

a mixture of timothy and red clover in the spring of 1899, there was in the beginning of June, this year, not a sign of clover over the whole field, but on one patch; here, on a space about ten feet long by five feet broad, Alsike had taken, and, finding, probably, that either the situation agreed with it, or that the soil contained some special constituent that suited its taste, the growth of this hybrid was most luxuriant. Have any of my readers ever remarked a parallel instance? No Alsike was sown.

*Crop-reports.*—How marvellous are the crop-reports in their statements of the changes worked by the weather in the shortest space of time. It all depends upon the writer's being *bulls* or *bears*.

Only the other day, one, writing from the great wheat-growing district of the West, stated that the absence of rain this summer, has reduced the prospects of the yield of wheat in Manitoba to one-fourth of the average; for, he did not really think that there could possibly be more than fifteen bushels of wheat grown to the acre over the whole province! Now if fifteen bushels of wheat is one-fourth of the average yield, one year with another, of Manitoba, it follows that the average yield is 50 bushels an acre! Of what possible use can it be to the public that such evident nonsense should be published in a respectable paper? Sixty bushels an acre of wheat, is just double the yield of England, and five times as much as the average of the whole of the United States.

Again, a few showers fall in some districts of the Winnipeg country; to work goes the reporter—on the 4th of July, recollect,—and impresses on his readers that “The recent rains have been general all over the province and the wheat crop is experiencing a thorough reviving, which promises to make the yield fully double of what was expected by the most hopeful a week ago. The other cereals have benefited even more than wheat, and the oat, barley, and root crops will be fairly good. The grass has sprung up and the wells and streams, which were drying up, have again filled up much to the relief of live stock. Altogether the rains of the past week have saved millions of dollars to the province. This is the sum of the reports made by the local legislators.”

And all this miraculous change worked in less than a week.

Now and then, we meet with an honest correspondent from the West, as, for instance, the following, dated only four days earlier than the above:

*Weather and crops.*—The weather has been more favorable this week. The temperature has been moderate and the best rains of the season have been experienced. On Tuesday, and again on Thursday, rain fell over a wide area of country. In some districts the rain was heavy enough to afford temporary relief from the drought, but in other sections, there was not enough to materially improve the outlook. Unless the rain is followed by further good showers soon it will not help the late crops very much. Wheat is generally too far advanced to expect any great improvement in the yield from favorable weather now. Of course, the condition of the crops varies much in different sections. The best in the drought districts may give half an average wheat yield, and from that downward to lands that are a total failure. Some overly enthusiastic reports have been published as a result of the rains this week, which it would be well to receive with caution.—Winnipeg ‘Commercial,’ June 30.

That the state of the wheat-crop in the West is by no means flattering to the *bears* is pretty clear; a great many acres have been ploughed up as hopeless, particularly in North Dakota, and however favourable the weather may have been since June 30th, no great improvement can be hoped for so late in the season as that date. Spring-wheat never tillers much, and when summer once sets in, it throws up its stems to do what they can, be they few or many.

*Superstition.*—Here is one of the drollest instances of rural superstitions with which we ever met.

Mary Bellenden, writing to Lady Suffolk (*circa* 1740) about her “home-farm” and its produce, says:

“It is well known to the whole country of Kent, that I have four fat calves, two fat hogs, twelve promising black pigs, two chickens, three fine geese, with thirteen eggs under each (*several being duck-eggs, else the others do not come to maturity*); all this, with rabbits and pigeons, and carp in plenty, beef and mutton at reasonable rates. Now, Howard, if you have a mind to *stick a knife* into anything I have named, say so.”