

The Turnip

To the Editor of THE CANADA FARMER:

SIR, I enclose a slip from the leading journal of the North of Ireland, containing a report by an Irish farmer of the results of certain manures upon a crop of turnips:—

[See article headed "Experiments in Manuring the Turnip."—Ed. C. F.]

I would ask attention especially to his statement regarding the condition of one of these crops "for the first four weeks of its growth." It suggests to me the following inquiries:

1. Is it ascertained whether a crop requires the same constituents during every period of its growth?
2. Is it ascertained that it requires equal amounts of the same constituent in equal periods of growth?
3. Is it ascertained whether the same manure liberates equal amounts of its constituent portions in equal times?

4. Is it ascertained what the effect of different conditions (of soil, moisture, temperature,) is upon the speed of liberation of the constituents of manure?

I am aware that it is roughly known that there are differences in these respects; but my impression is, that in ascertaining them *exactly*, there is still much work to be done. Some of it, of course, by the chemist in his laboratory; but much, too, by the farmer who will observe and register before he writes. His report of experiments on the large scale is needed to complete the information required for successful scientific farming.

Perhaps the word "experiments" may terrify some of your intending correspondents. I beg, therefore, to assure them that in the sense of *trying what is altogether new*, I should expect it from no man who is not prepared to bear the expense of a total loss. But in the sense of carefully trying what has been found of value elsewhere, and giving the results with accuracy, there is no farmer in Canada who has it not in his power to be of service to his brethren.

ERIGENA.

Guelfh, Feb. 10, 1864.

Rot Proof Potatoes.

To the Editor of THE CANADA FARMER:

SIR,—Seeing a few remarks in the second number of your valuable paper, on cultivating potatoes, has led me to give some of my experience with this much neglected crop. That potatoes degenerate is a fact pretty generally admitted. The pink-eye and many other old kinds are seldom seen in the market now. But fortunately we have other kinds as good to take the place of them. The rot has had a great deal to do with the failure of these old varieties. Colonel O'Brien, in his article, would lead us to understand that the cause of the rot has been ascertained; if so, I think the public does not generally know it. If we knew the cause we might apply some remedy; but where you see two kinds of potatoes growing side by side, one blighting, turning black, and dying in a few days, and the other continuing to grow and maturing a fine crop, you encounter a mystery not easily understood. Most of our early potatoes are subject to rot more or less. The Ash-Top, ripening first, is very liable to rot. Mexican, the best early potato we have, rots unless planted on sandy soil. Flukes rot more or less. Mountain June, a fine, large, early potato, rots very early in this locality.

If it is not intruding too much on your space, I will give the names of a few kinds that have withstood the blight, proved quite free from the rot, and matured a fine crop where other kinds have failed. The Large Rough, an early variety, a fine cropper, and of good quality; Davis' Seedling, originated in Ohio, is of the finest quality, and the best potato for garden purposes among twenty varieties that I have tested, being large, early, and suitable to all soils; Snow Ball has proved to be a fine potato; Painted Lady succeeds well in this part of the country; Garnet Chili has proved a valuable potato for farm purposes, growing very large, somewhat ill-shapen, but of good quality; Jersey Peachbloom is one of the best for light soils, growing to good size, very fair and fine quality; Gold Nugget is an English variety, growing even in size, sometimes weighing a pound, and valuable for its late keeping qualities, not being inclined to sprout, like most potatoes, late in the season. By the introduction of new kinds from other parts of the country occasionally, and the raising of seedlings, we may be well supplied with varieties free from disease to fill the place of old kinds that appear to be failing.

Cobourg.

B. LOSEE.

Farm Pests.

To the Editor of THE CANADA FARMER:

SIR,—As you intend THE CANADA FARMER to be the medium through which farmers may learn from the experience of others, I will, with your permission, give some of my own practical experience on the treatment of those "farm pests," Canada thistles and Red-root.

In my last FARMER that "R. B." of South Dumfries, is afraid they will "outflank" him, and well he may. If he had seen a ten-acre field covered almost totally, as I have had them, up to the chin with Canada thistles, he might well be frightened.

My treatment is to plough early in June, six to eight inches deep, harrow thoroughly, turn on all the sheep to keep clean, plough again the 1st of July, when they will be coming up, and harrow again thoroughly; plough twice in August, and harrow after each ploughing, and when I come to ridge up, the 1st of September, nothing can be seen but the dead leaves and stalks, which act as fertilizers to the young wheat. In the harvest following I can rake and bind without gloves or fear of being pricked. This plan I have used with great satisfaction and recommend it to my brother farmers. As to red-root, I would say that though your "deep ploughing" may be all right, yet to sow with fall wheat is hardly to be recommended. Red-root is only an annual, and will not grow from the roots, as the Canada thistle does, but only from the seeds, and that only in the fall. Thus, in sowing with fall wheat, it comes up with it in the fall, and in the spring "outflanks" it entirely, or so much so as to make it difficult to exterminate.

My plan is (and I have had it tested frequently during the last six or seven years) to harrow thoroughly after harvest, keep the field closed until all the seed grows, then as late as is safe for frost plough deep, and sow in the spring with peas or barley, but never summer fallow. Continue this treatment for three years in succession, and then seed down clover with a barley crop. If, however, any odd stalks should show themselves in the clover keep it shut up until the blossom appears, and then plough it under eight inches; that will do the land good and destroy the seed; but be careful that there be no seed ripe, as it will be in bloom at the end, and, if left too long, at the first joints, matured.

Middle Road, Appleby.

NOTE BY ED. C. F.—Our correspondent seems to overlook an important item in our prescription for getting rid of Red-root, viz: that very deep ploughing (at least eight inches), would throw the seeds beyond vegetating influences so that the pest would not come up with the crop of fall wheat. His method however seems to be a good one and would no doubt work well, if thoroughly carried out.

Flax Thread.

To the Editor of THE CANADA FARMER.

SIR,—I was very glad to see the notice which you took in your first number, of the Flax Works of the Messrs. Perine. Now if these gentlemen or any other parties could be induced to turn their attention to spinning flax thread I think it would pay them as well as render a great service to the good wives of Canada and the public at large. The article called flax thread now in use in Canada is very weak stuff and not fit for the purpose to which it is applied. In fact I have a strong suspicion that a great deal of it is not flax at all, but made out of the sea weed which is brought from the shores of India and known by the name of Jute Hemp. This article has no wear in it, and yet it spins as straight as a ribbon and takes a beautiful dye. I will not positively affirm that lots of our thread is made of this stuff, but I want to call public attention to the subject. I have an old tow bag which is very stout. It has been in use 40 years and is a good bag yet. I do not know how many Jute Hemp and cotton bags it has outworn. It has occurred to my mind that a great number of our Canadian girls would be well employed at the "two handed wheel." It was the fashion in old times for a lot of young girls to spin the "lea lang day" in the hard singing like laversocks. While I have been writing this scrawl my wife went "ben" the house to her "kist" and brought her fine linen sheets which she spun more than 60 years ago with her own hands. I would say, let us by all means pay a little more attention to flax-growing.

JAMES BUIK.

Nichol, Feb. 29, 1864.

Potato Growing.

To the Editor of THE CANADA FARMER:

SIR,—As you wish your readers to give their experience in farm matters, I will give you a plan I have adopted for planting and growing potatoes, which I think will be approved by all who make trial of it. I plough my land in the fall very deep, say ten or twelve inches, and then in the spring I cultivate with a two-horse cultivator as deep as the horses can pull without blocking the teeth of the cultivator up. I let the land lie one or two days and then harrow, let it lie one more day, choosing, if possible, sunny days for the operation, so as to kill all weeds, and then cross again with the cultivator, then harrow as before. Having thus prepared the ground I mark my rows out three feet apart each way; one way with the plough, about four inches deep, the other way with a marker, with teeth three feet apart. I plant the sets at the corner of each square, and cover about an inch deep. When the potatoes are beginning to break the soil, I take a pair of light harrows well filled with teeth and go cross-ways of the plough marks. It will never disturb the potatoes in the least. It will kill all the weeds and loosen the soil around the sets. They will grow very fast. After the first rain I sprinkle on each hill an equal quantity of ashes and plaster of Paris, then loosen with the hoe. I next cultivate with a one-horse cultivator each way in the rows, and then about a week after, hill up with a double mould-board plough, always making the hills a little flat on the top. I choose large potatoes for seed, and cut them in two sets, and plant two in each hill, which I find to be the best, as I have tried all plans. The more sets you put in a hill the more small potatoes you will have. I have raised potatoes in this way for five or six years, and have always had abundant crops.

Aldershott.

JAS. R. IRELAND.

Advantages of Draining.

To the Editor of THE CANADA FARMER.

SIR,—I see in your number of February 1st, an article entitled, "The Prime Principles of Farming," the first being "The ground ought to be kept dry." But it does not state in what way it should be kept dry or which is the best way of keeping land dry. I conclude, however, that it is meant to be kept dry by under-draining. A few remarks from one who has done some under-draining may not be unsuitable for the columns of your very valuable paper. In the first place, a field thoroughly under-drained will always be moist, but never so soft as to prevent a team of horses going on to it to plough, thereby giving the farmer the great advantage of getting on his land to work at any time after the frost is out.

I under-drained a piece of land in 1860, putting the drains about twenty feet apart; it was a piece of land I usually kept in hay, as I never could go on to it in time in the Spring to get it ploughed till it was too late for the crop to mature properly. The Spring of 1861 was a very wet one, yet I could go on to that piece of land to plough when I could not go on to the driest piece of land on my farm. The oats which I sowed on it were fully six inches higher than those in the field next to it. Secondly—No matter how dry the season may be, the land will never become baked, and can be ploughed at any time during the summer. Thirdly—In consequence of being able to get on to the land so much earlier than undrained land, the farmer has fully two weeks more time in which to do his Spring seeding, and the Spring time in this country every farmer will acknowledge is too short to put in all his seed properly. In a wet season it is next to impossible to get it in in anything like a proper manner. For these reasons, I subscribe myself,

AN ADVOCATE OF UNDER-DRAINING.

York Township, Feb. 26, 1864.

LONGED GRAIN.—Lodged grain is an evil. Always remember that lime and salt stiffen the straw. Harrow your lime in with your grain, and sow your salt, or as soon as the last ploughing is done. Your straw will be the brighter and the harder, and your grain the better, as well as a nice increase of bushels. John Johnston, the noted New York farmer, says he applied, in 1814, two hundred bushels of lime on two acres, before sowing the wheat, and it was a magnificent crop—over fifty bushels to the acre. And he says he can see the effect of the lime to the present day.—*Valley Farmer.*