessons which these statistics teach on the policy of various details of management—on the value of breed or family descent—on the costs and profits of breeding from two-year-old and three-year-old heifers respectively—on the profits of dairy husbandry generally—and on the importance of a large percentage of plough land on the dairy farm, are of the very highest value and importance. The following are among the conclusions to which this paper leads us:—

1st. That it is desirable for the dairy farmer to rear his own stock, so that he may improve his herd, and, by using superior bulls, that the calves he has to sell may be of more value for rearing.

2nd. That it is to his advantage to wean his heifer calves early, and, by his liberal treatment, to encourage their growth and bring them into the dairy at a little over two years old.

3rd. That winter dairying may be successfully carried on, and that by liberal feeding the cows will almost give as much milk as in the summer, without materially affecting the summer's yield.

4th. That a certain portion of arable land attached to every dairy farm—probably one-third—would greatly assist the farmer in supplying liberal feeding.

5th. That, as a considerable portion of the value of the food purchased goes to enrich the land, the farmer who uses much oil-cake and other purchased food is improving the staple of the land.

6th. That it is to the advantage of the landlord to encourage liberal feeding, as tending to this improvement of his estate.

7th. That for this purpose he should erect suitable buildings for comfortable winter-housing of the stock, and encourage the breaking up of a portion of the poorer grass lands.—*Agricultural Gazette.*

CHEESE POISONING.—I cannot understand how cheese can become poisonous under any circumstances. The older it grows and the more decomposed it is the more easily does the stomach digest it, if moderately taken and mixed with other food; for it is an old saying, and a true one, that "cheese digests everything but itself;" and, as some people will eat half a pound of cheese at a meal with nothing but a little bread mixed with it, a hard waxy curd is formed in the stomach, which the gastric juice is perfectly unable to penetrate. It lies there like a lump of lead. Irritation and inflammation ensue; it cannot dissolve nor pass; all attempts at vomiting only compress it into a firmer ball; intense headache, cold sweats, and sometimes death itself ensues. It is evident (if this theory be correct) that it is not old or even maggoty cheese that will produce this effect, but tough, new cheese, such as some of the Dutch cheeses are. Half-baked bread, gristle, and with some people hard dumplings, and even carrots, will produce a like result. It requires a ploughman's stomach to make a meal of bread and cheese alone, and even he eats onions with it when he can get them. Personally I used to suffer intense morning headaches consequent upon the smallest modicum of cheese. But as I grow older my stomach grows stronger, or less irritable, which amounts to the same thing. At its weakest, however, I could always greatly nullify its deleterious action by adopting what in my younger days we used to call hospital practice, that is, by spreading butter on our bread and eating the cheese with that. If people will avoid new, tough cheese, and eat only moderately of old, we shall hear no more of poisoning by cheese.—J. Q. RUMBALL, M.R.C.S., The Limes, Harpenden, Herts.

At a recent cheese convention at Rome, N.Y., there were represented 64 cheese factories, employing 38,679 cows.

Entomology.

"Grain Weevil" or "Borer."—[*Calandra Granaria.*]

To the Editor of THE CANADA FARMER.

SIR,—All grain is infested by its peculiar kind of weevil. Peas are very much attacked. These borers belong to the species *Coleoptra*, one of the family "Curculio." These weevils have all much the same appearance, all being provided with a long, prominent borer, by means of which they commit their ravages. The female lays five or six times a year. She penetrates the pea or grain, lays her egg and comes forth. The egg hatches and the larvæ, or grub, eats himself a warm and cosy home inside the seed. At docks where wheat laden vessels unship, you may see bushels of these insects swept from the warehouses. There is no atmosphere in which *this pest*, *aye, and every pest*, thrives better than that of a close, dark room. If there is any sign of the borer in your grain spread it out, they will crawl forth and hide in the chinks of the barn, whence they may be driven by smoke or other simple means. Therefore, you must be exceedingly careful to keep your granaries clean, for in dust and filth will the weevil thrive. There is yet another point in connection with this insect nuisance. It gives us a warning never to buy our seed by bulk alone, for the borer hollows the seed, leaving it full in bulk, but about one-third of its original weight.

AN OLD COUNTRY MAN.

Glanford, June 28, 1864.

DO CROWS DO MORE HURT THAN GOOD?—MESSRS. EDITORS.—This morning a raid of these voracious birds made a dash at our cornfield and pulled up 300 hills before I knew it was up, notwithstanding the precaution I had taken to supply the field with scare-crow lines. The advocates for the deceitful crows plead that their services in destroying noxious animals will more than compensate for the damage they do in the corn-field. It is true that they are great gluttons and devour with voracity every small animal that they can eat, and among the variety, they seize upon not only the noxious animals of a larger size, but devour without mercy the smaller creeping, friendly animals, and what is worse the savage, unrelenting depredators glut themselves upon the eggs and young of all our beautiful, friendly birds. These birds, not the crows, are the devourers of the smaller insects that lay waste our incipient garden and field plants, while the gross feeding crows do not notice the little insects, but leave them to supply the "creeping things" and little birds with their appropriate food. I think the injury the crows do will overbalance all their good works. If crows were as harmless as they are intelligent and beautiful, they would rank with the most noble of the bird creation. But the crow is one of the most shrewd robbers belonging to the feathered tribe, and by his strategy he will summon his band and make a dash at a corn-field with as much expedition and as unexpectedly as Gen. Jackson or the leaders of guerilla bands did upon their enemies.—SILAS BROWN, in *New England Farmer.*

THE WEEVIL.—IMPORTANT TO FARMERS.—The Editor of the *Akron Beacon* states that he has been informed, by the proprietor of the City Mills, of that place, that the farmers of Vermont are in the habit of checking the depredations of the weevil by the following simple plan:—

"The next season after it makes its appearance, they go through their wheat fields, about the time the wheat is stooling or heading, immediately after a shower or while the dew is on it, and scatter newly-slaked lime broadcast, so that it will adhere to the heads and stems of the grain. They use about a bushel to the acre. Good lime should be secured, and slacked by sprinkling a little water over it, so as to retain all its strength. The remedy has, it is said, been so effectually tried, as to leave no doubt of the result. Strips of large wheat fields, left untouched by the lime, for experiment, have been entirely destroyed by the weevil, while the grain on each side was all saved."

BRS.—Housekeepers not desirous of being carried out of the world by bugs, will be glad to learn that they do not stand hot alum water. Take two pounds alum, bruise it, and reduce it to powder; dissolve it in three quarts of water; let it remain in a warm place till the alum is dissolved. The alum water is to be applied, by means of a brush, to every joint and crevice. Brush the alum to the crevices in the floor, whitewash the ceiling, putting in plenty of alum, and there will be an end to their dropping thence.—*Country Gentleman.*