

the 17th of June; the oats were the black tartarian variety, and though not ripe when I saw it, I should say the crop would reach 45 bushels per acre. It was a strong, well-headed crop, and the oats promised to be a good sample. This crop, too, was on first prairie sod, on a farm belonging to Mr. Ross, of Winnipeg, but some ten or twelve miles away from the city.

Land increases rapidly in value near to the city. For this selfsame farm Mr. Ross paid \$367; now he wants \$3,000 for it. It is 240 acres in extent, and the owner has put up a small house and a building or two on it, besides breaking up about half of the land.

The soil of Manitoba is a purely vegetable loam, black as ink, and full of organic matter, in some places many feet thick, and resting on the alluvial drift of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers. It is, of course, extremely rich in the chief elements of plant-food, and cannot easily be exhausted; the farmers know this, so they take all they can out of it in the shortest possible time, and return nothing whatever to it in the form of manure. By turning up an inch or two of fresh soil now and again, the fertility of the surface is renewed, and the same exhaustive system of growing wheat, year by year, may be pursued for a long period with impunity. It is true, in fact, that for several of the first years, at all events, manuring the soil would do much more harm than good; and, until an Act was passed to prevent it, the farmers were in the habit of getting their litter and manure out of the way by sleighing it out on the ice of the frozen rivers in winter, to be carried away somewhere when spring-time and the floods come, and the ice broken up; now they leave it to rot in heaps outside the stables, and find it an easier task to remove the stable rather than the manure, when the latter becomes unpleasantly plentiful.

In course of time it is probable that the manure will need to be put to its legitimate use of improving an exhausted soil, or maintaining the fertility of a rich one. At a still later period the operation of subsoiling will bring up new earth from below, and there does not appear to be any probability that the better soils of the Province will ever become sterile, providing that the farmers make use of the means they will always have at hand for keeping them up to the mark. At present, however, these rich wheat soils do not need improving; they are rich enough for years to come, and in some cases too rich for the welfare of the crop; much of the straw, therefore, is valueless, and really a cumber to the farmer. In the State of Minnesota I saw large quantities of it burnt to get rid of it.

The good prairie soils are known by the dwarf wild rose and the wolf-willow growing on them while still in a state of nature; at all events, the land is at once denoted good where these plants are found, though it is probable that there is good land on which they are not found. But there is a deal of inferior soil in the Province in places; this is chiefly alkaline soil, on which nothing that is profitable will grow in its present condition; in many places, too, the water is alkaline. Yet there is plenty of good water to be got in most places by boring for it, and in some instances a clear pure spring has been struck a very few feet below the surface.

It must not be supposed that the soil of Manitoba is fit only for wheat and oats. The wild grasses, it is true, are very coarse in character, and there are many weeds and worthless plants among them, yet cattle flourish on these immense plains of prairie grass. The "prairie meadows" are generally damp lands, situated near the swamps. "River lots" often stretch four miles back, and are 6, 9 or 12 chains wide, as the case may be; 6 chains at that length enclose 200 acres. The Province is not adapted to grow maize; it is too far north for that; but it will grow garden vegetables very well, and turnips and potatoes, beans and peas, in the fields with complete success, while such "tame" grasses, as timothy and the rye grasses, and also red and white clover, grow satisfactorily on land that is at all decently cultivated.

Outside the city of Winnipeg I saw a large market garden, run by a Yorkshireman named Longbottom, in which very large crops of onions, potatoes, carrots, peas, beans, tomatoes, celery, and a hundred other things, were grown in a rough-and-ready sort of a way, but very profitably. There is a good market in Winnipeg for all kinds of garden stuff, and the earliest sorts command very high prices, so that our