

HOME AND FARM.

This department of THE CRITIC is devoted exclusively to the interests of the Farmers in the Maritime Provinces. Contributions upon Agricultural topics, or that in any way relate to Farm life, are cordially invited. Newsy notes of Farmers' gatherings or Grange meetings will be promptly inserted. Farmers' wives and daughters should make this department in THE CRITIC a medium for the exchange of ideas on such matters a more directly affect them.

RESTORING LOST FERTILITY.—In some parts of Pictou county, and in other portions of the province which have been long settled, the farmers complain that the land has nearly run out, and that, notwithstanding the manure they plough in, the crop taken off the land will scarcely pay for the outlay of seed, time and labor expended upon it. This lost fertility of the soil is very frequently the result of continuous cropping; but even intelligent farmers, who thoroughly understand the value of the rotation of crops, find that the soil is year by year becoming less productive, and this despite the use of manure and commercial fertilizers. A practical farmer in Hants county, in writing to us on this point, says that he always spreads the manure on the land in the autumn, ploughing it in as soon as the first dry days in spring have come round. This covering of manure he believes to be of great advantage to the land, it probably producing some chemical action by which the soil is benefited; at any rate, after 13 years' experience, he is convinced that his crops are from 20 to 40 per cent. better in consequence; and, as he very tersely remarks, "Try it, brother farmers, and experience will make you converts."

A correspondent, writing to the *Country Gentleman* on this question, strongly recommends that turnip or kale seed be sown upon the land so soon as the regular crop is harvested. This crop, he says, may be affected by drouth, but, if given a fair chance, the seed will grow rapidly, and nature will thus provide herself with a covering for the naked earth, which will restore to the soil the vegetable matter of which it is so much in need. The correspondent referred to made the discovery of this by accident. Having a field of turnips, the growth of which had been retarded by drouth, he came to the conclusion that the crop was not worth harvesting; during subsequent rains and fine weather late in the autumn the turnips grew rapidly, the foliage being most abundant. As the frost and snow came on suddenly that season, he allowed the turnips to remain, and early in the spring ploughed the land, sowing it with timothy and clover. That summer he cut more grass from the field thus treated than he had ever done before, and this fact led him to think that a second crop of vegetables, if allowed to remain in the land, must be of great advantage to it. He says that for upwards of 20 years he has continued this practice, and while he does not ignore the fact that barn manure is absolutely essential to the fertility of the soil, he nevertheless attributes his more than average crops to his plan of allowing the second crop to go back to the soil. This plan, we believe, is known to some of the farmers in Kings and Annapolis counties; but that it is not very generally practiced in any part of the province is apparent to those conversant with the condition of many of the older farms.

THE DAIRYMEN'S ASSOCIATION.—If any proof were needed of the value of organization among farmers, or among those who follow a specialty, such as dairying, it would be furnished by the splendid gathering of the members of the Dairymen's Association, which took place at Amherst last week. Next to our own experience, the experience of others must always be of the greatest value; but, unless opportunities are given for the interchange of ideas, we are apt to grow conservative in our methods, and inclined to regard our manner of obtaining results as *par excellence*. Dairying is a branch of farming in which a man requires both knowledge and common sense; knowledge to know how best to improve the stock, how to feed the cows so that they will produce the largest quantity of milk without injuring the quality, and finally how to manufacture the cream into the best and most saleable butter; common sense to understand how to act when unforeseen circumstances arise, and take advantage of the experience we ourselves have gained. As a business, dairy-farming in the Maritime Provinces is still in its infancy, but that it has an assured future is beyond cavil. The advances made in the improvement of dairy stock during the past ten years prove that some, at least, among our farmers have their weather-eye open to the possibilities of the business, and each year we have additional proofs that dairying, under proper circumstances, will give any man a fair return for his outlay of capital and time. That we are enabled thus to speak is due entirely to the Dairymen's Association, the members of which, collectively and individually, have been untiring in their efforts to build up the dairying industry of this province, and to whose zeal we are indebted for the publication of most valuable papers bearing upon the several branches of this particular kind of farming.

THE DAIRYMAN'S MEETING.—Between fifty and sixty dairymen assembled in convention at Amherst on Wednesday and Thursday of last week. Outside the routine business of the Association, the time was chiefly occupied in the reading of valuable papers bearing upon the industry, several of which are worthy of a wide circulation. The Rev. A. C. Macdonald presided in a manner most acceptable to the dairymen, and his remarks, which were the outcome of long experience, were listened to attentively by the members of the Association. A resolution favoring the adoption of the best means of disseminating information with respect to dairying was moved and strongly supported by Professor Smith, of Truro.

We think it would pay large breeders to experiment with their hens. Put them in small flocks from time to time and watch them. Pick out the best layers and put them together and select the pick of the flock for breeding stock.

BEEs AND FRUIT.—That bees are an important factor in the economy of nature has long been proved. Only a few years ago I came across the following in the *American Bee Journal*: "Most of the readers of the *Journal* are aware that in England melons, cucumbers, pumpkins and squashes cannot be raised in the open air. They are all raised in greenhouses and hot-bed frames, and many hours have I worked in the garden at home in England, with a fine, long camel's-hair brush conveying the pollen from blossom to blossom, where the bees could not get to do the work; and even now in this climate, if we do not have good weather for the bees to work on the fruit-blossoms, and especially on red clover saved for seeds, we get but a poor crop. Last year I had a good crop of mammoth clover seed, while a few miles from here there was none, and I think I owe it to my colonies of Italian bees, for they worked on it first-rate.—W. Addenbrooke"

A few weeks ago I heard two old farmers discussing bees and buckwheat. "I tell you," said one, "buckwheat is a good thing for bees." "Yes," replied the other, "but the bees are not a very good thing for the buckwheat." "No, I suppose not," said No. 1. And thus the conversation ran on until I ventured to ask Mr. Farmer how he knew that buckwheat was injured by the bees. "Why, they take something from it, don't they? If they do, it injures it. How can it be otherwise?" replied my farmer friend. I then explained that I was a bee-keeper, and also a raiser of buckwheat; that my buckwheat, which was at times fairly "swarming" with bees, yielded fully as well, if not better, than buckwheat that was far removed from the busy workers. I explained how necessary were the bees for the fertilization of blossoms; that if the blossoms were covered with muslin, so that the bees had no access to them, they produced no fruit. My opponent contended that it might not be lack of visits from bees that made the covered blossoms unfertile, but lack of heat from the sun's rays, as the result of being covered. I then cited to him the experiments of Prof. Lazonby, of Ohio, in covering strawberries with boxes, and fertilizing one variety with the pollen from another. Specimens that were left unfertilized produced no fruit; those that were fertilized did. I also told that oft repeated story of how the fruit-growers of a certain town in Massachusetts years ago compelled the bee-keepers in that vicinity to move their bees out of town. The bees injured the fruit—so said the fruit-growers. In a few years they were persuading the bee-keepers to bring back their bees, as the crops of fruit had been exceptionally light since the removal of the bees. The bees were brought back, and with them came abundant crops. I told him that crops of red clover seed could not be raised in Australia until bumble bees were imported to fertilize the blossoms. I then waxed eloquent, and declared that the beautiful colors were not given flowers simply to please the human eye, the grateful fragrance to regale the human olfactory, nor did the nectar flow simply that it might be gathered up and used to tickle human palates; these things were the blossom's advertisement, which attracted to it the honey-loving bee, which came, bringing with it the fertilizing pollen from distant flowers.—From a paper read before the Michigan Horticultural Society at Adrian, by W. Z. Hutchinson.

POINTS IN TILE DRAINAGE.—The great secret in making underdraining a permanent and valuable improvement is in securing uniform fall when laying the tile, and maintaining a good outlet. Both these points are important. When the outlet has been closed for a year or two, if there be a good fall, re-opening it will cause the washing out of obstructing sediment.

How to SELL GOOD BUTTER.—A floating paragraph contains a good (though not entirely new) hint on this point. It remarks that, wherever practicable, farmers can generally make it pay to produce the finest quality of gilt edge butter, and have regular days of taking it weekly to certain families in neighboring villages or cities, with whom a previous arrangement has been made. In this way a steady market can always be commanded, and at better prices than can be secured in any other way. Well-to-do town-people will always pay well for a quality of butter suited to their taste.

Meal will fatten old sheep better than grain, as they cannot masticate the grain well with their poor teeth. Sheep dislike to eat meal, as it flies up into their nostrils. This trouble can be remedied by wetting it slightly, or what is better, cut the hay, wet it and sprinkle the meal over it.

It is only a little provender that the fat cow throws from her meal box; only a few oats that drop through the horses manger; only a few nubbins of corn that the pigs root out of the trough; only a lock or two of hay that the sheep trample under foot at each feeding; but in the course of the long winter these little things amount to an enormous whole, and it is all unnecessary waste.

Ducks are very fond of cooked turnips, potatoes, &c., and will do much better when kept mostly on a vegetable diet.

ADVICE TO MOTHERS.—Are you disturbed at night and broken of your rest by a sick child suffering and crying with pain of Cutting Teeth? If so send at once and get a bottle of "Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup," for Children Teething. Its value is incalculable. It will relieve the poor little sufferer immediately. Depend upon it, mothers; there is no mistake about it. It cures Dysentery and Diarrhoea, regulates the Stomach and Bowels, cures Wind Colic, softens the Gums, reduces Inflammation, and gives tone and energy to the whole system. "Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup" for children teething is pleasant to the taste and is the prescription of one of the oldest and best female physicians in the United States, and is for sale by all druggists throughout the world. Price twenty-five cents a bottle. Be sure and ask for "Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup," and take no other kind.

A CARD

To all who are suffering from the errors and indiscretions of youth, nervous weakness, early decay, loss of manhood, etc., I will send a recipe that will cure you, FREE OF CHARGE. This great remedy was discovered by a missionary in South America. Send a self-addressed envelope to the Rev. JOSEPH T. INMAN, Station D, New York City.