

AGRICULTURAL.

[FOR THE BEE.]

MR. EDITOR,

SIR,—I need not inform you of the general failure that has again taken place in the potatoe crop. Of this you have undoubtedly been already apprised, as the subject is one of vast importance, not only to the farmer but also to the mechanic and merchant, for all are more or less injured in consequence. The failure is not with us only; the accounts from various parts of the Province are truly deplorable—in many places whole fields are without a plant. But it is not my intention at present, neither is it necessary to dwell much on this part of the subject, but to lay before the public a number of facts which evidently go far to show that the cause of failure is in the seed.

Mr. — prepared a field for potatoes, in which the ploughing, manuring, and preparation in every manner was equally the same. The field was all planted in one day, with seed taken from two different cellars, the consequence of which was a total failure of one kind while the other grew well.

Many other instances have come under my observation where the whole field underwent one uninterrupted sameness in tillage; but being planted with two different qualities of seed, one part failed while the other succeeded.

Last Spring potatoes were sold by a person in this district to a number of his neighbours, with which they planted a portion of their fields, and the result was a total failure, while seed obtained from other cellars—planted at the same time, and in the same field, grew well. These facts fully confirm my assertion, that the primary cause of failure is in the seed. Other instances equally forcible might be mentioned, but from a reluctance to be too lengthy I shall forbear.

Some perhaps, are ere now ready to ask "why does the potatoe not grow now as well as formerly?" This I consider no difficult question to answer. It is well known that the seasons of late years have been much shorter than formerly—the potatoes have been at least ten days later planted than they were in previous seasons, and generally as much sooner gathered in the fall. In this case they evidently could not have come to maturity; and it is well known that unripe vegetables will not keep. In this state they are put into cellars in large heaps, where they heat and ferment, and consequently lose their growing properties—although retaining externally a sound appearance until deposited in the ground.

Where only a portion of the crop has failed, the vacancies may with success, be filled up with plants taken from those parts, or from other fields, that have succeeded. Experienced agriculturists say that the potatoe can safely be transplanted; and where the seed grows well there are generally more plants than are necessary. But where the failure is total, it would be much safer to prepare the field for turnip seed, than venture a second crop of potatoes, which would have all the chances of the first seed to fail.

At present, I shall conclude by pointing out the fallacy of some of the absurd notions that are entertained, respecting the cause of failure in the potatoe crop.

Some have urged that the cause is in the air. But has the atmosphere become changed from what it was formerly? This evidently cannot be the case, as Nature is a fixed and unalterable system. But even if we were to allow that the atmosphere had undergone a change, this could not affect the potatoe, it being protected by a covering of soil. Others

have urged that the effects of lightning has caused the failure. That lightning when coming in contact with the potatoe would destroy it, I admit; but why should this vegetable experience its effects more than others? I have also heard it remarked by some, that the seed was destroyed by worms—they have dug the potatoe up, and found it containing large quantities of small worms. But why are they surprised at this? Where would they expect to find such insects if not in putrid substances? Not a few imagine that they can trace the cause of failure to the soil; they affirm that seed which grows on one soil will not grow on another. Instances of this I have myself observed, and it is to be attributed to the different qualities of the soils, as seed will frequently grow when planted in a moist soil, that would in many cases fail when planted in a dry one, and vice versa.

Yours, &c.

July 7th, 1835.

MELVILLE.

From the American Gardener's Magazine.

ON THE CULTIVATION OF THE GOOSEBERRY.

After enumerating a number of varieties, which are popular in England, and have received prizes at the exhibition, Mr. Walker says—

"Upon gooseberry bush a snail I found;
For always snails near sweetest fruit abound."

The propagation of this well known genus is by suckers taken from the old plants, by layers, or by cuttings, the last of which is the best, as the cuttings generally form much better roots; the best time to cut the roots is in October or April; the cuttings should be taken from bearing branches, and should be from eight to ten inches long; plant them in a border of good light earth exposed to the morning sun, leaving two eyes above the top of the soil; if both eyes start, rub one of them off, leaving the strongest, which should be trained upright to form a regular stem; they should be watered if the weather proves dry. The bushes should be transplanted, into the places where they are designed to remain, the third year; the soil should be rich and light, in a free, open exposure; they should never be planted in the shade of other trees. An English writer on this fruit remarks, "In pruning these shrubs, common gardeners are apt to make use of garden shears, observing only to cut the head round, as is practised in evergreens, &c., whereby the branches become so much crowded, that what fruit is produced never grows to half the size it would do were the branches thinned and pruned according to rule."

I fully agree with the writer; pruning should be done with a knife, removing such shoots as cross each other or give the bush an unsightly appearance; some of the strong young shoots should be left every year, and a part of the old wood cut out; if proper attention is paid to pruning, the greater part of the wood in the bushes, at any time, will be only two years old, which will give much larger fruit than the old wood. I prefer leaving the shoots their full length; some persons cut them to six or eight eyes, but as this increases the number of new shoots, the air, so necessary for the well-doing of the plant, is prevented from circulating through the bush, and the fruit thereby becomes small and mildewed. Little good can be done with the gooseberry without judicious pruning; and with it, and the aid of a little manure, and digging up the soil once every year, much fine and delicious fruit may be obtained. Strewing a little air-slacked lime over the beds every year, about the first of May, is very beneficial. Plant the bushes in rows eight feet apart, and six feet apart in the rows keeping them clear of weeds.

On this the conductors remark—

The above paper by Mr. Walker will, we hope, be the means of greatly extending the Gooseberry. From prejudice, or from very little fine fruit having been seen in our market, they seem to be but very little esteemed for the dessert, and less cultivated than almost any of the eatable berries which are produced in every garden. The best varieties, when perfectly matured, are extremely rich, and high flavored. In England this fruit has been brought to a high state of perfection; the temperate and humid climate of several districts, seems admirably adapted to them. In Lancashire, where the greatest number of new varieties have been obtained, it is cultivated in greater perfection than any part of Britain. Many of these sorts have been introduced into this country, and although they have not come up to the size they have attained in England, yet they have been grown sufficiently large and fine to recommend them to general cultivation. Mr. Walker has twice received the premium of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society for the largest and finest varieties; his hints on pruning are highly valuable, and we would recommend a careful perusal of his communication; the sorts he enumerates, are nearly all to be had in this vicinity.

RAINY DAYS.—How much time is thrown away by some farmers when the weather will not permit them to work out doors. And how well this time might be improved! There are many days and hours of wet weather in a year, in which it is impossible to do any work on the farm, and when these are lost, as they are to many farmers of my acquaintance, they amount to a considerable sum. "Time is money" as my grandfather used to say; and further "Take care of the pence and the pounds will take care of themselves."

Now if this is good advice in money matters, it will surely apply to economy in time, to those hours and half days when rain drives under cover.

Well, how are the hours to be best improved? I will tell you, my brother farmers. Get yourselves a set of carpenters' tools, and make a work-bench, and if you can plane a board and drive a nail, you will find enough to occupy all your spare time.

The tools will cost but five or six dollars—such as are most necessary, and then you will be able to keep all your out-buildings, and many of your farming implements in good repair. If your barn or stable door break down, mend it immediately the first rainy day. If a board is loose, put a nail in it or replace it. If you want any plain, useful kitchen furniture, such as pine tables, benches &c. take those occasions to make them. But it is unnecessary to multiply the things that might be repaired in such times. Every farmer that looks around him (if he is not in the habit of so doing) will find the wood work on his place lamentably out of repair.—*Genesee Farmer.*

MANAGEMENT OF PIGS.—The following experiment was made by a gentleman of Norfolk. Six pigs of the Norfolk breed, and of nearly equal weight were put to keeping at the same time, and treated the same as to food and litter for about seven weeks. Three of them were left to shift for themselves as to cleanliness; the other three were kept as clean as possible by a man employed for the purpose with a curry comb and brush. The last consumed in seven weeks fewer peas by five bushels, than the other three; yet they weighed more when killed by two stone and four pounds (thirty six pounds) upon an average, or six stone twelve pounds upon the whole.