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AGRICULTURE.

ON THE GENERAL MANAGEMENT OF A FARM IN LOWER CANADA.—(Concluded.)

PLOUGHING.

If it be thought absolutely necessary to summer-fallow, that is to plough without sowing, which only happens when the soil is so hard and heavy that it cannot be pulverized in any other way, you ought not to spread the manure on the land in the preceding fall, but plough the land and ridge and furrow it with as much care as for a crop. You need not touch it again before the month of June, when you must plough it again and harrow it so as to render it even, and destroy the roots of the weeds. You may then draw the furrows in a straight line, giving them a uniform breadth, and so as to facilitate drainage. About the middle of July you must plough it again, and sow it with plenty of buckwheat. At the end of September, plough it again, having previously spread it with dung. In this case the buckwheat is ploughed under with the manure, and serves greatly to increase the latter. The land thus prepared ought to be sown with wheat in the ensuing spring, and you may add a little timothy and clover. A bushel of timothy will suffice for four or five acres, and three or four pounds of clover to each acre.

By following the method above described, you will have, in the year 1851, quadrupled, or more than quadrupled the fertility of the soil.

I have now done all that I can for field A. I have weeded and manured it as well as I can, and after having taken the crop of roots and the crop of wheat or barley next year, I leave this field to rest until the other fields have been improved in the same way, and according to the method above described. When this shall have been effected, that is to say in the space of six years, or in the year 1856, the war will be over, and the battle may be considered as gained. The fields will then be in a clean and fertile condition, and their value will consequently be greatly increased. The Farm of 70 or 80 acres, which in 1849 only sustained three or four miserable cows, and perhaps no more than an equal number of sickly sheep, will be capable in less than ten years of furnishing an abundant subsistence for ten or twelve cattle and other stock in the same proportion.

One of the great advantages of this system of rotation of crops is, that the pastures, which in summer furnish summer-feed for the stock, are in due proportion to the quantity of roots and hay destined to winter-feed them, and in due proportion to the straw which the grain-crops yield for their bedding. I will observe here that farmers—except those who live near towns, where they can easily procure manures—ought never to sell a single load of their hay, straw, or roots, since the whole ought to be consumed on the farm, with the view of procuring a sufficiency of manure therefrom, whereby the fertility of the soil is to be sustained. But if the farmer is not to sell hay, or straw, or roots, what is he to sell? I answer, the third of the land being under this system appropriated to grain crops, he will always be able to sell a large part of them. The half of the farm being in hay and pasture, will allow it to produce a large quantity of butter, cheese, butchers' meat and wool, and to sell a considerable part of these after having supplied the wants of the family. It may be said, that six years is a long time to wait for the renovation of the whole farm; but I will reply, that I know of no other means by which it may be done in less time, from its own resources; and it is worthy of observation that the land is improving every year. The produce is larger, even for the first year, under this system than it is under the present method of culture, and from year to year, the land is improving, field by field, and is producing more and more so as to pay the farmer better than it does at present, and to recompense him doubly afterwards when the whole shall have been improved under a system of rotation.

It may be objected that two years of pasture is a long time of rest for the land; but you will observe that the land does not remain unproductive during this period of repose. This plan not only contributes to re-establish the almost exhausted fertility of the soil (and it will be admitted, that this is the only one now practised by the Canadian habitant); but it is also the best means of furnishing the farmer with the first necessities of life, and the articles which, so to speak, will most readily find an outlet in our markets, such as beef, lamb, mutton, butter, cheese, wool, and other products already named.

MANURES.

Manures are of the first importance to the farmer, and he must do everything in his power to increase their amount. The system here proposed is calculated so as to increase the quantity of manure in proportion as the soil becomes improved. As already said, the farmer ought not to sell a particle of his hay or straw, because these are the principal materials for manure, and consequently it is infinitely worse to sell the manure itself. The manure thus economized

will suffice each year for the field which is to receive the root crop (No. 1).

After the crop of Oats (No. 6), the land is not yet exhausted, and might even yield another grain crop. It is better, however, to preserve this fertility than to be obliged to bring back continually this degree of fertility.

In his short treatise, it is impossible for me to mention one hundredth part of the means which we have of increasing our stock of manure. I shall content myself with alluding to the rich deposits of bog-mould which we possess, and the limestone which can be had every where. The very weeds even, which are the curse of our fields, may be converted into good manure.

DRAINING.

Although Drainage is a profitable improvement of the land, it is so expensive that I will say nothing more about it than what the Canadian farmers know already, that is, that the land ought to be so ditched that water cannot lodge and render the soil unproductive.

[There are always spare days, however, such as a damp day in harvest, or when the frost stops the ploughing in the fall, when underdraining might be done to a considerable extent. All drains in this climate should be at least 3-2 feet deep, cut as narrow as possible, and filled with eighteen inches of broken stones, or laid with draining tiles. Whenever the land is springy, or the subsoil heavy and retentive, draining will do good. The drains should be cut parallel, from 20 to 30 feet apart, and should run in the direction of the lowest level.]

STOCK.

As for the sort of Stock which ought to be kept, I would advise a regular proportion of all the animals which proper with us, because one sort may be fed on the food which another will not touch. For instance, Sheep eat greedily and get fat upon French Beans, which no other creature but man can use.

HORSES.—The Canadian Horses are, everything considered, the best breed for the country, but we ought to take care to raise only the best sorts: the system of leaving entire all the small miserable stallions, is sure to deteriorate the breed: Colts ought to be fed abundantly, particularly during the first winter after weaning. Nothing can be more absurd than the idea of starving a young Colt, for the purpose of making it hardy; still the idea is rather commonly entertained. Colts, like children, require ample liberty and ample nourishment.

CATTLE.—The Canadian breed is perhaps the best for the country, and the best to yield milk, butter, &c., provided care be taken to select the best bulls and cows to breed from. Too much care cannot be given to this point, and the calves must be supplied with good and abundant food. If it be desirable to cross the breed, so as to increase the quantity and quality of the milk, this can only be done with the Ayrshire breed, seeing that the larger breeds do not do so well for the country, at least in the present condition of its pastures.

[By keeping a thorough-bred Bull, and changing every three or four years, and rearing only the best heifers, the stock would gradually be brought up nearly approaching to the breed of the sire.]

A good Canadian Cow will, in my opinion, give more milk for the same allowance of food, than any other breed which I know.

[The profits of the dairy depend almost entirely on the care taken of the cattle during winter. Cows, warmly housed and well fed through the winter, and put on good pasture in summer, will yield much more than sufficient to pay for the difference of keep. In the Province of New Brunswick, cows are generally fed on dry hay in winter, kept in cold stables, and are pastured in the woods, or on fields which have been impoverished by excessive cropping. The consequence is, that, as reported by Farmers themselves to Professor Johnston, the average yield, per cow, for the season, is only 89 lbs. Butter, or 140 lbs. Cheese. In Ayrshire, as reported by Mr. Colman, Commissioner from the United States, the yield is, per cow, 300 lbs. Butter, or 500 lbs. Cheese. To ensure a similar yield, the following treatment is requisite:

Select good, well shaped, healthy cows. In winter, provide for them a warm stable on the south side of the barn. Water them in their stalls. Boil regularly for them a mixture composed of turnips, mangolds, or carrots, with chaff or cut hay, and a small allowance of barley, oats, or linseed: of this let them have two pailsful each, daily—and as much oat-straw or hay as they require. In summer, turn them into fields where they can have as much grass as they can consume. The cows should calve in April; the calves to get the milk for a month, and afterwards to be weaned off with skimmed milk and boiled linseed.]

SHEEP.—The Leicester breed is the best to give large and fat sheep, but it is not so advantageous as regards wool, which is perhaps the principal object for which sheep are kept. That breed which would possess a combination of the two qualities of fat meat and fine wool, and a vigorous constitution withal, would be the best for Lower Canada.