

On the Wing.

After reading the reports of the great injury done to the wheat crop by the Hessian Fly, we decided to make further personal examination. We therefore took a trip to Chatham, in the County of Kent. This is the centre of the greatest wheat producing section in Ontario. We have not yet seen any land on this continent to equal this for wheat raising; and not only is it adapted to either winter or spring wheat, but fruits and flowers that will not thrive in any other part of Ontario will do so here. The soil is of a deep, rich, clayey nature. The country is very flat and level, and has been low and wet, but draining has effected a wonderful change. It was formerly so unhealthy that settlers could not go on the land without being liable to the fever and ague. A deal of the best land in this and the adjoining County of Essex had been taken up by French settlers, and during the time of slavery in the States, these counties being the most southern points of Canada, were sought by runaway slaves, and a large number of these negroes afterwards formed the Buxton settlement near Chatham. Neither the ague nor this mixed population were considered desirable by European or American settlers who desired general progress. The lack of good water in some localities is a drawback, and the superabundance of it in others will always be an unsurmountable obstacle. The absence of stone or gravel to make good roads is also a serious drawback. Canada thistles are not as thick here as in some parts of Ontario, but there is no lack of them. The rag weed gives the sturdy tiller vexation enough to make up for the shortage in thistles. No one could impute want of sense in the native Indian, the runaway slave or the French pioneer for locating here; consequently this part of the country, though unequalled in fertility, was shunned by those who wished for progress.

Time has wrought great changes. The march of progress has been rapid here, and the obstacles above mentioned are rapidly disappearing, and we know no place on the continent where we would rather settle than this part of Ontario. In some parts of this fertile county the golden wedge of enterprise is gradually upheaving the old tardy settler, and rapid improvements are being made. Large drains or ditches have been dug; we might, from the size of some, almost call them canals. Stock, grain and fruit now occupy the place where mud turtles and wild ducks formerly disputed the ownership.

To give an instance of this great change we called at the residence of Mr. William Irvine, who resides on what is called the Harwich Plains. He has a fine farm of 200 acres of excellent land—as fine crops as can be found of wheat, oats, barley, corn, beans, peas, apples, cherries, grapes and peaches. A good avenue of maple trees along the road side; a lawn with flowers and evergreens; a well finished and furnished brick house. We were informed that ten years ago this farm and many thousands of acres like it could have been purchased at 50c. per acre. What is the value of this land at the present time, when we see five times the quantity of wheat produced per acre that we observe in some parts of Canada where land formerly brought from \$60 to \$100 per acre? Mr. Irvine informed us that eight years ago, when draining this land, he used to bring up lots of mud turtles, and that it was quite a bother to get them out of the way even with the scraper, as some of them would weigh from 50 to 57 lbs. each. We mention this to show the recent improvements and the class of land in this locality. The land was for many years flooded and received the rich washings from the fertile lands of Western Ontario, the deposit having been made by the River Thames, which empties itself a little below this into the St. Clair

River, and is navigable to Chatham, the market town, and which will ere long claim the appellation of a city. Within the corporation we were shown a field of winter wheat containing 100 acres, enclosed in one fence. We presume no such a sight could be seen in any other town or part of the world. Chatham is not a mere town by name, as many hundreds of western towns and cities are; it has 8,000 inhabitants.

HESSIAN FLY.

Here we made enquiries for the largest wheat growers. We were directed to McGarvin Bros. as being the most extensive, and we directed our course to their river farm, about five miles from Chatham. On the way the first farmer we met was Mr. R. Pollard, from whom we made enquiries in regard to the Hessian fly or the midge, the different varieties of wheat and the apple crop. The principal information received was that he got a sheaf of wheat from a Mr. Wallace's farm, the name of which he did not know, but he said it was the best wheat and the brightest straw he had seen this year, and informed us that the crop surpassed anything in the neighborhood. Upon it being produced we immediately recognized it as the Democrat variety. He said we might call at the farm of Mr. Smith. He thinks there is most Fultz wheat raised in that locality, but he does not like it as it is too apt to rust; he considers the Scott wheat is a better variety. He had not seen or heard of the Hessian fly doing any injury in that locality.

At McGarvin's we found the threshing machine running, one of the brothers acting as fireman, engineer and greaser. Brother No. 2 was standing on the feed table feeding the wheat. On the straw stack was a puny negro and Indian boys keeping it out of the way. A third brother drove up to the machine a load of wheat from the field, as they could thresh it as fast as hauled and save all the trouble and risk of stacking. A fourth brother was on another part of the farm driving a self-binding reaping machine; he was just finishing the last acre when we were there. After enquiring about the Hessian fly, the different varieties of wheat, etc., we asked which variety of wheat appeared to answer best this year. The reply was that Mr. Wallace had the best piece of wheat he had seen this year, much cleaner in the straw than the wheats they raised for a general crop. They had a very small piece of the Democrat, but this year they intended to sow it pretty largely.

"How do you like

YOUR HARVESTER?"

"First-rate—would not do without it on any consideration; in fact, I would not farm or raise wheat and depend on hands to do the work. I do all I can by machinery. We have just finished cutting 200 acres, and consider that we have the best harvester made; it is the Globe Twine Binder, made at the Globe Agricultural Works in London. We first imported one of the machines from the States. They will do the work; you can see they have done it. You can find numbers of the other binders lying in the fence corners broken. We have seen them all, but there are none that equal this."

The McGarvins have an appliance on one of their farms by which the loaded grain rack is elevated to the top of the barn, thus enabling the pitcher to unload much quicker, and often saving one or two hands. Their land is not all in one block. They have large barns, but their crops are too heavy for the barns to hold them. For instance, the field that was being threshed had 90 acres of wheat on it, and this is the sixth consecutive crop of fall wheat taken off this field. Many fields can be pointed out where a continuation of cropping every year, without manure of any kind, has been kept up for the past half century.

THE WHEAT FIELD.

We called at the farm of Mr. W. Wallace, as from all accounts his wheat appeared to stand at the head of the list. Mr. W. had procured a half bushel of this wheat from a neighbor on shares, and this yielded 21 bushels. He returned the half, disposed of a little, and sowed last autumn nine bushels on 10½ acres of land. He says he expects it will turn out about 50 bushels per acre. We saw this crop; it was partly cut and partly standing. The only difficulty appeared to be that it was far too heavy. We enquired about the land. Mr. W. said the farm starved the former owner of it, not from the poverty of the land, but from bad management. This field, he was informed, had been cropped 35 years successively before he got it; he put in clover on part of it, and plowed it under. Mr. Wallace said he found that kind of farming would not answer in Romney. The land is too rich. Now that field would produce 10 to 15 bushels more per acre with this crop, were it not so rich. It would be better if three more crops of wheat in succession were taken off it. He said: "I have tried manure on wheat land here; it will not do, the land is so rich." What do you think of these statements, the land having been successively cropped for nearly half a century, and this without manure? Mr. Wallace is a Lowland Scotch farmer who had been for some years on Bow Park Farm, and he says this land is still too rich. Where is there land that can compare with it?

We proceeded to Crow's Ferry, nine miles from Chatham, and crossed the river in a scow. Mr. Crow has 900 acres of land at this point.

In returning to Chatham we called on some of the leading wheat growers. At Mr. Dalson's we noticed an unpacked binder in the yard. We enquired the cause and were informed that several had been ordered in that locality. The agents had attempted to run them, but the grain was too stout; they could not take it off the ground. He said he felt sorry for the manufacturers. He was using his old reaper, and informed us that most of the farmers had to take to them for lodged grain, but in standing grain some of the other machines were doing pretty well.

In Chatham we spent the evening with Mr. Stephen White, with whom we conversed about crops, exhibitions, etc.

The conclusions we have arrived at are that there is very little, if any Hessian fly in this part of Canada; that the rust has injured the crop from 5 to 10 per cent.; that the Scott wheat appears to be again coming to the front, as many now prefer it to the Fultz, which variety appears to be most extensively cultivated here. The Egyptian wheat appeared to be liked by many. Very little Clawson sown; it did not answer as well as the Scott when tried. The Democrat promised very well, and is becoming popular.

Upon our journey we met Mr. J. Goodyear, who farms about 250 acres near Woodstock. He has about 50 acres of winter and spring wheat. He is of opinion that, where land is at all well cultivated, we need be under no apprehension respecting the Hessian fly. He considers superphosphate and salt to be not only the best fertilizer, but also a preventative of the fly.

FERTILIZERS.

Three years ago he had a piece of land so poor and useless that it would not grow a decent crop of white beans. He put on 200 lbs. of superphosphate and salt to the acre, and now the land is giving 25 bushels of wheat per acre. He has used superphosphate for eight years, and where properly applied, it will increase the yield fully 40 per cent., and the grain will be 8 to 10 days earlier. About 300 lbs. of each per acre is