

Agriculture.

SOME POTATO TALK.

Written for the CANADIAN FARMER by T. C. Robinson, Owen Sound, Ont.

(Continued from last week.)

Far different results greeted me on a patch of richer land, nearly as sandy, but lower and black with vegetable deposit. About twenty square rods of this, near an old log fence between two of my fields, had never been broken up, but had grown up with wild berry bushes, ragged shrubbery, and the ever present (on loose soil) wire grass. I got sick of the sight, which stretched over much more than the twenty rods, and so I put in all hands to civilize the waste. The usual digging, chopping, grunting and gee-hawing eliminated most of the stumps and brushwood, but the soil was so extra tough that a waggon-load or two had to be carted off, and then I had it planted with currants and Gregg blackcaps, in rows six feet apart, and with Chicago Market potatoes between every two rows of the currants or blackcaps. Somehow the wire grass wasn't so bad here—in fact I think on rich, moist land it grows so fast that it is softer and more easily destroyed than on dry, light land—but Canada thistles more than made up for that. I have seen thistles before, and thought I knew about them, but I found before that patch was cleared that in this direction my knowledge-box needed expansion. But we got the thistles cleaned out pretty well a few times, and the Chicago Market, being an early variety, was already wilting a stalk here and there to show that the tubers were beginning to ripen, in the dry, early part of the summer, when, passing the patch one day, I was so disgusted with the lively sprouting of the thistles again that I put in the hands to scour it out once more. Right after the work the rain came down, after the fashion it learned so well before the summer was out, and the potatoes, doubly encouraged, got up and grew right along, with the damp season that set in, till well on in the fall. The yield was good! Twenty-three bushels from the twenty rods, planted only half full, because of the intervening rows of currants and black caps, is equal to a rate of 368 bushels per acre, if the ground had been full, and the space was nearly a rod short because of a large pile of sods that had been thrown around the one henlock stump that had defied our efforts at grubbing. One corner of the patch, too, was extra dry and rocky, so that the yield must have been considerably larger with an equally fair chance all around. How much larger let my readers determine, now that they know the facts.

But I have another patch to tell about before I am done. This was old land, and pretty well worn out, before I planted it to strawberries and gave them just enough of a manure mulching to tantalize them into a vigorous effort to cover the ground with runners. The varieties were mostly Wilson, Downing and Seth Boyden. I didn't want young plants formed there, but I was short-handed and pressed for work elsewhere just when they felt the manure and began to jump. And so the patch grew by the "matted row system," in spite of me—resulting next season in the usual immense number of small, half-formed, mean-looking berries, which that system usually results in—on my land, at any rate. When spring came, in order to clean the land for strawberries again, I ploughed the strawberries down—manure mulch, weeds, matted row abominations and all—dropping every third furrow, before the next slice covered it, with potatoes cut to single eyes, of the following kinds: Ontario, Clark's No. 1, An-

drus' White Rose, Dempsey, Rose Climax, Burbank's Seedling and White Elephant. They were covered so heavily by the sod that they were slow in coming up—a chance not lost at all by the thistles, which put in an appearance in force. Depending on the deep planting, we did not hill the potatoes, but used only the Dutch or "push" hoe (so often spoken of by me in these columns), and fingers and thumb, to keep them clean, on most of the patch. On this patch, too, there was some neglect; because, as indicated before, we were short of hands, and justice to my plant customers induced me to attend first to the small fruit plantation. And so the thistles got so far ahead once or twice that pulling them out of the rows, where the hoes could not reach, made the potato stalks tumble around pretty badly from the consequent disturbance of their roots. Now for the results: The early kinds all ripened up with the dry weather—Clark's No. 1, Andrus' White Rose and Ontario all about the same time—with yields varying on an estimate at rates of seventy to a hundred, or even a hundred and thirty bushels per acre, according to the way the thistle streaks happened to run, rather than to the difference in variety. The Ontario was the smoothest and handsomest, though not quite so large, on an average, as the others, but occasional hills, where fewer thistles, or more manure, happened to strike, were simply magnificent. But Dempsey, Rose Climax, Burbank and White Elephant managed to keep green till the dry spell was over, and then they went forward with a bound, and kept it up till fall. They were all good. I did not notice the appearance of Dempsey and Rose Climax so much, because the other two were more noted; but they were quite handsome, free from blemish, and they and the Burbank yielded, on an estimate from the rows, at about the rate of two hundred bushels per acre. The Burbank proved the smoothest and handsomest potato on the place, but was nearly equalled in this respect by the Ontario. There is just one reason I can think of why I did not accurately measure the yield individually of these three kinds. I did of the Burbank, and the others seemed about equal to it. But the White Elephant was so surpassingly fine that I passed by these others without the notice they deserved, and would have got it if they had been away from the Elephant. A careful measurement of the yield of this variety showed a resulting rate of about three hundred bushels per acre, and the best of it was that nearly every potato was of fine marketable size. Every other kind I had grown gave a lot of small ones, but I do not think much more than a peck of unmarketable potatoes (perhaps not so much) could have been picked out of ten bushels of White Elephant, while the average length, as near as I can remember, was about five inches and a half. The eyes are not so nearly level with the surface, nor the potato so uniform in shape, as the Burbank and Ontario; but there was nothing noticeable in the way of knobs, "fingers-and-toes," &c., as we often see in some of the older varieties. The yield, of course, does not stand as high as Chicago Market; but I have no doubt that the latter would not have yielded any more than the Elephant if it had not taken the late start and grown till fall—an unusual thing—and when the additional fact of the poor soil on which the Elephant grew is considered, I think the conclusion is inevitable that the White Elephant is a more productive variety.

The conclusions that I draw from these experiments are:

1st. That all the new varieties tested are more productive than Early Rose, of which I grow a considerable patch near by with very poor results.

2nd. That Chicago Market is the

best early sort, for my land, that I have tested.

3rd. That White Elephant is decidedly the best late sort for me, and far the most productive late variety I have tried.

4th. That cultivation without hilling is a success on sandy soils.

5th. That season and soil make a great difference in the same variety of potato.

6th. That potatoes want manure.

7th. That some of the new varieties will yield more with poor treatment than Early Rose with first class treatment.

8th. That next to variety, CLEAN CULTIVATION (including bug-slaying) is the chief element of success.

9th. That a man generally gets all the success he deserves, and this time I got a little more.

White Star and Snowflake were in another place, and so have been overlooked. Snowflake yielded pretty well, on good ground, with fair cultivation—doing rather better, I thought, than Early Rose near by. The quality was fine. Of White Star I only had half a pound, which I sprouted under glass and made sets of; yield of big and little ones) about a bushel and a peck. Two bugs nearly devoured the young sprouts just after setting out—which accounts for most of the small ones. Where they had any chance they were of fine size, but some were a little scabby. This was a fine yield, but I feel as if I want to test it another season before I can be satisfied as to its comparative value.

I am aware that many men in Ontario must have a far greater knowledge of potatoes, derived from longer experience, than I have. But, somehow, they don't tell about it, and the people want to know. This article may help some one with less experience than myself, who wants to learn something of the habits of the newer varieties; and it may perhaps draw some of the knowing ones out of their shell, so that we shall all learn something that may do us good—a most desirable consummation! Meantime, I hope I may be pardoned for my small experience, because of my earnest endeavors to tell it in a way to be of use.

POULTRY.

GAMES.

In regard to the game fowls they are good layers when allowed free range all over creation, but just because they are so active naturally they fret and chafe when confined to winter quarters, and for that reason do not make good winter layers, at least I have not found them so.

They are good mothers, providing food for their offspring, and protecting them from harm. As a provider, the game hen, with a family on her hands, excels anything else that wears feathers. She will scratch up anything that is within ten feet of the surface, and the neighbors' yards and gardens generally suffer most. One industrious game hen will keep a whole neighborhood in hot water. I know all about it for I have tried it. Why didn't I shut her up in a coop? Just you try to catch a game hen and her chicks and you will know all about it. Once I picked up one of the little chicks that seemed a little lame; he chirped after the senseless way that chicks have if you touch one of them, and the next thing that I knew there was a rush, a whirl of wings, and for the next three minutes there was such a mix of woman, sun-bonnet, and hen that you couldn't tell "tother from which." Don't you tell, but I did; yes, I did, I turned and—ran away.

The games are hardy and the chicks are easy to raise—they are up and

scratching and fighting almost as soon as they are well out of the shell—but for all that, when the cholera comes along the game hens turn up their toes and die just as meekly as the Brahmas, Cochins, Rocks and all the rest of them. There is no breed of fowls in existence that is proof against chicken cholera.

In regard to the variety of games, if you conclude to keep them, get the kind that you like best. So far as useful qualities are concerned, one kind is just as good as another; and as for scratching, fighting, and pure "cussedness" generally, one kind is just as bad as another. Perhaps you may think that I am rather hard on the games, but they were exceedingly hard on me in the first place. I kept them one summer and they caused me more "worryment" of mind than all the chickens that I ever had before or since. The four-foot fence that kept the other fowls in or out, they regarded with contempt. They visited the garden when they pleased, and as a natural consequence we didn't have any garden that we felt like boasting about. Our neighbors' gardens looked even worse than ours, and our neighbors' feelings were harrowed up worse than their gardens. If somebody didn't come along every morning about breakfast time and say: "Those confounded chickens have been in my garden again," we feared that some of the neighbors were seriously ill.

And that game rooster. He fought everything on the place, and between times found time to kill all the roosters in the neighborhood. I expected to pay for a rooster every week, and it was not often that I was disappointed. So long as he killed only cheap roosters I didn't mind it very much, but when he began on the five dollar birds, my patience and pocket-book gave out, and I soon got rid of every game on the place.

If you do get games, build a fence ten or twelve feet high all around your garden, and hire an active boy with a dog to keep them out of the neighbors' gardens and away from the neighbors' roosters.—FANNY FIELD.

OUR NATIVE AND DOMESTIC FOWLS

BY JOSEPH WALLACE.

Dorkings are to a great extent a neglected breed in this country, while from time to time foreign and native breeds have been lionized and developed, and new varieties persistently pushed to the front by their admirers. The Dorking has but a precarious footing upon American soil. There is no denying the fact our fanciers "keep shy" of the Dorking, and even our Standard shares in this indifference by giving us a few meaningless words in apology for "no extended or critical description of them."

We cannot comprehend for the life of us, why our enterprising fanciers seem inclined to ignore the Dorking. If merits are a fair criterion of the value of a breed, we feel sure the Dorking is equal to some and superior to others as a flesh producing fowl. In England, where the breed has stood the test of rivalry and criticism for hundreds of years, the Dorking leads in the market and in the show-room. No breed can supplant them. Their table qualities have been the subject of nursery rhymes in Coventry, and in a satirical Saxon poem entitled the "Visions of Pier's Ploughman," written over five hundred years ago. To a people who love to feast on good things, this is a grand quality in the breed. Among high and low, rich and poor, the Dorking is the first in their The Asiatics, French and other breeds have been introduced to the fancy