

## The Household.

### Keeping Out the Cold.

To the Editor of THE CANADA FARMER.

The house we live in is very cold, caused chiefly I think by its standing on black ice a foot above the ground.

For the last three years I have been trying to persuade my father to bank it up, but he argues "that it is impossible for any cold to come up through a double floor," although water freezes if spilled on the floor even at this season of the year.

My father is a constant reader of your journal, and thinks whatever you advise is about right. Now, Sir, I have taken the liberty of thus trespassing, hoping that you will persuade father to bank up the house and keep us all from freezing this coming winter.

#### RURAL DISTRICT.

NOTE BY ED. C. F.—It will afford us great pleasure if any word of ours should make one household warm through the coming winter, and the point referred to by our correspondent is one about which we have no doubt. There are more reasons than we have space to give, why, under the circumstances mentioned, the house should be cold. In the first place, the exposed floor is an additional outer wall, always chilled, and keeping the interior cold. Again it cannot or is not likely to be so tight that air will not come through, and of course the warmth of stoves, &c., causing heated air to ascend and escape by flues or other ventilators, will bring a rush of cold air from beneath. A little practical experience may be still more convincing than any theory or philosophy, and we happen to know from personal trial the difference made in a house by having the space under the floor open, and closing it in. Our first winter in the climate of North America taught us many useful lessons, and this among the rest. We entered a new house just as winter set in; the dwelling was far from complete, and, among other imperfections, was not walled or banked up to the level of the floor. We shall never forget the experience of that season. Water spilled on the floor froze and remained solid for days together; if the table was washed even with warm water, the surface was instantly coated with a thin sheet of ice. The windows were imperviously crusted with concealed vapour, presenting in sunlight, most beautiful frost pictures, which, however, we would gladly have exchanged for a little more warmth. In short, the freaks of Jack Frost were so extraordinary and novel as to be really entertaining. But we tired of them, and before next winter shut him out effectually by covering in the basement of the house. The difference must be tried to be realized. We trust our friend, the writer of the above, will have the pleasure of learning the difference this winter.

### Desolation Farm-yard.

I never passed Mr. Parish's old place, when a child, without feeling depressed and gloomy. There were not two rods of fence left standing about the house; the old door-steps were broken in, the doors looked as if the first gust of wind would finish them off, a few lank pigs roared about the front door, and I have an impression that a sorrowful-faced cow was "staked out" about the premises somewhere. We used to call the place "Desolation Farm-yard," and it well merited its name. The people were not drunkards who owned it; they were only "do-less." The poor wife and mother had little health, and I suppose such a shiftless husband had caused her to lose all heart and spirit. Indeed, I think they hardly realized the true condition of things—the changes in the once respectable place had come on so gradually.

I think Solomon must have had such a place in his mind when he penned the lines, "By much slothfulness the building decayeth, and through idleness of the hands the house droppeth through." This was exactly the case in "Desolation Farm-yard." A few handfuls of nails every year, a few days' work with

the paint brush and the white-wash bucket, would have kept the place in decent repair, would have helped the family to maintain a respectable place among their neighbors, and would have prevented the children from growing up such wild little Arabs. Children reared in such a home never can maintain a decent self-respect, nor are they likely to be respected by others. No one would think of inviting the daughters out to a picnic or a sleighing party, unless some benevolent person did so out of charity. It would require a pretty brave young man to drive up to "that old house" and wait upon Miss Susan into the carriage.

So, too, young Peter Parish would be sure to "get the mitten" if he proposed to see a neighbor's daughter home from singing school. She could not stand the jests of her companions about "that old house," even if she had thought well enough of Peter. The shadow of Desolation Farm-yard would follow them all their lives, unless they wandered off to distant parts where it was never heard of. Even then the mould of its crumbling walls would cling to their hearts and characters forever.

It is a burning wrong to a child to give it such a home in its early years. An air of thrift and tidiness can go along with very deep poverty, and where it is found there is ever a claim to respectability which will not fail to be recognized. As a poor woman once said, "However poor persons may be, they can almost always afford to buy a peck of lime. A peck of lime, judiciously applied as white-wash, can work wonders on the raggedest home.—*Can. Country Gentleman.*"

### Economical Vinegar.

In a new country, where the fruit is scarce, it becomes a matter of no small importance that all should be made the most of. We all like good, pure vinegar, and can be sure of it only when it is manufactured from apples. In the fall of the year, those who have apples are paring and drying them for winter use, which is a very commendable thing to do; and a more commendable thing still, is to save the parings and cores for vinegar, and the way to do it is this:—

When you have quite a quantity, put them in a boiler with water enough to cover them, and boil, or rather soak them, several hours. Then strain the juice by pouring it through a clean basket; pour into a cask where there has been vinegar, and leave it to make itself. If you have no such cask, add half a pint of molasses to each gallon of juice, put in a bit of brown paper, and set it where it will warm. A piece of "mother," or vinegar plant, added, will make the process more rapid.—*Western Rural.*

### Steaming Potatoes.

The secret of "steaming" potatoes is very little understood, and rarely carried into full effect, although it is indispensable to the nutritious development of the vegetable. The whole mystery consists in suffering the steam to escape, and at the same time keeping the potatoes hot.

When the cook throws off the water, under the jurisdiction of the cookery-book, what is she to do next? The steam rushes out, and she places the vessel opposite the fire; but, fearful that the potatoes may cool in the meanwhile, she puts on the cover. Thus she undoes one process by the other; for the steam no sooner escapes from the potatoes, than by being confined by the lid, it condenses rapidly, and falls back in water upon the vegetables.

And thus, through the ignorance and obstinacy of our cooks, we are perpetually served with what are familiarly called wet potatoes—a sort of vague excuse which helps to throw the fault against the season, or the gardener, or anything, or anybody, rather than the real culprit. The Irish peasant woman, wholly ignorant of science, but with instinctive sagacity, gets rid of the difficulty by the simplest process imaginable.

Placing the vessel, without the cover, in a slanting direction opposite the fire, so as to hasten the process of steaming by the external heat, she throws a napkin over the potatoes, which receives and retains so much of the steam as does not make its escape, while it performs the equally essential office of preserving the heat of the vegetable below.

When potatoes are boiled—the usual mode of dressing in Ireland—it should be recollected that they are deprived of their nutritious qualities by over-boiling. The peasantry are well aware of this, and say that they are "strongest" when the "bone" is left in them, that is, hard boiled. In this condition they require the powerful digestion of the labourer.—*Western Rural.*

## Worms in Milk.

We (*Glow-worm*) have received the following note from a scientific correspondent relating to the finding of worms in milk. A lady, in an agony of fear, took to a Brighton chemist a specimen of milk to be examined, declaring that worms, active and red, were to be found in it, and, having used it at the breakfast table, was much disgusted at the discovery. Examination resulted in obtaining from the bulk of the supply several lively specimens of the larva of the common gnat. The dairyman had drawn his supply of water from a tank that, open to air, admitted the insect!—and hence the result.

Why is wheat like a baby? Because it is first cradled, then threshed, and then becomes the flour of the family.

To clean cider barrels, the *Scientific American* says, put lime water and a common trace chain into the barrel through the bung-hole, first tying a strong twine to the chain to draw it out with. Shake the barrel about until the chain wears off the mould or pomace, then rinse well with water.

CIDER VINEGAR.—S. J. Woodman, of Chicago, Ill., writes to the New York Farmer's Club, that a barrel or a cask of new sweet cider, buried so as to be well covered with fresh earth, will turn to sharp, clear, delicious vinegar, in three or four weeks, as good as need be.

BOLOGNA SAUSAGES.—In compliance with the request of a correspondent we furnish a receipt for German or Bologna Sausages:—Mix 10 lbs. of Beef and 2½ lbs. or 3 lbs. of fresh fat Pork, chopped fine, 1 ounce of mace, and 1 ounce of cloves. Stuff the whole into calico bags; leave them a day or two, and then put them in a brine barrel for ten days; then smoke them for a few days. Allspice, thyme, and pepper may be added if agreeable.

HOW TO CLEAN RIBBONS.—Wet the ribbon in alcohol and fasten one end of it to something firm; the other in your hand, keeping the ribbon out straight and smooth, rub it with a piece of castile soap until it looks decidedly soapy; then rub hard with a sponge, or, if much soiled, with the back of a knife, keeping the ribbon dripping wet with alcohol. When you have exhausted your patience, and sink it must be clean, rinse thoroughly in clean water, fold between cloths and rub it with a hot iron. Don't wring the ribbon; if you do, you will get creases in it that you cannot smooth out.—*Maryland Farmer.*

NOVEL RAT TRAP.—Place within the reach of rats some coarse oatmeal, mixed to the consistence of thick gruel, in a tub about two feet in depth—the oatmeal to be about two inches in depth. The rat ventures to eat his prepared repast, and then endeavours to make his escape, but to his great surprise he finds his feet fettered and clogged by his newly-found treasure, and is therefore incapacitated from giving the necessary leap. His fate is sealed. He shrieks to bring his friends and relatives to the rescue, who share the same fate. This remedy is simple.—*Mark Lane Express.*

## Miscellaneous.

### Teaching Agriculture as a Profession.

We translate the following judicious remarks from the *Journal de l'Instruction Publique*:—

"We have applauded heartily the foundation of various schools of commerce and agriculture which flourish under our eyes, and we rejoice at their continued success. We have too many professional men, too many young men of talent, led astray by the vanity of their relatives, who wish, at any price, to see an advocate, a doctor, or a notary spring from the bosom of the family. It is necessary to endeavour to remedy this evil inherent in the human heart; and we cannot attain that end more surely than in honoring, by raising on the pedestal of a good education, the position of the farmer.

"Agriculture, like Law and Medicine, has become for us a science. The soil must be studied under all its forms, in all its elements. It will be turned and re-turned hereafter, by hands as intelligent as diligent, like the leaves of a good book.

"Everyone feels that the time is past when the soil poured into our heaped-up granaries the exuberance of its riches; on the contrary, it is necessary to do violence to it in order to extract a miserable subsistence. The days are far removed,—very far, alas!