THE FARMER AND MECHANIC,

Devoted to Agricultural, Horticultural, Mechanical, and Domestic Subjects.

Vol. I. TORONTO, CANADA WEST, APRIL, 1849. No. 7.

SPRING WORK.

PLOUGHING.

This is the most important branch of farm labour, and to execute it with neatness, and upon correct principles, are points not easily attained, unless the ploughman be early trained to the business. The great point to be aimed at is to turn a well-proportioned furrow, and to have the whole mass cleanly and regularly inverted to a uniform depth and width, and each furrow made to rest upon its fellow in a certain angle of inclination. The angle that presents the largest surface of newly-turned soil to the action of the atmosphere is doubtless the one that should be preferred, if the character of the implement employed will admit of its being done. That angle being forty-five degrees, will require a furrow to be, as its width is to its deph, in the proportion that nine is to six inches. A six by nine-inch furrow, when all things are considered, is the best for spring work; but it may be increased or diminished in depth, to suit the character and condition of the soil, and to adapt it to the particular crop intended to be cultivated. Straightness of furrow imparts a finish to ploughing, which, if not indispensible to give an abundant return in harvest, will be found at least creditable to both the ploughman and the proprietor of the farm. In performing this branch of labour, the old maxim should be observed, that "what is worth doing, is worth doing well." It is too much the custom of the ploughmen of this country to slight their work, the main object being to go over a great breadth of ground, within a short space of time. One good ploughing is better than three done in a slovenly manner. When land is well ploughed, the furrow-laps will be so completely closed, that the inverted grasses and roots of weeds will, in due time, undergo decomposition, by being excluded from the action of the atmosphere; whereas, on the contrary, bad ploughing only invigorates noxious weeds and *couch* grass to grow; and thus, in due course of time, the crops will be destroyed by them.

As soon as the frost is out of the ground, which will doubtless be the case by the time this number reaches the subscribers, the business of breaking up grass land, or old sward, may be advantageously engaged in. This work can at no period be better done than very early in the spring, as it will require a much less draft or power to execute it, and it may be performed many days before other portions of the farm are ready to be ploughed. Instead of reserving old, worn out meadows and pastures for generations, as is still the practice in many cases in England, it is decidedly better to plough them up, and, in their turn, put such land under a course of cropping. Three or four years, at the farthest, is as long as land can be occupied with the cultivated grasses, and even so long a period as this is too great for clover. The crops that can with much certainty be sown upon an inverted clover *ley*, or sward, are oats, peas, Indian corn, and flax. If peas and flax be sown, it will be found, as soon as the crops are removed off the ground, that, with two ploughings, it may be put into as good condition for autumn wheat as if it had been regularly summer-fallowed. The same applies to the Indian corn ground, only with greater force, as the horse-hoeings and ploughings given the land, for the purpose of eradicating the weeds, and imparting a vigorous growth to the corn crop, would abundantly clean and prepare the soil for wheat, so that simply a seed furrow would be all that would be required for the wheat plants, after the removal of the corn. The only objection to this system is the liability of the corn crop being damaged by early autumn frosts. By planting early varieties, this may be obviated, to a great extent; but to get the entire crop off the ground by the 10th of September will require excellent management; and, indeed, it cannot be done in the eastern and northern portions of the Province, if the crop be cultivated to a great extent. When all