

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. Newsw 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.

We have received the report of the Secretary for Agriculture, which we will review at length in subsequent issues. The report comprises 143 pages of printed matter, containing much valuable information bearing upon the agricultural resources of Nova Scotia. The secretary, Dr. Lawson, is recognized throughout the province as a reliable authority on agricultural questions, and the zeal and efficiency with which he performs his official duties afford a guarantee to the public that the matters under his care will not be slighted or dealt with in a slipshod manner. Dr. Lawson is veritably the farmers' friend, and so long as he remains at his post the farmers may feel confident that the government will have as its adviser a man of practical common sense and matured judgment.

UNDER-DRAINAGE.—The value of under-drainage is not yet thoroughly appreciated by many of our farmers. In talking with them we find that there is a prejudice against tile draining; firstly, on account of its cost, and secondly, on account of the supposed liability to choking of the pipes. Having investigated the question of under-drainage, and having had some practical experience in its advantages, we can speak with confidence on the subject; and the facts which we here adduce should be borne in mind by the farmer who contemplates under-draining his land. The cost of tile-draining is large in proportion only when the area to be drained is comparatively small. If two or three farmers could unite in sharing the expense of draining their farms, the cost to each would be comparatively light, and the increased productiveness of the soil would pay for the under-drainage within three years. So far as we are aware there are not more than two or three competent tilers in the province, and unless the services of one of these can be secured, our advice to farmers is not to go heavily or recklessly into tile draining. After the land has been properly surveyed and the trenches dug, the tiles are placed in position resting on the level earth beneath. No planks or boards should be placed under them, as these will in time rot away and throw the tiles out of position, after which they speedily choke and become practically useless. Having laid the tiles properly, the earth must be packed in closely about them, in fact so closely as to apparently prevent the water reaching them. This is the point that most amateur tilers neglect; they imagine that in order that the water should reach the tiles, the earth should be packed in loosely. The result is that the water carries with it into the tiles a large amount of sedimentary matter, which eventually chokes them completely. It is a very simple matter to observe in a tile-drained field whether the tiles have thus been improperly laid; if they have, the reader will note that the soil above the tiles is less productive than the other section of the field; while, if the soil has been packed firmly about the drain, the lines of increased fertility will at once indicate the position of the tiles. The principal advantages which are derived from under-drainage are an increased area of production and an earlier access to the land. These are two important factors in farming in Nova Scotia. Our late wet springs and long summer droughts are against farming operations; but if by under-draining the land, we can take advantage of the dry spells for sowing, the crop will have so far advanced before the drought comes on, that the foliage will protect the naked earth, and hinder the moisture which it still contains from being drawn off into the air. This moisture will then be available for the crop, and hence the results of the drought will scarcely be perceptible.

THE DRAINAGE ACT.—Dear Sir,—Someone has been kind enough to send me a copy of THE CRITIC, in which my name is mentioned in connection with the proposed drainage act. So, for the benefit of those interested, I will explain, with your permission, how the matter now stands.

For many reasons I have always considered it absolutely necessary that the drainage act should be combined in some way with measures for the advancing of money to farmers in some more satisfactory way than at present exists. Entertaining these views, I did not care to ask for a parliamentary committee, unless I had funds advanced sufficient to pay for counsel, witnesses, etc., I put these ideas to Dr. Haley, M. P. P., in writing, about a week before the House met, and there the matter stands. It is but fair to say that Dr. Haley expressed a wish to do all that he could to forward this work, and stated that he would rather that I got up a petition with a certain number of signatures, which, for certain reasons, has not been complied with. I may say, in justification of myself, that I found it perfectly useless to get the people to take any interest in the matter until the general election was settled and decided. Since then, it has come to my knowledge that one of the very measures that I have worked so persistently for, for the last ten or more years, and which so many of that class, that Sam Weller suggests, think that they can see thro' a three inch plank better than anyone else, ridiculed and condemned, is about to become a fact, so that the work is much simplified. We now have only to get a drainage act. Your correspondent does not half represent the injury done from want of drainage, as really a good season, if we ever have one, is almost as bad as the other; for, under circumstances, as I showed plainly in my letters, only the dry sections of the farm are ever worked. As for the drainage act itself, anything that answers the purpose will suffice, the object being to keep the farmer from locking up his working capital, if he has any, and to furnish him with funds to drain if he has not, at ten pounds

per acre with money at five per cent, it will cost a farmer about three dollars per acre for twenty years. The Ontario Acts are all municipal, so they certainly would not suit Nova Scotia, neither can I altogether see that they are constitutional, as I think the work should stand on its own merit. In England they have both government drainage acts in force, and many different companies that advance money for that purpose. I should think the proposed loan societies might take the matter up to advantage, with or without government guarantee, but the most straightforward and simplest method would be for the local government to take the matter up. No taxation would be required as it is self-sustaining. I am afraid it will be too late to attempt anything this season, hoping these remarks may be of use.

I remain, yours,

Windsor.

ALFRED THOMAS, C. E.

WHY DOES NOT THE BUTTER COME?—I see by THE CRITIC that this question has been answered by S. W. Whitney in "Country Gentleman," though not according to my experience by a long shot. I am now past 30 years of age, and have attended cows ever since I can remember, and to my knowledge I never knew of but two or three churning in which the cream seemed bewitched, and every one in the farmhouse knew right well at the time what the bewitching was caused by. It was certainly not on account of the cows being cold, although our barn was far from frost proof. In the depth of winter, when the cows were shivering in the barn, I have seen the milk taken from them and freeze while it was setting for cream; indeed, I have known the cream itself to freeze before we had a sufficient quantity for a churning, and yet the butter would come all the same a few minutes after the cream was put in order. Those are cold facts which I am giving you, but they are nevertheless true. Some of our neighbors who had warm barns and good houses were troubled during the winter season with what is known by butter-makers as bewitched cream: but, as I have said, we never found any more difficulty in making the butter come in the winter than during any other season of the year; and, therefore, I do not hesitate to answer the enquiry with which I have headed this communication. If the cream is kept cool, the butter will come every time. In most of our farm-houses the cellars are small; and, as these are filled with vegetables, the milk is generally set during the winter season in small pantries adjoining or near to the kitchen. Here the cream soon turns bitter, and after it has once become so you might churn till doomsday before bringing the butter. The milk should never set more than twenty-four hours, especially if in shallow pans, if it does, look out for witches in the cream. I agree with Mr. Whitney that it is but right and proper that we should keep our cows comfortably housed, say in a temperature about 15 degrees above freezing; but the coolness or warmth of the barn has nothing to do with the butter coming, that depends upon the cream being in a proper state, and the cream cannot be in a proper state if farmers' wives persist in using their kitchen pantries as dairies. This butter question is one that I should like to hear some others express their opinion upon. It is an important one to farmers, and its discussion in your columns may be of advantage to your country cousins.

Kent Co., N. B.

HARRIS PULCIFER.

Most people kill their turkeys with kindness. It is an aboriginal fowl; it has in its blood to this day more wildness than the dunghill chicken. For this reason, among others, the cock submits himself to the restraints of artificial life better than the turkey does—better, probably, than the turkey ever will. All breeds or varieties of the common cock or chicken improve in size, flavor and beauty under domestication, but the turkey deteriorates. It seems to be like the Indian of its native wood. It craves freedom and languishes in confinement.

GARDENING FOR PROFIT.—A new edition of Mr. Peter Henderson's standard treatise on the culture of vegetables for market, originally issued under the above title in 1867—entirely rewritten, brought down to date, and greatly enlarged—is published by the Orange Judd Co. of New York. The book has now 376 duodecimo pages, with 138 engravings, and the price is \$2.

POTS FOR PLANTS.—Many amateurs get a false impression that plants must have large pots to grow in, says Vick's. Frequently wee bits of geraniums and fuchsias are planted in six or eight inch pots. They do not flourish because they need smaller pots. Let the plant remain until you are sure, by examining the ball of earth in which the plant grows, that the roots have completely filled the soil. Then put in a pot two or three sizes larger. After the plant has been given an eight-inch pot it is not likely to need a larger one for some time.

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 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.