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Letters addressed to the Editor must be postpaid, or they will not be lifted.

TURNIPS.

On the comparative merits of various esculent roots—on the seasons for sowing them—on prejudices as to the influence of the moon upon vegetation—on an ingenious contrivance for depositing seeds in drills—on deep ploughing, and the advantage of sowing the soil between growing crops—on the extraordinary success and skill displayed by Mr. Walker, in the management of his farm near Holmesburg.

Philadelphia county, 1826.

JNO. HARE POWEL, Esq.
Corresp. Secretary of the Pennsylv. Agricultural Society.

SIR,—From the remarks I made in a late communication to the society relative to the cultivation, use, &c. of the common turnip; some may suppose I intended to depreciate the value of the ruta baga, or Swedish turnip, not so; for most purposes I believe it to be far superior to the other—it will keep better, and in the spring when succulent food is most wanted by the farmer for his stock, it will be found much sweeter, and as solid as when taken from the ground—it also answers for table use when the other kind has become spongy, bitter and unpalatable—I consider the ruta baga, however, for feeding purposes vastly inferior to the carrot and mangel wurzel, and therefore cannot subscribe to the high encomiums that have been so lavishly bestowed upon them—For the dairy they are less eligible than the white turnips, and they cannot be given to cows, in sufficient quantities to produce great increase of milk, without imparting a feculent smell and taste to the cream and butter. The leaves which are large and exuberant, are totally inadmissible for the dairy, as they are infinitely stronger and produce a more unpleasant odour than the bulb: but for dry cattle, sheep and swine, they afford an abundance of food. To bring them to perfection, you must cultivate them carefully upon the drill system, and whether they ever arrive to that condition or not, will depend in a great measure on the state of the weather. They require moisture, rich ground, and faithful tillage. Sown broad cast they will not come to any size, unless in a very fertile soil, with frequent hand hocings, which would be attended with more trouble and expense than in any other way. To those only, who dare deviate from the course of their forefathers, and have courage to follow the drill system, regardless of "the world's dread laugh," I would recommend the cultivation of them, for those who succeed will find themselves amply compensated for their labor. They have the same enemies to contend with the white turnip, and they require to be sown rather earlier; the finest I ever raised, were sown in the wet season of 1824, as late as the 24th July; so that in one respect they have the advantage of the carrots and mangel wurzel, inasmuch as that they may be sown after harvest, and after other crops. I sowed some last year between my carrots, but owing to the excessive drought, few of them vegetated; and those that did were small, though of good quality. Those I have mentioned as having raised in 1824, between the carrots, Mr. George Walker, who resides near Holmesburg, and who came from the great turnip county of Norfolk and from the vicinity of Holkham, assured me that to take them all in all, they were

the largest and finest he had ever seen in England, Scotland, or elsewhere. Mr. Walker practises the drill system, and has been himself successful in cultivating the ruta baga. This gentleman is an enlightened agriculturist, by profession, and I am persuaded, I hazard nothing in saying, that he has done as much, or more, in improving a poor worn out soil, with the aid of less manure, than any other man in the country. This may appear a bold assertion, but in support of my opinion, I appeal to the many intelligent farmers and gentlemen by whom he is surrounded, who knew what his farm was when he purchased it, about 4 years since, and who know what it is now. It exhibits a pleasing spectacle, of what may be done by industry, skill and economy, and confirms me in the sentiments I have always entertained, that deep and repeated ploughings, in proper seasons, (notwithstanding all that has been said about the difference of climate, are the fundamental principles of good farming, here as well as in England.—There they plough deep, in order to get rid of moisture; and here we should plough deep in order to retain it. This, by many, will be considered a paradox, but it is nevertheless true. I am not philosopher enough to account for all the causes in the latter instance, but I have had sufficient practice to convince me of their good effects. Mr. Walker ploughs from 19 to 12 inches deep, and by a judicious rotation of crops, he last year raised from 35 to 40 bushels of wheat to the acre, weighing from 63 to 64 pounds per bushel; whilst some of his neighbors, on much richer ground, did not get more than half the quantity. The last summer, the latest and driest I ever experienced, I had about an acre of carrots, and about the same of mangel wurzel, next to each other in the same field; they grew on a declivity to a southern exposure. They were sown and planted near a public road, and attracted the attention of all who passed by—to some they were objects of curiosity, to others of admiration, and to many of ridicule—so intense was the heat and so great the drought, that I almost despaired of getting any thing like half the crop I had anticipated; having, however, experienced the efficiency of ploughing often in dry weather, between growing plants, I determined my hoe plough should not be idle.—After the mangel wurzel arrived at a certain height, I could not pass the plough between them, by reason of their irregular manner of growing; amongst the carrots, whose roots do not extend above the surface, and therefore present no obstacle, I ploughed every fifteen or twenty days in the driest time, and was thus afforded the best opportunity (but such an one as I hope will not for some time to come occur again,) of showing the beneficial consequences resulting therefrom. The soil between the carrots, even where I had cut the tops off within an inch or two of the crown, and thus as it were leaving the ground bare and exposed to the scorching rays of the sun, was always loose and moist; whereas the soil between the mangel wurzel became, in comparison with the other, parched and hard, and the leaves so dry, that you might have reduced them in an instant to the consistency of impalpable powder, by rubbing them between your hands. The carrot tops continued green, beautiful, and luxuriant throughout the whole of this fiery ordeal. The beginning of September, I began cutting them, and hauled in almost every day a hand cart load or two, containing as much as a man and a boy could well pull, for the horses and hogs, until the 11th of November, when I began to harvest them. By this time the roots from whence the tops were taken in September, had thrown out tops again as large and as fine as those first cut, and I hauled in upwards of 24 cart loads, pressed on, each containing as much as a good horse could draw. I could not have had less than 15 tons of roots and tops to the acre; the tops full grown, will average nearly half the weight of the roots; they are equally valuable for feed; no granivorous animal will refuse either, and this is saying more than can, I think, with truth, be said of any other esculent. I had not a carrot in the crop that weighed half as much as I have before had them to weigh; it is therefore probable that if the season had been favorable, I should, have had double the quantity.—I did not perceive that any injury was sustained by the roots from which the tops were taken. It may be thought presumption in me to advise the adoption of a system, which men of talents,

science, and much more experience have recommended and urged over and over again to little purpose—but I cannot help expressing my astonishment at the unwillingness manifested by the great majority of husbandmen, to vary in the smallest degree from the beaten track of their ancestors. In almost every branch of the art, extraordinary exertions are made, and various experiments tried, with a view to improvement, to fame or to fortune, whilst those engaged in the first and most essential of all, in that which gives life and sustenance, and vigor to the whole, fold their arms with apathetic indifference, and, as if the spirit of emulation had become extinct within them, listlessly pursue the unbroken "tenor of their way." My ideas on this subject cannot be better exemplified, than by making the following extract from an eloquent address delivered before the Philadelphia Society for promoting Agriculture, at their annual meeting in 1822, by Nicholas Biddle, Esq., who says—

"With all the splendid success of Mr. Coke, of Norfolk, in rendering his land nearly ten times as productive, he used the drill husbandry for sixteen years before any individual followed his example; and even now his improvements are supposed by himself to extend about one mile in a year."

Now, these facts show at once, that such are the unaccountable and inveterate prejudices of farmers, with few exceptions, comparatively speaking, that though they have "demonstration strong as proofs of holy writ" before their eyes, they obstinately and pertinaciously refuse to profit by the opportunity thus presented to them; and because the method bears the character of novelty, advance as an excuse, for not imitating that which would redound so much to their interest, this sapient, and as they suppose unanswerable argument—that it is *book farming*, and therefore will come to nothing. So that according to this sort of rural logic, in order to become a good practical farmer, it is indispensably necessary that you should not read about these matters; or if you do, nothing at least beyond the pages of an almanack, and then chiefly with the view of consulting the phases of the moon and the signs of the zodiac, and by these to be governed with more than heathen superstition in all the operations of ploughing, planting, sowing, gathering, &c. Some time since, in passing through the Philadelphia market, I observed a woman of German extraction with a basket of prodigious fine parsnips; they measured 2½ to 3 feet in length, handsomely tapering from the crown to the end. I asked her, how she managed to raise them so large and fine? for, said I, mine have turned out forked and indifferent this season. May be, said she, you don't sow them in the right sign. Perhaps not, I replied; I have no faith in such things. Ah, but there is something in it for all, said she, and you must sow in the sign of the fish; (thinks I-to-myself, this is a fish story.) On my return home, however, I thought I would look at my memorandum book to see how far it was from the fish when I committed the seed to the ground; and it actually appeared that I had accidentally sown on the 22d of May, 1824, which was on the second and last day of pisces, the very time prescribed by the credulous old woman to insure success; I therefore attributed my failure to that which I had before supposed to have been the real causes, a deficiency of tillage and a scarcity of manure. Jethro Tull, who has written an ingenious and one of the best treatises on husbandry extant, thinks it not unlikely that hogs were the first tillers or ploughers of the ground, and that rational men, not willing to be excelled by instinctive brutes, invented an instrument something like a plough, to break and divide the soil for the better reception of seed. Now, if he is right in his conjecture, and we continue to progress in the improvement of agriculture at the same rate it has advanced from the beginning, it may reasonably be presumed, that in the course of some dozen centuries hence, the drill system may come into pretty general use. But to return once more to the carrots, in the sowing of which I think I have discovered some improvement. You have seen the tubes I had made, with the intention of obviating the necessity of stooping, and of planting with precision and expedition; seed of various kinds. The carrot seed, however, is so different from all others, and so difficult to sow with any degree of accuracy, that it never entered my mind to use them for that purpose, until the last season. On the 30th April,

as I have before mentioned, I had the ground prepared in the manner I have stated to you in a former communication. (See vol. 1, Society's Memoirs.)—The drills on the ridges were already drawn, but it blew so violent a gale, I found it impossible to keep the greater part of the seed from blowing away as soon as it had escaped from the band; fearful of a storm, I was anxious to get in the seed immediately on the fresh ground—but how was it to be done? We could make no progress in the usual way. In this dilemma, and at this moment, it occurred to me to try the tubes. It was a happy thought; for in four hours I had the satisfaction to see the whole acre completed by one man and myself, with each a tube. I had put the seed in soak forty-eight hours before, and after draining the water off through a fine sieve, mixed well with it about an equal quantity of plaster of paris. With this mixture we filled our right hand waistcoat pockets, and taking as much between the two fore-fingers and thumb as could be retained without wasting, we dealt it out into the tubes, which were held over the drill as close to the bottom of it as possible, we walking in the furrow; so that we were enabled to get on at a tolerable smart gait, eight or ten paces, without resorting again to the pockets for a fresh supply; and I found afterwards that they came up more regular than any I had ever sown. Blow high, blow low, I shall never use any other method. The tubes are very simple, and cost from 33 to 40 cents. I use them myself for all seeds sown or planted in drill, and even potatoes, which I cut into single eyes. All who have seen the tubes highly approve of them.

JAMES WILLIAMS.

*I prefer sowing all long-topped roots on ridges; particularly carrots and parsnips, because they are afforded a deeper till, are sown with greater despatch than by line; and, except under a vertical sun, the ground is less exposed to a flat and regular surface.

For seeds, three fourths of an inch diameter of the tube is large enough. For potatoes, according to the size of the cuttings; mine is about two inches, and 3 feet 6 inches long. I carry the sets in an apron bag before me, tied round the waist; and am thus enabled to plant while standing erect, and am at the same time furnished with a tolerable good substitute for a walking stick. The top of the tube, in the form of a funnel, or hopper, is about 3½ to 4½ inches in diameter, and the bottom 2½ to 3. The former is for the better reception of seed, the latter to prevent the tube from clogging with earth.

Latest from England.

The packet ship William Thompson, Capt. Bowne, arrived at N. York on Tuesday last from Liverpool, whence she sailed on the 20th of July. By this arrival, the Editors of the Commercial Advertiser have received a variety of foreign Journals, including the latest Liverpool, London, Irish, Scotch and Hamburg newspapers. In addition to the supplies from their regular correspondents, they are indebted to the politeness of Capt. Bowne for a variety of the latest papers, including Gore's Liverpool Advertiser of the 20th of July, and London papers of the evening of the 13th.

The late Fire in Liverpool—We did not, we believe, says the Albion, underrate the value of the property destroyed, when we named 1100,000 though we understand, not more than half that sum has been insured, or has, as yet at least, been publicly known to have been insured.—The cotton was 2,500 bags, or a value of 20 to 25,000; the grain about 30,000 measures, or 115,000 value; ships' apparel 110,000.

Hanburgh papers to the 9th July contain intelligence from St. Petersburg to the 30th of June. The last funeral honors had been paid to the Empress Elizabeth on the 16th, when her remains were deposited in the Church of St. Peter. Count Woronzow and the Marquis of Ribeaupierre had at last quitted the capital to proceed to Akermann and open the conferences to be holden at that place with the Turkish Plenipotentiaries.

An article from Berlin states that the King had gone through Dresden to the bath of Toplitz; and that the Prussian Committee in favor of the Greeks had sent a first description of 30,000 dollars, or 7,500 sterling, to Mr. Eyard, the Swiss Philhellene; to be employed as he was to think it best for the aid or relief of that heroic people.

In Gore's Advertiser there are seventeen ships for various ports in the United States.

One hundred and thirty three members have been returned to the New Parliament from England and Wales, who were not members of the last Parliament.

The meeting of the new Parliament is prorogued to the 24th of August—the present month.

The Liverpool Commercial Chronicle announces the arrival of Mr. Cooper, the American Novelist, on his way to Lyons with his family.

The state of the Commerce and Manufactures of Manchester, is very far from improving, and the movements of the idle operative, in large bodies, and often in a riotous manner, gives the magistrates, and military patrols enough of employment. Tuesday the 18th, was said to be the worst market day ever known. Every thing was flat, and manufacturers of wealth and rank were retiring from the business.

Letters from Riga, state that in consequence of the excessive dry weather, the new crop of flax will hardly fail of being a short one, as a great deal of the seed has been destroyed. All the crops are rather injured.

The Earl of Chichester is dead—His remains were interred on the 13th July.

The family of a person called Gitanos, consisting of eight individuals, has been sent into Spain, escorted by gen-d'armes. The head of this family had been accused of murder and cannibalism, in the department de l'Herault, from some expressions used by one of his young children. It appears that the charge could not be substantiated and no proof could be found of this double crime.

The Courier of the 18th ult. states that Mr. Price, the American Manager, has become the Lessee of the Gaiety Lane Theatre, having taken the contract off the hands of Mr. Esdaile in consideration of receiving from the latter his deposit of 2,000l. The Committee signified, through Sir Calcraft, their assent to this arrangement on Saturday evening. Mr. Price leaves London in a few days for the United States, and will be back by the middle of October, to superintend the opening of Drury Lane. We wish him success; but he must remember, he has to administer to a public taste somewhat more refined than that of the United States. [Bah!]

A certain farmer and his dame, possessed of more wealth than was placed their two daughters in a seminary established for finishing the education of young ladies. After a considerable time had elapsed, the farmer's spouse waited on the mistress of the school to hear her report, which proved to be tolerably satisfactory, excepting as regarded their progress in the musical department, in which the pains of the instructress bestowed on the pupils proved entirely fruitless. The governess honestly dissuaded the good dame from a perseverance in that branch of education, and candidly told her, that the young lady had no capacity for it. This friendly advice, however, failed in its intended effect: for the sagacious advocate for a good education, bridling herself up and placing her arms akimbo, replied with great vehemence, "Madam, don't tell me about capacity, when I don't spare expense; and I declare you will get her one innards safely."

Blanks for sale at 1000 units.