

HOME AND FARM.

This department of THE CRITIC is devoted exclusively to the interests of the Farmers in the Maritime Province. 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 as more directly affect them.

**REPORT ON AGRICULTURE.**—The report of the Secretary for Agriculture contains many facts which are interesting not only to agriculturists, but to those Nova Scotians who take a pride in the development of our province, in which agriculture must ever take a foremost place. According to the report, there are now 91 distinctive agricultural societies in operation in Nova Scotia, 3 new societies having been formed during the past year. These societies have a membership of 4,532 persons, the annual subscriptions amount to \$5,344.90, and the total amount granted by the Provincial Government was \$6,653 50, making the total receipts from all sources \$11,997.

**SOCIETIES.**—The report contains a tabulated statement of the standing of the agricultural societies for the past 23 years. By this it appears that in 1864 there were 37 societies with 1,744 members, showing that there are at the present time more than double as many societies in active operation, the proportionate membership being about one-third greater for each society than for the first named period.

**REPORTS.**—From the reports of the several societies we gather that a large sum of money has been expended in the purchase of thoroughbred stock, a smaller amount in the purchase of seed grain, and a small sum for the purchase of agricultural books, periodicals and newspapers. From a list of the officers which is published, it is quite evident that many of our most intelligent and active farmers are doing their best to promote, through these societies, the agricultural interests of the province.

**EXHIBITIONS.**—During the year 1886 ten exhibitions were held in nine counties, two having been held in the County of Shelburne. The prize lists of these were as follows: Antigonish, \$1,124; Digby, \$281; Guysborough, \$500; Halifax, \$600; Inverness, \$700; Lunenburg, \$1,141; Queens, \$327; Shelburne, \$240; Yarmouth, \$1,040.

**BONUSES.**—The government pays a bonus of ten per cent on the first cost of all thoroughbred horses, sheep and Holstein and Hereford cattle. Under the provision of this act, \$742 were expended during 1886. The importations being as follows:—

	Original cost.
J. C. Mahon for Holstein bull "De Prine" and five Holstein heifers.....	\$3030 00
T. R. Black for Hereford bull "Ledbury" and two Hereford heifers	761 00
M. A. Logan, et al., Percheron horse, "Gold Spray".....	2000 00
George Ruffee, Percheron horse, "Duke de Charteris".....	800 00
N. H. Meagher, Holstein bull, "Karel," and two Holstein heifers	750 00
N. H. Meagher, three Shropshire down ewes.....	84 00
	\$7425 00

**WEATHER AND CROPS.**—The spring of 1886 was one of the most favorable that has been known in Nova Scotia for many years. Ploughing in many sections commenced early in April, and the weather being dry and warm afforded an excellent opportunity for seeding. The rainy weather in May and June was a great drawback to those farmers who had not taken advantage of the early season. The rains being cold, the crops made but little progress; indeed, in some localities they were washed out by the freshets. The summer drought was somewhat prolonged, but it was followed by copious showers and magnificent autumn weather. The potato harvest, which generally averages about 8 millions of bushels, was last year under the average, saving in the Counties of Kings and Annapolis, where the returns show a good yield. Grain growing is not increasing in favor among the farmers, last season's operations show that the yield in oats, wheat and barley, was quite up to the average, although the grain was small and the straw short. About 2 millions of oats are annually raised in the province. In the hay crops, Lunenburg and Yarmouth report an over average. Shelburne and Eastern Halifax an average, and the rest of the province from 10 to 25 per cent below the average yield. About 600,000 tons of hay are annually cut and housed in Nova Scotia. The apple crop was at least 20 per cent greater than that of any previous year. In Annapolis and Kings Counties greater attention is being paid to fruit culture, while in other counties young orchards have been set out. Among the most saleable apples grown are the Baldwin, Northern Spy, Gravenstein, Nonpareil, Rhode Island, Greening, Pippin and Golden Russet.

**MAKING FRUIT TREES.**—On a great many gentlemen's places I find the gardeners are in the habit every fall of putting stable manure around the young fruit trees. This is a great mistake as it brings to the stem of the tree all kinds of worms, which in the course of the winter will eat into the tree and kill it. If the trees are planted in the fall or spring, they should have a little covering over the tops of the roots, say a little hay or straw, and after the first year no more, and fruit growers will find the tree will be more healthy and strong. We do not find the nurserymen covering up the young trees every year.—*W. C. Morton, Del.*

**PLANTING STRAWBERRY BEDS.**—Now that the season for making plantations of strawberries has arrived, a consideration of the best methods of producing good results with this fruit may not be amiss.

The most important point when the planting is done in the spring, is to set the plants in early. By so doing, probably nine-tenths of the loss arising from dry weather can be obviated. A strawberry-plant should not be moved after new rootlets begin to form in the spring, or the crowns com-

mence making rapid growth. If the plants are set early, the roots get a chance to start before or as soon as the tops, while if planting is delayed until the sun becomes powerful and the ground dry and warm, the result will not be nearly as good.

As a rule, the best soil for a strawberry bed is the lowest and dampest that can be found, provided it does not overflow and heave with the frost. It is useless to attempt to raise fine fruit unless an abundant supply of moisture can be kept up. But in selecting a low situation for this crop it should be remembered that immunity from late frost in the spring, when the plants are in bloom, is a great advantage.

For ordinary field culture the rows are made about three feet apart, and the plants set twelve to eighteen inches in the row, while for garden culture the plants may be set two feet apart each way. Sometimes, in order to save plants in field culture, they are set three feet apart, and the spaces between in the rows are filled by "runners" during the summer; but as this method is an additional tax on the strength of the plants, it is more desirable to set them at the proper distances, if time and plants can be afforded.

There are two methods of planting commonly practised—that of setting the plants by hand in the furrow, or ground "marked out," and setting them with the spade, which requires two persons—one to make an incision with the spade, and one to place the plant therein, the space being closed by the pressure of the foot. For the second method, good strong plants, with long roots well straightened out, give the best satisfaction, as they are easiest to plant and most likely to live. A plant should never be set too shallow, as it is almost impossible to keep the soil up around the crown, and have it do well. A plant set too deep can have the soil removed from it, but one set too shallow is continually being washed out. Strong young plants are best for new beds.

If plants are set early, the beds will probably get sufficiently weedy to need hoeing and cultivating early. Until the plants become well established, the best tools for cultivating are a fine-toothed harrow for the space between the rows, and a common hoe for working around the plants. If the soil is inclined to raise a crop of sorrel instead of strawberries, the weed should be removed "root and branch" early in the season. No weed is nearly so injurious to a strawberry bed as this, as it lives over from year to year, and, after the second season, it will almost overrun the bed if not checked on the start. Mulch of some kind, such as salt hay, straw, or forest-leaves, is one of the most valuable aids in keeping the soil clear of weeds, as well as in protecting the soil from extreme drought, and keeping the fruit clean. It is impossible to raise extra fine fruit without a good covering of mulch.

It seems reasonable to suppose, considering the composition of the strawberry, that it does not require a great deal of fertilizer; but this is a mistake. It does exhaust a great deal from the soil. In proof of this it will be found that the sod of an old strawberry-patch is not worth much for a succeeding crop unless it is re-enriched. Some of the best fertilizers for strawberries are well rotted manure, finely-ground bone, and potash. Good muck, either composted with these, or used plain, is also a good fertilizer.

There is nothing that conduces more strongly to the health and vitality of a strawberry bed than thorough cultivation during the summer. With this the soil retains moisture better, and tends to the production of "runners," which would be otherwise slow in forming.—*C. A. Maclean, of Ocean County, N. J., in Examiner.*

**HOW TO RAISE LOTS O' TATERS IN DRY SEASON.**—One summer, several years ago, we tried the following experiment with a small patch of potatoes that were suffering from protracted drouth. We procured a piece of scantling about 2 or 2½ inches square and 6 feet long, sharpened one end of it in the form of an elongated cone, about 12 to 15 inches in length. Then we took that spike to the patch, and pressing it down deep as we could, conveniently, in the centre of each hill, we reamed it out, so to speak, by working the upper end of the pointed wood-hand-spike, round and round, until we made a funnel shaped hole in the centre of the hill, large enough to contain about one-half gallon of water. Each evening while the drouth lasted we filled the holes in the centre of the hills with water.

The result at digging time much more than compensated us for all our time and trouble, for in each and every hill we found a perfect nest of large potatoes lying all around the funnel-shaped hole, almost as nicely arranged as beads upon a necklace. We counted several hills, and they numbered from 25 to 30, and "nary a little one" among them.

My recollection is that this experiment was tried in the summer of 1881, which was the driest summer that we have had in the last quarter of a century.—*Indiana Farmer.*

Grass, where crops will not grow, must be inferior, and poor pasture is undoubtedly unprofitable. But surely good pasture would pay. If animals can fill themselves in an hour, instead of in a day, as is usual, surely there is much advantage.

**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, moths: there is no mistake about it. It cures Dysentery and Diarrhea, 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 and nurses 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.