

Canadian Observations of Latin Agriculture.

In the Ontario Agricultural College herd last year, one cow produced 20,778 lbs. of milk. She is a large, beautifully-built, splendid-looking cow, pleasing to the eye from every standpoint, and a great credit to the breed. You can then imagine my chagrin when, by contrast, the first sight that met my gaze in Naples was a herd of Nanny goats, driven by a goatherd from door to door, supplying milk "while you wait" all day long. And yet, Italy has been practicing the art of agriculture since the early, early days of old, old civilization, hundreds of years before the Christian Era began, and agriculture is still the most important industry in Italy. Eighty-five per cent. of all the Italian soil is productive land. Dairying is not one of the leading lines, however, nor is any other kind of stock-raising. Oxen and asses are still the principal beasts of burden, and wine the largest crop.

And yet, the agricultural products of Italy are varied, and in the aggregate amount to a very large total. Remember that Italy is only twice the size of the State of New York, and you will realize that not much land is wasted when the following crops are produced annually:

Wheat	143,400,000 bush.
Corn	85,600,000 "
Oats	19,360,000 "
Rye and Barley	18,400,000 "
Rice	26,000,000 "
Other Cereals	18,000,000 "
Total Cereals	310,760,000 "

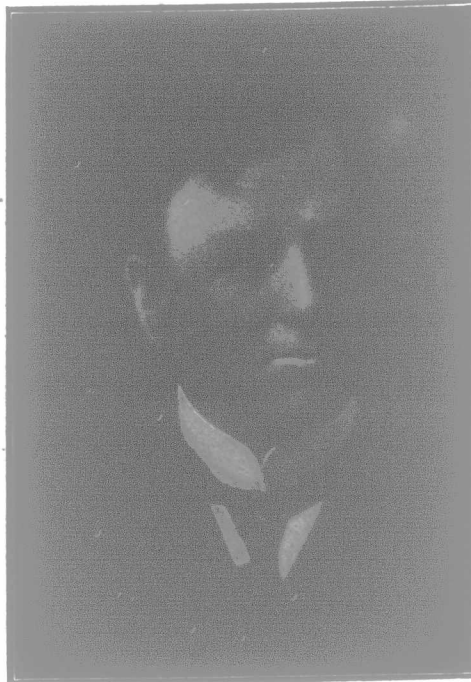
Potatoes	19,360,000 bush.
Hemp	111,000,000 lbs.
Flax	30,000,000 "
Cotton	22,000,000 "
Tobacco	7,250,000 "
Olive Oil	74,500,000 gals.
Wine	666,000,000 "

But, like the Swiss and the French, the peasant people are a frugal, thrifty race, and while the rich eat wheat bread, the work-people are content with bread made from corn and rye.

LEGUMES EVERYWHERE.

In looking about, to find out how the fertility of the soil was maintained in districts where live stock was not common, and hence farm manure was far from plentiful, I noticed that everywhere leguminous crops (or pulse) were the rule. I also discovered that in some form it was eaten every day by rich and poor alike. All the time I was in Italy I never once sat down to a dinner without being served with peas, or beans, or lentils, or some other variety of leguminous annual. I found also that the poorer classes consumed large quantities of pulse, it being used to a large extent as a substitute for meat. Where the Irishman finds his balanced ration in potatoes and pork; the Englishman, in bread and cheese; the Scotchman, in oatmeal and milk; so the Italian rests content with macaroni and pulse, and the land gets the benefit in restored fertility.

BY G. C. CREELMAN.



G. C. Creelman, B.S.A., M.S.
President Ontario Agricultural College.

FRANCE.

"A little land well tilled" seems to be the rule with the farmers of France. That the policy is a good one, seems also to be worked out in practice, for in the past fifty years, while the increase in cereal acreage has been only 25%, the increase of cereals produced has been 70%, showing an increase of one-third in the productions of the soil.

SHEEP.

Sheep are a very important factor in the agricultural development of France. The Agricultural College at Grignon, near Paris, recognizing the value of sheep to the land, started careful breeding experiments with this class of live stock. Nearly 60 years ago the Merino was crossed with the English Leicester, and a breed established known as the Dishley-Merino. This sheep is now found everywhere in France, and I saw one ram that had just been sold for \$460.00. Individual lambs are given personal attention at Grignon. When twins are born, one is always taken from the mother and placed in "The Nursery." Here "The Orphans" all feed from a common rack of bottles, ten in a set. This ingenious contrivance saves a lot of time in feeding, and seems to please the youngsters very much. These little fellows were given barley-meal and linseed-cake very early.

CATTLE IN FRANCE.

The French are not clever in the breeding of cattle, and the common practice of using oxen for work purposes has seriously interfered, and still materially interferes, with the production of draft horses. There are, however, a very large number of good hackney horses, of carriage size but saddle type. These have been bred for war, and the breeding is kept up for the same purpose. Good sound mares are distributed by the Government among the militia officers throughout the country, who are not in active service, and after three years, for one-third their value, such mares may be purchased outright by said officers and used for breeding purposes. The practice has helped France and Switzerland to keep in the country a splendid lot of breeding mares.

SWINE.

In France the swine industry is also an important one. The Berkshire-Yorkshire cross seemed a popular one. Two-months-old pigs of such breeding sold readily for \$8.00 apiece. I saw a litter of seven, mixed black and white, still "suckers," sold for \$56.00. Pure-bred pigs of the same age brought \$20.00 each, and gilts, eight to ten months, from \$30.00 to \$40.00. All young pigs, not intended for breeding purposes, were either speyed or castrated as sucklings, the males at five weeks and the females at three weeks old.

CROPS.

In France the principal farm crops are:

- (1) Wheat, oats, rye and barley.
- (2) Corn, potatoes and hemp.
- (3) Madder, tobacco, saffron and hops.

Tobacco is monopolized by the Government, and yields a gross revenue of \$75,000,000, but from this must be deducted the cost of manufacture and cultivation.

HORSEFLESH.

Possibly the greatest shock I received during my summer trip abroad was when I visited the municipal abattoirs in Geneva, Switzerland. I had obtained permission to go through the plant, and was advised to make my visit on a certain Thursday morning early. I did so, and arriving outside the killing-rooms, I beheld a number of horses tied by their halters and standing in a row. I supposed that they had been ridden in by the drovers, and would be ridden out again later in the day. Not so. That was their last trip, for in a few minutes they were led in one by one, knocked on the head, and treated exactly as "dumb driven cattle." The meat was sold openly on the market as horseflesh, at beef prices, and in no way was any effort made to pass it off as anything but horse meat. To a Canadian farmer, however, who had been brought up to regard horses as friends, and cattle as food, it was a distinct shock. The animals themselves were not old or worn-out, but were mostly comparatively young animals, that had gotten sore feet or strained tendons, and were, therefore, worth more on the butcher's block than in saddle or harness. Pound for pound, live weight, they brought about as much on the market as second-class steers, or rather more than "canners."

CONCLUSION.

In general, I would offer the following comparison between Latin and Canadian farming, while asking the reader to keep in mind the fact that my Southern European trip was hurried, and, therefore, a casual one:

- (1) The Italian or French peasant would keep fat himself and keep a large family on the wastes and leaks of the average Canadian farmer.
- (2) The Canadian farmer would give up business rather than have to put up with the great lumbering oxen and small pokey donkeys that do most of the farm work in these countries.
- (3) The Latin farmer cultivates every foot of his land, has no fence corners, stumps, stones, or other encumbrances on his land.
- (4) Many of our Canadian, or, at least, Ontario, farmers too often plow around and harrow around and mow around and rake around and drive around stone piles that should never have been placed on good land, in the centers of cultivated fields.
- (5) The amount of hand labor performed on the farms in Italy, France, Switzerland, and even England, is remarkable, when viewed by a Canadian who has wrestled with the "No-hired-help" problem. Now I shall test the credulity of your readers. In Italy I actually saw farmers, dozens of them, spading fields for wheat. (That I may keep some shred of my reputation for veracity, please, Mr. Editor, do not put this in your Winnipeg edition.) The rank and file of the farmers know nothing of improved agricultural implements.

May I be allowed to say, in conclusion, that while I found Italy too cold in April, and France too hot in May, and England too wet in June, Canada seemed just right when I arrived home in July.



The Great Lumbering Oxen.