

Utilizing Burnt Land.

The devastating fires in the woods, and especially those in the swamps, naturally lead us to consider what course of operations can be adopted to utilize those tracts of land so burnt over. I was a sufferer to a considerable extent from such fires; and knowing a neighbour of mine, who lived a few miles away, had also suffered a few years since in a similar manner, I determined to pay him a visit and learn his experience and remedy.

My friend was an intelligent North of Ireland man, and well-to-do in the world. I told him my errand, and I begged him, after hearing what I had to say, to tell me all particulars of his own experience from beginning to end. He said in reply, that after he had paid for his present farm, and one for each of his sons, he purchased an adjoining 30 acre piece, which was valuable only for its timber. He had paid a large price for it, and never could account for the fire getting into it and destroying the timber so completely. He said, when relating the particulars, "When I examined the lot after the fire was subdued, more from want of light combustible fuel to destroy than by any act of our own, for we were powerless to arrest its progress, I felt very low spirited at having sustained such a heavy loss. The land was covered with a heavy growth of pine, cedar, and other swamp timber. This piece had cost me nearly \$16 an acre, and was, as I supposed, valuable only for its timber; in fact, I would not have taken twenty dollars an acre for it, as the fences were getting bad on all three of our farms, and we had no other source from which to replace them. After the fire, myself and my sons walked over the lot, and agreed that as it was of no use 'crying over spilt milk,' we would think no more about it. We therefore turned our faces homeward, and I did not visit that wilderness of timber and ashes for twelve months. The land was perfectly covered with fallen timber, lying 'criss-cross' every way, and in some places piled up several feet high.

"About the same time next year my youngest son came running to me to say that the fire had again got into our swamp. It originated, he said, from a camp of Indians who lived close by. There was a strong wind blowing at the time. I examined the fire, and found it had by that time got great headway, and was burning furiously. The dry logs and half consumed stumps, now like tinder, caught and blazed up twenty to thirty feet high, a perfect mass of flame unquenched by the strong breeze. I saw at once it would be useless and impossible to even try to stop the fire, and consoled our minds with the idea that all the mischief was done that could be done; and as we could not put it out, we would let it burn without trying to do so. We went carefully all round the

edge, and removed all dangerous logs that might cause destruction to our fences, and in some cases the fences themselves were removed. Next morning the fire was almost down, and a smart shower of rain effectually extinguished the remainder. We now concluded to examine the results, and found the fire had nearly cleared 30 acres of land; the stumps even were so much burnt that they stood up like 'crabs' on their toes, and many of them could be pushed over, and almost all could be jerked out by oxen, and, in fact, by cutting a log here and there, and chunking up some brands, the land would be well cleared. The swamps at that season of the year would bear cattle well, and we were soon jerking out stumps, not a difficult job when we consider they were only held by the points of a few roots. After all was done, and a black job it was, I had a tract of 30 acres all cleared of swamps, with a few exceptions. A neighbour, a Welshman, advised me to sow *Cocksfoot*, *Timothy* and *Blue Grass*, at once. I did so, and after cutting a few drains I next year had—what I have found by experience to be—a far more valuable field, acre for acre, than the best piece on my farm, or any farm adjoining in that neighbourhood."

The above short history of a remedy applied to a great misfortune, may perhaps be useful to many.

I myself have a lot of nearly 160 acres similarly circumstanced, as before stated, and am determined to follow my old friend's plan, and after completing the clearing, cutting a few drains, sow it with *Timothy*, *Cocksfoot*, and *Blue Grass*, and am sure shall thus realize full value for my loss of timber, or at least shall utilize the land after the loss is sustained.

C. L.

Talk with Farmers.

DITCHING.

"How are things progressing on the Government Road Settlement?"

"Oh, well. Our crops have been excellent; but our young people have lately had their minds a good deal unsettled by my son's return from California and British Columbia. His accounts were so glowing, and he was so free with his money (although a careful fellow) that the rest of the young folks can hardly be persuaded to stay at home and work quietly."

"How did the field turn out you were about to ditch?"

"It did nothing the first and second years. It was one mass of strawberry plants when it was dry, and there was a great swale right across the hundred acres; so that with foulness of the dry peat, and the flooded state of the wet, I did not realize any sort of profit, and hardly expenses, from my crop; so that although it was rented land, I determined to drain it, and I did so."

"Did you tile drain it?"

"No; I ditched it, and made a real good job. I always ditch with the plough and scraper. My boys don't like to work in the wet; neither do I; so we watch for a dry time, and then put in the plough with a good strong team. We plough out as much as we

can, and then get scrapers to work, each with a team. We take out the loose soil with the scraper, and remove it to low places, so that we both ditch and raise depressed places at the same time, and fill up runs and gullies where they are not wanted. After going over the ground once, and removing all that the plough has moved, we plough again, and again scrape out. I never leave steep sides to my ditches; but prefer depressions in the ground; and for that purpose, wherever it wants it, we cross the ditch with the scrapers, as well as go lengthways. This saves future trouble, and all danger to sheep or cattle or horses, by getting on their backs in the ditch, and so being lost. Besides, I find that I get better grass in the slope than in the flat, and it all bears a heavy crop, except in just the water way, and when I put it into grain it bears a splendid crop right down to the water furrow in the bottom. Moreover when I do it in this way, I can always plough across the ditch if I want, and take it altogether it is a much better plan."

"Well, but how about the economy of it? You must move so much earth that it must cost more than common ditching?"

"No; it does not. A pair of horses with a good scraper will move an immense deal in a day, and besides can put it just where it is wanted; but if I ditch with the spade, the earth can only be thrown out on each bank as far as a man can heave it; and if you want it to go further you must cart it, and then you have to move it all again, so that it is twice the labour it would otherwise be. And besides all this, myself and my boys think it a deal the best plan for the horses to do the hard dirty work, rather than ourselves."

"But you cannot go deep enough in this way?"

"Yes, I can. I have in other places made ditches three and even four feet deep through rising ground; and although they are wider than the actual flow of the water requires, yet I find the profit of it in other ways."

"How long was the ditch in question across the 100 acres?"

"It was fully sixty rods long; it averaged two feet deep, and was wide enough for the team all through; it was well sloped at the sides, so that it can never founder with frost or be trodden in by cattle, or fill up in any way; and it only took us three days to finish it—three men and two horses, with plough and scraper."

"Did it answer well?"

"Yes, capitally; and this year I have a splendid crop, and good promise for future years. I have all the hollows near by filled up, have got rid of the strawberries and other weeds, and now have a fine field instead of a piece of rough pasture, that was a scandal to the farm. This is not the first work of the kind I have done either for myself or others, and I have always succeeded well, and the work done in this way has given the best of satisfaction. You will