

Sowing According to the Age of the Moon.

To the Editor of THE CANADA FARMER:

SIR,—I am only a young farmer—my opinions lack the authority of experience. Yesterday I had a dispute with my next neighbour and my man, who both maintained that the state of the moon was of the greatest consequence in sowing peas or planting onions. I showed my ignorance by laughing at them; so we decided on appealing to you. My man declares that if peas are sown during the first two quarters they will never ripen; that they must be planted when the moon is on the wane. What extraordinary influence she exercises over onions I forget just now. I know many who think like this, and it would be well for you to dispel a delusion that often causes inconvenience to those who believe in it. Do you know anything about a new grass called *Bromus Schraderii*? When should it be sown, and how much to the acre, and is it good for anything? I got a little at Bruce's, in Hamilton, the other day, to try, but though his catalogue makes it out to be something wonderful, it does not tell what to do with it. I fear your answer will come too late, but still I should like to know.

NOTE BY ED. C.F.—But for the fact that the superstition above alluded to is credited by some, even in this enlightened age, we should not have thought it necessary seriously to state that seed will germinate, under favourable conditions of temperature and moisture, without being influenced in the slightest degree by the moon. It is the height of folly to lose the precious opportunity of sowing seed, whenever ground and season are ready, in waiting for any fancied lunar influence. Such belief ought long since to have ceased altogether.

In reference to the second question, our correspondent will find a short notice of the grass in the CANADA FARMER for Jan. 15th, 1867. Its value, like that of most new candidates for public favour, has perhaps been rather over-estimated; but its reputation justifies a trial. We cannot say what quantity should be used to the acre.

The Divining Rod.

To the Editor of THE CANADA FARMER:

SIR,—I might have been tempted to offer a few remarks in reply to Mr. George Doidge's strictures on my communication anent the Divining Rod; but when a person, embarking in controversy, is unphilosophical enough to make use of the word "ridiculous" in his attempt to controvert the opinions of another, I call to mind

"The starry Galileo and his woes,"
and abstain from further comment.

As regards Mr. York's letter, I may be permitted to observe that it is just possible that the nameless "tin pedler" was an imposter. At all events, I venture to suggest that the case specified by Mr. York can scarcely, in fairness, be placed in the same category with the cases furnished in my communication.

It should be borne in mind that no one ever pretended that the power of effectually using the Divining Rod is inherent in every man:

"Non cuius homini contingit," &c,

V. C.

Lakefield, Ontario, April 6, 1868.

An Early Green Manure Crop.

MR. A. KIRKWOOD, of this city, sends the following communication in reference to one which we published lately on the subject of "White Mustard" as a green manure:

"In the number of the CANADA FARMER for the 16th March, of the current year, your correspondent, 'An Improver' says, 'We all feel the want of some inexpensive quick-growing green crop, that can be sown (on land ploughed in the fall) very early in the spring, to be matured sufficiently by the 1st of July to be ploughed under,' &c.

"I would suggest to try *Melilotus alba* or white melilot, known also as Bockara clover, which can be sown very early in the spring, grows very rapidly, and in great quantity, and will be ready to be ploughed under by the first of July. But I would advise him to plough it under before then, as at that date there may be more of it than he can get well under."

MIDGE-PROOF WHEAT WANTED.—Michael Roddy, of Sand Point, wishes to know where he can 'procure a few bushels of midge-proof wheat.

SEEDING CLOVER WITH PEAS.—"A Subscriber" enquires whether "it would be advisable to sow clover with peas." We should think the peas would be very apt to smother the clover.

CANADIAN PATENTS.—D. P., of Lancaster, asks us to give "a full description how, where, and the cost of procuring a patent right for an original new invention in the Dominion."

ANS.—Letters Patent for Inventions are not yet granted for the Dominion, and cannot be, until a new patent law is passed by the Legislature; but patents continue to be issued, as heretofore, at Ottawa, for the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec. The Government fee is \$20. The fees for preparing the necessary papers and drawings, range from \$10 to \$15, or \$20, according to the work involved. It is expected that patents previously granted for any of the Confederated Provinces will be extended to the whole Dominion by the new law; but nothing certain is known on this point. At present, only a British subject residing in either of the two provinces, being the actual inventor, can obtain a patent for the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec. If our correspondent has a new invention which he desires to protect, he should communicate with some reliable Patent Agent, sending him a model and full description of the invention, that the case may be prepared for the Patent Office. For such a service, we can recommend Mr. Alex. Christie, Patent Agent, No. 34, King Street East, two doors from the CANADA FARMER office. He has had considerable experience in the business, and can give more information on the subject than we have room for in this place.

The Canada Farmer.

TORONTO, CANADA, APRIL 15, 1868.

"The Ashes of a Slice of Bread."

DURING a recent visit to Montreal we had the pleasure of attending the Annual Conversazione of the Natural History Society, at which, among other interesting proceedings, Principal Dawson delivered a capital address on the topic which heads this article. At the close of the address, the President of the Society regretted that all the farmers of Canada were not present to hear the address. So did we. As the next best thing to their being present, we propose to give them a brief recollection of what was said. Unfortunately we took no notes, and hence must draw for our report on a rather treacherous and leaky memory.

The Principal observed that many persons were inclined to regard the investigations of the Society as more curious than useful. But its attention is often taken up with subjects of a very utilitarian character. There is one, for example, which is of the highest practical importance. It is the art of making two blades of grass, or two kernels of wheat, grow where only one grew before. I shall endeavour to illustrate this by discussing, for a few minutes, the ashes of a slice of bread as related to national wealth, population, and emigration. Now, our slice of bread consists of the following things: gluten and starch, with perhaps some sugar, mucilage or oil, woody matter, water and ashes. We will pass over all the rest, and confine attention to the last-named—the ashes. These form only about two per cent. of the

whole substance, yet in them are found a variety of elements. On the wall is a table of them, and it would be easy to show that all the things named are more or less important and necessary to the plant, and to the animals that feed on it; but I will just refer to one only, second to none in importance—Phosphoric Acid. Every adult human being has, in his body, several pounds of phosphate of lime or bone earth, and this is obtained from the food he eats; and whether it be from his slice of bread, or from animal food, it is derived originally from plants. If we subsist mainly on bread it comes from wheat. The wheat obtains it from the soil. So essential is this phosphate, that unless a certain quantity of it be found in the soil, it will be impossible to grow wheat. A fertile soil contains about four-tenths ($\frac{4}{10}$) of one per cent. of this material, and how interesting it is to reflect that the Creator has placed a small supply of this ingredient in every fertile soil. The phosphates are distributed through all productive soils, in a state of nature, in about the proportion above stated. In worn-out, or exhausted land, only one-tenth of one per cent., or even less, will be found. Trifling as this difference may appear to the uninformed, it implies a great deal. If wheat could be grown on such a soil, it would lack one essential quality. The flour made from it would contain no bony matter, and the feeders on such bread would become rickety, and have no frame on which flesh could hang. Now, on many farms once rich in phosphate, and consequently yielding fine crops of wheat, it is found that wheat will grow no longer. What is the matter? The ignorant farmer blames the climate, thinks the seasons have changed, lays the evil to insects, to blights, and various mysterious causes; but the fact is, that perhaps twenty crops of wheat have been taken from the soil without restoring to it the valuable material that has been removed from it. The land is impoverished, and cannot yield its wonted increase. But the farmer does not know this. He could easily remedy the evil if he understood the philosophy of his business. But he goes blindly on, his crops growing less and less, until he falls into debt and poverty, becomes discouraged, sells his farm, emigrates to the West, or to some new country—or he remains to struggle on, while his sons, finding farming a poor business, go to the city to seek their fortunes by crowding into the professions, or trying to get into mercantile pursuits. Moreover, sections of country acquire a bad name, farming doesn't pay there, and emigration passes them by for more inviting neighbourhoods. This is no fancy sketch, and what has been referred to is only one of many branches of agricultural science which, if our farmers and their sons would study, would lighten their toils, put money in their pockets, and send the tide of prosperity all over the country. These things are taught in our schools and universities, in our agricultural periodicals, and in the most elementary treatises on scientific farming. It is cheering to know that attention is being turned to these matters, that our legislature is becoming alive to their importance, and that steps are being taken to promote the interests of agriculture. This is the foundation interest. Agriculture is the King of arts; by it all men live; "even the King himself is served by the field." It is the duty of every lover of his country to promote agricultural improvement, and our legislatures are well employed in devising measures for obtaining agricultural surveys and reports, and in securing efficient instruction in practical science, especially agricultural science, in our schools and colleges.

The above is but an imperfect outline of a most interesting address; yet meagre as it is, we hope it will help to put not a few of our readers on a line of thought and investigation that will make them better and more prosperous farmers.

CHANGE OF OWNER.—Mr. John Snell, of Edmonton, has, we are informed, as the result of the advertisement in our columns, sold the yearling Durham Bull, "Darling Duke," sired by "Duke of Bourbon," dam "Grace Darling" by "Baron Solway," to Mr. Richard Brown, of the Township of Clarke, for \$200.