

"Grasses Worthy of Culture."

To the Editor of THE CANADA FARMER.

Sir,—In the number of THE FARMER for the 1st March, under the above heading, are mentioned several grasses which are already widely cultivated, and have been thoroughly tested, such as Timothy, Orchard-grass, Kentucky Blue-grass, and Red-top, meaning by the last, I presume, *Agrostis Vulgaris*, a common and very valuable grass, spread over hills and vales, forming a soft, dense turf.

But are there not some others at least worthy of experimental culture, as *Poa Serotina*, *Meadow Red-top*, or *Fuel Meadow*, as it is called in Massachusetts, an excellent pasture and meadow grass, on low moist soils. It is somewhat surprising that reliable experiments have not been made with other indigenous grasses, as *Calamagrostis Canadensis*, or *Blue-joint*, which is much sought after in our lumbering districts. *Elymus Virginicus*, or *Wild Rye*, although a coarse-growing grass naturally, might yet be made to produce good hay. Then there is *Cinna Arundinacea*, found in shady places, and much sought after by cattle, that might, by cultivation, be made a valuable addition to our forage plants.

All these grasses should be made the subject of experiment by our young farmers, the results of which would be very interesting, and perhaps profitable, to the many readers of THE CANADA FARMER.

K.

Quebec, 14th March, 1864.

More about Lucerne.

To the Editor of THE CANADA FARMER.

Sir,—Lucerne requires a light, warm soil; poor sands and wet clays must be avoided. Land requiring winter furrows will not answer. Sow in April five to six pounds of seed and one bushel of barley per acre, both harrowed in and rolled. The lucerne requires careful weeding the first year, and after the barley is cradled, the stubble should be removed. If the land has been cropped to carrots for three years, very little weeding will be necessary. In a favourable season, it is often cut five times. Cut when the flower forms, and always the day before you feed it. Never pasture it with sheep.

COLIN D. ANDERSON.

Eglington, 26th March, 1864.

Manure Exempt from Toll.

To the Editor of THE CANADA FARMER.

Sir, I was lately engaged in a case before a Magistrate on behalf of a client who had been forced to pay toll on manure which he was drawing, and I noticed that the greatest astonishment prevailed amongst the farmers present that such loads were exempt. In conversation, too, I found that they were in the habit of paying in such cases, not being aware of the wise provision of the law. A hint from your paper might save the farmers of Canada many a penny during the year.

Brockville, March 10, 1864.

G. M.

Pedigree in Plants.

The general superiority of blooded animals, that is, those whose pedigree can be traced through families possessing marked and fixed points of excellence, is now generally conceded. It is acknowledged that an equal number of the Durhams, Devons, and Herefords, among cattle, of Merinoes, Southdowns, and Cotswolds, among sheep, etc., will, as a class, show superior qualities to the miscellaneous stock known as natives. But the same principle of superiority from breeding among plants, has not yet been as fully recognized. Yet there is abundant reason for supposing that the same law is equally prevalent in the vegetable as in the animal kingdom; that "like begets like," and that observances of this law may be turned to most profitable account by cultivators. To some extent this is acted upon, in saving the best seeds of grain and other products, but it is only recently that definite experiments have indicated how great improvement can be realized by proper and continued selection of seed. The experimental researches and success of Mr. F. F. Hallet, of Brighton, England, have already been noticed in the *Agriculturist*. New interest has been excited in this subject recently by a

meeting of a large number of the leading farmers of England, to inspect his farm and witness the progress of his operations. From year to year this gentleman has selected, not only the best heads of wheat, but the best kernels of the finest ears, and used them for seed. One of the visitors says, "two or three features in the appearance of the wheat fields forcibly struck us, namely, the extraordinary strength of the stems which enabled them to withstand a very severe storm occurring July 21st, and maintain their upright position; the uniform size of the ear, and the absence of 'under corn' (dwarfed wheat). We counted on one stool 42 ears, all of which were of the same size and as near as possible, of equal height." In reply to the question, "What was the average product of his wheat crop last year?" Mr. Hallet said he should keep far within the limits of truth in stating that the maximum was six quarters (48 bushels per acre), and the minimum four and-a-half quarters (36 bushels) per acre. He also gave three instances which had come to his knowledge of large productiveness of the improved wheat, which yielded respectively, 72 bushels, 62 bushels, and 60 bushels per acre.—Now what has been done in England, can be repeated here. No one can fix the limits to which productiveness may be carried by following out similar experiments. May we not hope in a few years to find improved "breeds" of wheat, of corn, and other cereals in this country, as well marked, as are the established strains of horses and cattle?—*American Agriculturist*.

Mode of Cultivating Beans.

THE ALBANY CULTIVATOR recommends the following plan of cultivation:—

"Many suppose that poor land is necessary to raise white beans—only because they will grow better on poor land than other crops. Manuring the land for them has doubled the crop. Nothing is better for them than good rich corn land. If the soil is rather heavy, an excellent way is to turn over clover-sod in spring, roll and harrow it, and plant the beans. There will be less hoeing needed, as fresh inverted sod is usually clean soil. When the soil is free from weeds, the best way is to drill in the beans, so that the drills may be about 2½ or 3 feet apart, and the seeds about 2 inches apart in the drills. If a drill cannot be had, furrow out the land, and drop the beans by nailing or tying a small tin pail to the lower end of a rod about the size of a walking stick, make a hole in the bottom large enough for the beans to pass out, and walk along shaking it over the furrow. The quantity or distance may be perfectly regulated by making the hole the right size from trial, by shaking more or less rapidly, and walking slow or fast. If the soil is weedy, plant in hills a foot and a-half apart in the row, and seven to a hill. The beans will be yellow in three months and ready for harvesting, which is done by pulling them. If the weather continues dry a few days they will soon be dry enough, if placed in small heaps. If wet weather is feared, take the bunches and place them in small stacks made around a pole driven into the ground, radiating from the centre or pole, and with either roots or tops out; these stacks may be as high as a man can easily reach, and should be built on four small sticks at the bottom, the size of stove wood, laid across, to keep the beans on the wet ground, and to allow the drying wind to blow under. When quite dry, draw out the pole and draw them to the barn, and thrash in winter."

Thin Seeding.

REV. GEO. WILKINS in a Lecture before the Royal Agricultural College, among other things spoke as follows upon this subject:

"It is not the quantity of seed, but the manner in which it is put into the ground, on which success depends. For my part were a prize offered for the largest quantity of the finest grain of either wheat or barley, or oats, and I were to contend for it, I would not use more than two pecks of any kind of wheat an acre and of very long-strawed kinds not so much; nor would I use more than 2½ pecks an acre of either barley or oats.

"But before I use the seed of any grain, I ascertain, as I can do in five or ten minutes, how many grains there are in a bushel. I do this because of wheat, for example, some seeds are nearly twice as large as others, and the same of barely and oats; and because I stint the number of seeds to given quantities of land, putting them in one by one, as Xenophon, the learned Greek, describes they should be to his disciple Socrates.

"If men would only reflect and exercise the brains they are supplied with, it would be impossible for them to put their 33 bushels an acre or 45 grains of seed-barley, and their 30 or 35 grains of wheat, on every square foot of ground, as very many do; and some even advertise their doings as if they were wonderful exploits; whereas, if it were not common, the man who should use those numbers of seeds would be considered to be insane, and probably put under the care of a keeper, or into confinement."

Flax Items.

A COMPANY has been formed in this city, who intend to put up machinery in various localities in the northern part of this State, and in Wisconsin, where a sufficient number of acres can be engaged to warrant the expense. They will, we are told, pay a fixed price for both seed and straw, or will pay so much per acre for the crop, and take all risks of failure.

At Janesville, Wis., Messrs. Mallory & Blackwell have contracted for five hundred acres of flax, for which they furnish the seed, and take the rotted straw, one of their own men overseeing the process of spreading and rotting, paying the farmers twenty dollars per acre for the use of land, labour in growing, &c.—*Prairie Farmer, Chicago*.

HAY-MOWS should always be well ventilated, and not battened or enclosed with matched boards.

FLAX is getting into extensive use in Wisconsin for manufacturing purposes. At Milwaukee there are exhibited specimens of flax white as snow, and also coloured with the most brilliant hue; calico made of fifty per cent. of flax; cotton flannel one-half flax; felted cloths, and a variety of other manufactures of which flax is a component part. As handsome an article of broadcloth is manufactured from this cottonized flax as could be desired.

VITALITY OF TIMOTHY SEED.—It reply to the enquiry, "At what age does Timothy seed lose its vitality and cease to germinate?" the *Prairie Farmer* says:—If well kept it will germinate when three or four years old or even older. Should prefer not to sow even the third year without testing it. A simple test is to place between thick cloths, kept damp, in a warm place. If good the seeds will sprout in a few days; if poor will soon mould. Do not let water collect in the vessel in which your cloths are laid. If a saucer is used it can easily be turned off.

KEEP STOCK OFF THE MEADOWS.—Many meadows are seriously injured by stock in the spring months. They are permitted to run upon them when the frost is leaving the ground, which is soft and easily cut up by the hoofs of horses and cattle. The scanty picking they get will not begin to compensate for the damage they cause the meadow. When the ground is soft, as it always is in spring, stock should be carefully excluded. It is also very bad policy to pasture meadows in the fall. Every sprig is generally eaten off, and the ground and roots are left cold and naked. If the growth after cutting the grass had been left, it would have acted as a mulching, keeping the roots warm and uninjured by the severity of winter. A good coating of aftermath laying upon the ground all winter is equivalent to a covering of snow, which all know to be highly beneficial to land.

HOVE-MADE POUDBRETTE.—A correspondent of the *Working Farmer* says:—"Instead of paying one dollar and fifty cents per barrel for poudbrette, I manufacture twenty-five barrels per year in the following manner: Under the privy I have a cemented stone vault, five feet square, and two and one-half feet deep. Into this I put six barrels of sand, two barrels of swamp-muck, one barrel of hen manure, and some forest leaves. After four months, this is taken from the vault and deposited in the hen house, where it remains, and is shovelled over frequently, until quite dry. It is then put up in barrels ready for use."

NOTE BY ED. C. F.—We have here one method of turning to good account the richest fertilizer that can be put on land. It would be better, however, to dispense with the sand. Dried muck or soil of ordinary quality will answer every purpose. If enough be put into the well or vault, and the whole mass thoroughly stirred before removal, all offensive odour will be destroyed. It is not a good plan to put the compound into the hen-house, as it would be likely to create an atmosphere injurious to the health of fowls.