

Abolition of the "National Seed Shop" at Washington.

Our American exchanges are in ecstasies over the extinction of what has long been a serious matter of complaint with them, viz.: the seed distributing department of the Bureau of Agriculture at Washington. From all accounts there has been much abuse connected with this department in times past. One of our United States contemporaries in eulogizing the new Commissioner for his action in this direction, says, he has "abolished one of the most unfair, corrupt and useless parasites that ever sucked blood from the treasury." This may be all true. Our American confreres are better judges than we are as to the way this thing has been worked, yet we venture a doubt whether the policy of "reforming it altogether," might not have been wiser than that of abolishing it altogether. If Government, as such, is to keep up an Agricultural Bureau with a view to promoting the great foundation interest of a country, then it seems to us that the trial and introduction of new seeds or foreign varieties of old, familiar seeds, is a most important part of its work, and one of the most useful directions in which it can exert itself for the general good. To test and distribute new seeds is costly, and attended with risk. Hence it is not likely to be done at private expense. The gain of a single new plant, such as the sorghum, which, if we mistake not, was introduced by the seed department of the U.S. Agricultural Bureau, is of immense value to a country. Out of this a new industrial interest has grown, and a valuable article of commerce has been added to the marketable commodities of the land. Reform in the way of abolishing institutions is cheap and easy; not so the correction of abuses that may have crept in. It is a noteworthy fact, that while our American neighbours are congratulating themselves, and praising their new Commissioner because he has, to use the classic language of the *American Agriculturist*, "bust up the great National Seed Shop," we in this country are urging our Bureau of Agriculture to make itself useful, among other ways, in obtaining and distributing new and valuable seeds. While freely admitting that such a line of operation may be so pursued as to be of no practical benefit, we cannot help thinking that, well managed, it may be extremely beneficial. Perhaps it is less needful in the United States for Government to do anything of the sort, from the fact that the country is a very extensive one, while the people are always on the *qui vive* for novelties. Private enterprise can, under such circumstances, more safely engage in ventures of importation. But even in this direction our neighbours do not escape from imposition. Novelties of the most worthless description are constantly being introduced by editorial puffery and skilful advertising, so that in many instances little fortunes are made before the test of a single season has been brought to bear. Interested parties generally hold back their novelty until they have a sufficiently large stock to make it a paying affair, whether the public is benefited or no. But it would be very foolish on this account to abolish all seed stores and nurseries. And even so, we venture to think, it is hardly wise to sing psalms of joy over the extinction of a concern, which, however, badly managed heretofore, might have been made, if in skilful, conscientious, and competent hands, a wide-spread public blessing.

Implement Catalogue.

We have received from R. H. Allen & Co., of New York, their newly-published Catalogue of Implements, Machinery and Hardware: a voluminous and copiously illustrated publication of 272 pages. It is a perfect *vade mecum* of farm requisites, and also contains a great variety of things not specially pertaining to agricultural use. Not only are all the staple and familiar farming tools enumerated in this

goodly volume, but recent inventions and novelties are also to be found in it. A price list is forwarded along with the catalogue, so that purchasers have all needful information supplied them in print, thereby rendering letters of enquiry needless.

We shall mention a few out of the multiplicity of articles comprised in this trade list, advertizing chiefly to such things as we suppose our readers may possibly like to know of. Among a great variety of ploughs, we observe sub-soilers of different sizes and prices, from a light one-horse kind, working from six to ten inches deep, at \$8, to a heavy article for four oxen, working from fourteen to eighteen inches deep. Every farmer who has a third horse or an extra team should keep a subsoil plough following the surface plough. We note also, under this head, side-hill ploughs of a good pattern, shovel-ploughs and prairie ploughs.

Cultivators in great variety are here represented. Let horticulturists make a memorandum of "Harrington's Hand Cultivator," price \$9, a nice little implement for going between rows of garden vegetables, strawberries, &c.; and let farmers who would like to mingle ease and dignity with hard work, dot down as a farm luxury the "Sulky Cultivator," price \$75.

Hand seed sowers of several makes are advertised: the best among them, the "Wethersfield Seed Sower," is for sale in this city, by J. Fleming & Co. A novelty under this head is worthy the attention of the farming public, "Cahoon's Broadcast Sower," price \$10. It sows with regularity so much seed per acre, as graduated, is suspended from the neck, and worked with a crank. Horse-power seed sowers are also offered, some with guano attachment, others with grass seed attachment, and one sowing grass seed and plaster at one operation.

The Hay Tedder, price \$100, is an implement concerning which too much cannot be said in commendation. It shakes up the newly cut grass, and weathers it evenly in double quick time. It is the fitting companion of the mowing machine.

Potato harvesters are offered from the cheap potato plough, price \$10, to the "Empire Harvester" price \$125.

Wind-mills with self-regulating attachment; horse-powers for from one to eight horses; dog or sheep powers, by which useless canines and pet lambs may be made to do the churning themselves; cleaners, hullers, corn shellers, smut machines, bark and cob crushers; fan, farm, and flour mills; cotton gins, saw mills, mortising, boring, and shingle-making machines; sugar evaporators, farm boilers, sausage meat cutters and fillers, graters, fodder and vegetable cutters, apple and grape mills for cider and wine making, apple parers, jack screws, hay presses, cheese pressers, churns, brick-making machines, mangles, scales, refrigerators, freezers, grindstones, belting, packing, vanes, draining tools, ice tools, garden implements; are among the contents of these well-filled pages.

Among vehicles here offered, a dumping farm wagon is a great convenience, and one that ought to come into general use, as one of the best labor-saving contrivances a farmer can have about him. The Patent Cow Milker, not long since illustrated and described in our columns, is for sale by this firm. A capital dynamometer, for testing the draft of ploughs and harvesting machines, is here offered at \$25, a great reduction on the cost of the old country article.

In thus running over a few points in this catalogue, while we may be doing the house that issues it a service, we conceive that we are rendering a greater service to our readers, and the country at large. We are much indebted to American inventors and manufacturers for labor-saving contrivances, of which it is our wisdom to procure and use as many as possible.

It only remains to add, that parties wishing a copy of this Catalogue must remit one dollar, American currency, to R. H. Allen & Co., 189 and 191 Water Street, New York. The figures we have quoted from the price list, are of course, all in United States currency.

Manufacture of Beet-root Sugar in England.

THE feasibility of manufacturing sugar from the beet in England, is likely to be put to the test very shortly. An enterprising London sugar refiner, Mr. James Duncan, has engaged to put up a factory on condition that the adjacent farmers grow a certain quantity of the beets. The condition has been complied with, the Lavenham Farmers' Club having engaged to cultivate 200 acres. The *Mark Lane Express* appears to be sanguine as to the result. In reporting the action of the above-mentioned club, that respectable journal shows that in France the yield of beet-root sugar has increased from 4,800 tons in 1827, to 132,000 tons in 1860, with a further increase since; that large quantities of this product are sent to England, and compete in the market with the West India article; that the climate of England is every way favorable to beet culture; that twenty tons of sugar beet, a moderate average yield, will bring £18, while thirty tons of mangolds, also a fair average yield, are only worth from ten to thirteen guineas, and that in addition to this gain there is considerable value about the refuse after it has gone through the press, for feeding purposes. On these and like grounds, our able contemporary augurs the success of the experiment.

One fact stated in connection with the matter, would seem to encourage the belief that the Canadian climate is eminently adapted to the cultivation of the sugar-beet, and that in this country a large percentage of saccharine substance would be contained in the crop; it is, that below forty-five degrees of latitude the plant does not yield enough saccharine to answer the purpose of sugar-making, and that the higher the latitude above forty-five, the larger the proportion of saccharine, so that in Russia as high an average as fourteen per cent. is obtained. We have had our doubts as to beet-root sugar being a profitable manufacture in this country, but various facts have led us to look somewhat more hopefully upon it, and we should very much like to see the question subjected to the ordeal of thorough experiment.

The Marsh Harvester

Our readers may remember that we last year gave a brief notice of a new reaping machine, called the "Marsh Harvester," which was coming into great favor amongst our neighbours, more particularly in the Western States. Besides several subordinate advantages which this reaper appears to possess, its chief distinctive feature is the provision made for facilitating the binding of the grain. The machine is provided with a platform, on which one, or if necessary, two men can stand, and receiving the grain as it passes from the sickle on an endless apron, bind it at once, thus saving themselves all the labor of walking, and to a great extent the fatigue of stooping. It is obvious, also, that by this arrangement, not only is labor saved to a considerable extent, but much of the unavoidable scattering of the grain attendant on the usual method of binding is avoided. The advantages which this reaper claims are indeed so obvious, that it only requires to be shown that it actually does its work well to secure for it a preference over any other reaper now in use. The increasing number that have been sold in the United States is, we think, satisfactory evidence on this head. Our previous account of this invention will be found in the August number of the CANADA FARMER for 1867, Page 227, Vol. 4. We have repeatedly received enquiries where this machine could be procured, and have hitherto been obliged to refer our correspondents to the American makers or agents. We are now, however, able to direct them to a Canadian manufacturing firm for all necessary information, and for a supply of this new reaper. The Messrs. Paxton, Tate & Co.,