

The potato is said to have been first cultivated in Scotland about 1683, but was then confined to the gardens. It appears from the general report of Scotland that in the year 1725-6 the few potato plants then existing near Edinburgh were left in the same spot of ground from year to year, a few tubers being taken and used in autumn; the parent plants were well covered with litter to save them from the winter's frost.

Different counties of Scotland claim the honour of having first cultivated potatoes in the open field. One account states that in 1728 one Thomas Prentice, a day labourer, first planted potatoes in the open fields at Kilsyth, and that his success was such that every farmer and cottager followed his example.

Ignorance of the mode of cooking them also retarded their culture. A person who had been invited to taste the first potatoes grown in the county of Forfar, about 1730, related that the roots had been merely heated, and that they adhered to the teeth like glue, while their flavour was far from agreeable. The food was about to be condemned through the ignorance of the cook, when the accidental arrival of a gentleman who had tasted a potato in Lancashire caused the rejected roots to be remanded back to the hot trifles, till they became as dainty as they had before been nauseous.

On the potato being improved and returned to America, it seems to have had the same prejudices to contend with as it had at first in Britain. A writer in an early volume of the *Cultivator*, speaking of the re-introduction of this esculent as a curiosity upon the table of the Governor of Massachusetts, says that when a child he learned from a very aged woman, who was a cook in the said Governor's family, that she first saw the potato there about the beginning of the eighteenth century, and that they were small and of a disagreeable flavour. Her observation then was, "If great folks like such things, as these because they are novelties, I am sure they are welcome to them for all me." Much prejudice existed against the potato, causing a very scant cultivation of it even so late as the war of the revolution. Belknap, in his history of New Hampshire, states "That in 1719 a large number of emigrants came to this country from the north of Ireland, and settled a township which they called Londonderry, and that among other things they also introduced the culture of potatoes, which were first planted in the garden of Nathaniel Walker, of Andover. These people being called Irish, the potato they introduced was called the Irish potato, which name they still bear in many parts of the United States."

W. R.

Cobourg.

Hurdles for the Farm.

In England, on all arable farms, there are many rods of hurdle fences erected daily during the season. Every shepherd knows what it is to have to make a large enclosure once, if not twice, each day. On a farm in Hampshire the writer has many times set such "fences," as they would be called here, but at home they were called "pitching hurdles." Every English farmer knows all there is to know about such work, and the wonder is that here in Canada scarcely any one thinks of making these hurdles or erecting such fences, though there is little doubt

they would make a cheap and durable, as well as most convenient and useful fence.

In England, when a flock of sheep were to be moved from one field to another (usually turnip fields), a waggon loaded with wattle or gate hurdles preceded the flock. These hurdles were hauled and distributed lengthwise along the field, and were afterwards all erected in a straight line. A few were left at one end in excess of those required to make the long fence; and these were used to enclose, crosswise, about half an acre to begin folding with. When all was ready, the sheep were brought in by the dog, and the job so far was completed for that day. The time required to pitch such hurdles is very small. A crowbar (made usually of an old musket barrel, with a heavy, solid, pointed end, welded on to the breach of it), is driven into the earth about 12 to 18 inches deep, and a stake plunged into the hole thus made, and after putting up the hurdle in line, a wire, or other kind of shackle, is slipped over the projecting end and over the end of the stake, including also the end of the next hurdle; thus the ends of both hurdles are securely fastened to the stakes. When a shepherd is naturally a smart hand at this work, and does his best, about one minute is sufficient to erect each hurdle, and sometimes, under favourable circumstances, a less time will suffice. It therefore follows that about sixty of these hurdles can be thus erected and placed in the form of a solid and durable fence in about an hour.

Each of these hurdles is 8 feet long by 3 feet 6 inches high, and consequently there would at the above-mentioned speed, be nearly five hundred feet of fence set up in an hour. Of course the hurdles are so laid when being removed from the waggon, as not to be required to be carried far before being raised into the line. Still, each hurdle has to be lifted and placed, the hole made, the stake pitched, and all shackled together, and it seems a good deal of work to do in such short time; but it is often done. Afterwards, it may be many days before the long or main line of hurdles is removed, as piece after piece of the turnips or other similar food is each morning fenced off, and the hurdles necessary to do this are of course carried some yards each. This is much slower work than erecting the main line, where all the hurdles are laid ready to the hand. Now it would be manifestly impossible for a sheep farmer at home to do without this or some similar fence. Of late years, wire is used as being still more easy of moving. Nettings, also of various kinds, are now freely introduced; but these would not answer in Canada. The hurdles, however, would, there is little doubt, form a most useful addition to our farms. At home, the cost of an ordinary wattle hurdle used to be about 13 cents, whilst that of a gate hurdle was probably twice that sum. Timber, of course, was worth much more in England than in Canada, and such gate hurdles ought not to

cost more than 30 cents each here, especially when proper precautions are used to have their construction reserved for a bad day, when little else could be done. If the bars or thin rails of which they are composed were split out, and laid by in a pile, across and across, so as to take them out of "wind," and the ends also similarly treated, there is no doubt a handy man who will "move" himself could make at least six such hurdles a day. There is no nice work required on them, no smoothing of the bars, simply reducing any over-lying thickness or width at the end with a draw-knife, and they are then most rapidly put together, and pinned through the heads of the bars.

Black ash or cedar, split into bars about three inches and a-half by half inch or five-eighths in thickness, are all that is required for them. Five bars are used for each gate, and two short braces. The leads or ends should also be split out of black ash, and are usually one-and-a-half by two-and-a-half inches, and five feet long. In morticing the heads, two or three might be bored at once by contriving a means of retaining them in their proper place when boring them, which boring might be done with an ordinary carpenter's morticing machine with great ease and accuracy. In all these small matters, there will of course require more or less arrangement in carrying them into effect; but once convinced of the advantages and the necessity, there will soon be made good progress towards completion.

Almost all these appliances on the farm are condemned as difficult, if not impracticable, generally on account of having no place to work in—no shop, in fact, where such things can readily be done, and which ought always to exist and to be provided with tools of sufficient variety to enable amateurs to do good work. Good professional carpenters will not work without good tools, and they must also be in good order; and yet we often see poor workmen trying to do a job of work with such tools as a good hand would despise and utterly refuse to use.

3.

Wire Fences and their Construction

I have had a good deal of experience in wire fence, and have come to the conclusion that I want no better. I shall buy no more rails at twenty dollars per hundred, nor have I done so for the past ten years. Wire takes less posts in number and smaller in size.

It makes some difference what kind of stock one wants to pasture as to the construction of the fence. Where you do not turn out hogs or sheep I think the following plan is about right—the one I have adopted and find entirely satisfactory, viz:

Cut posts six feet in length; allow two feet to go into the ground, then thirteen inches from the ground bore a three-eighth inch hole; seven inches higher, do.; eight inches, do.; eight inches, do.; nine inches, do. This you will see takes five wires, and the last is three inches from the top of the post. Set posts twelve feet apart, and use No. 6 annealed wire (diameter about three-sixteenths of an inch), which should be painted white, two coats; a good plan is to paint it before it is put up.

For drawing the wire and keeping it tight you have cast iron rollers six inches, one and one-half or two inches in diameter, with three