

# THE ONTARIO FARMER,

A MONTHLY JOURNAL OF

Agriculture, Horticulture, Country Life, Emigration, and the Mechanic Arts.

VOL. III.

HAMILTON, MARCH, 1871.

No. 3.

## The Farm.

### HINTS FOR THE MONTH.

The present month is rather an uncertain one in this climate. Usually Winter loosens his hold very sensibly by the middle of the month, and yet he often gives us rather unpleasant reminders that his reign is by no means over. Last year the whole of March was wintry, and in the greater part of Canada sleighing lasted until the first week in April. This year the indications are for a somewhat earlier Spring, and at the date of writing this article (March 7), the season is to all appearances well nigh a month in advance of last year. Still, some sudden change in the weather may yet put us back as far as we were last Spring.

Preparations should now be made in thorough earnest for Spring work. Tools should be in perfect order; vehicles in good repair and well greased; ploughs ready to start; harrows in right trim, no teeth missing, and all sharp; harness oiled and if necessary repaired; cultivators, whippetrees, ox-yokes, dung-forks, hoes etc., all fit for use. As this month is noted for high winds, fasten everything likely to receive damage from this cause. Look after barn and stable doors, gates, loose fence boards, and the like. Working horses and oxen should be well cared for as the trying time of hard work approaches. If they can be moderately used, as well as properly looked after, they will become gradually prepared for the severe tasks before them. March is rather early for lambs in this country, especially from fine wool flocks; but it is desirable to get mutton lambs as early as possible, that they may attain a better size and be sooner ready for the butcher. Breeding ewes should be well housed, either in closed sheds or in the barn, with litter enough to preserve the fleeces clean. It is possible to keep them too close, they are the better of some ventilation. Toward the end of this month the banking may usually be removed from cellar windows, when cabbage leaves and other decaying rubbish should be cleared out; sprouts rubbed off from growing potatoes, and the interior cellar-walls whitewashed. If not done already, apples, potatoes and other roots should be carefully picked over, and

every sign of rot removed. Breeding cows ought to have regular feeds of roots: raw potatoes, carrots, mangolds, or even turnips, will do. Winter grain may be rolled if the ground becomes dry enough. This is especially necessary where the ground has been heaved by frost. It is not often that much ploughing can be done in this country during March. But on porous or well-drained land it is sometimes feasible; and our Spring is so short, that the sooner the plough starts the better. On sandy soils ploughing may begin so soon as the frost is out of the ground. But in the case of clayey or rich soils, the action of the sun is needed for a time before the ground is stirred. It will not do to plough clayey land while it is saturated with moisture. Clover seed should be sown early. It may be done best on a light snow some still morning. The seed and footsteps are then visible, helping the sower to do his work evenly, while the moisture of the melting snow hastens germination.

This is the month for making maple sugar. Our space does not admit of giving full directions concerning this process. Provide, if possible, pails instead of troughs. Do not gash the trees with an axe, but bore them over again, while gashes rarely or never heal. The flow of sap is as copious from a small hole as from a great cut. Keep everything connected with sugar-making scrupulously clean, if you desire a nice quality of sugar. Cows that come in early should be carefully attended, and their calves kept warm, especially those intended to be reared. If exposed to cold, their growth will be seriously retarded. Poultry should be allowed to get picking at the first grass, pickweed, &c., that starts. Hens inclined to sit may have eggs put under them this month, but it must be in a warm place, and the early chicks must be well looked after, or they will not live long. Bees should be set out the first warm day, that they may have a flight after their long winter confinement, and be stimulated to early breeding. Success in bee-keeping very much depends on getting hives populous by the time the honey season begins. The orchard should be inspected, and if trees have been injured by mice, or rabbits, let them be treated to a plaster of cow-dung and clayey loam, well beaten together and fastened on with an old cloth. Stable manure