

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 as more directly affect them.

WILLOW AND WILLOW FENCE POSTS.

The keeping up of farm fences is, as wood becomes more scarce, a serious difficulty, and wire will have to be used instead of boards or poles. But there are few farming districts in Nova Scotia where boards cannot be obtained at a cheap rate, but it is the posts which constitute the chief difficulty. If the ground is damp they are likely to rot in a few years, and in any case they are constantly being thrown out by the frost, so that the fence, instead of being perpendicular to the ground, is at all angles, and is far from sightly. A farmer in Cumberland County, who has for many years grown willow for basket-making, has a fence surrounding one field, the posts of which are live willow trees. Ordinary trees do not answer for fence posts, because their awaying too and fro with the wind loosens the nails which fasten the boards, or the staples which hold the wire; but willow posts can be cut off at five feet from the ground, and the tree will still continue to grow and throw out branches and leaves as before. A slip of willow, if stuck in the ground in the spring, will at once take root, and in a very few years will be stout enough to serve the purposes of a fence-post. The branches which grow after the tree has been turned to its new purpose, can be cut off dried, and used for summer fire-wood. They make a quick hot fire which soon dies out; and that is just what is required by the farmer's wife for the summer months. While speaking of willow, we would remind our farmers that Nova Scotia is admirably adapted both as to climate and soil for the cultivation of osier, or basket-willow; and as the demand for this material is steadily on the increase, some of our farmers should turn their attention to growing it. The willow can be grown upon land that is too wet for other crops, and after the slips are set out, it requires no cultivation whatever. True, the crop of the first year is of no value, but from that time out a regular yearly cutting can be made. Basket makers require willow of one, two or three years' growth. If cut in the spring, and peeled while green, it is more valuable than if cut in the autumn and the bark removed by steam. Peeled willow sells in Halifax at from 4½ to 7 cts. a pound, according to quality. A ton of this willow, recently imported for the workshop in connection with the School for the Blind, east in Brighton, England, \$110, which, with freight and railway charges of \$30, made its actual cost in Halifax \$140. Willow purchased in Ontario by the managers of the same establishment, cost 8 cts. per pound landed in Halifax. The demand for willow will hereafter be steadily on the increase in this province, as the young men who are being trained as willow-workers in the institution referred to, will soon be starting for themselves in the chief centres of population. It is estimated that the yield of willow upon one acre averages a ton per annum.

POTATO CULTURE.—Some interesting experiments have been made in potato culture by a Mr. Hersey of Maine, from which we may gather a few practical lessons. Mr. Hersey finds, as the result of potato planting during the past six years, that small whole potatoes are generally quite as prolific as seed cut from large potatoes. If the weather is favorable, the small whole potatoes send up stronger and more vigorous plants than do the cut seed. He likewise disbelieves the prevailing idea that the seed end of the potato is not profitable for planting, and that it always yields small potatoes. His experience is that the seed end of the potato, which contains many small eyes, is sure to produce one or more healthy plants, which is not always the case with seed cut from other parts of the potato. Mr. Hersey finds that the application of salt, at the rate of a handful to the hill, has a beneficial effect upon the tubers, and that ground plaster sprinkled upon cut seed potatoes is advantageous to their growth. These are matters in which we are all interested, and every farmer should during the coming season practically test them, so that he may arrive at a conclusion based upon actual experiment. The fairest method for making these tests is to plant parallel rows in the same field; in the first using salt, as has been described, in the second, using plaster, in the third, small whole potatoes, in the fourth, the seed ends of potatoes, &c. Being planted in the same field, the relative merits of small potatoes, cut seed, and seed ends, can be fully tested, as also the value of salt and ground plaster. When these experiments are made on different patches instead of parallel rows, no just conclusion can be reached, as it is impossible to estimate the relative condition and fertility of the soil; but, when planted in the same patch, a fair conclusion can be arrived at.

BEES.—Mr. Editor: It is now about time for our bee-keepers to get their hives out of the cellar, but my advice to them is not to take them out until there is pollen and honey for them to gather. Two years ago I took one of my hives out in April, as the weather was warm and pleasant, meaning to bring the remaining five out the next day. The weather proving cold I let them stay in the cellar, and did not bring them out until the Queen's birthday. The yield of honey in each one of these five hives was much larger than that from the hive which had been placed in the open air more than a month previously. This proves that nothing is to be gained by carrying out the hives before there is something for the bees to work upon, and as they do not suffer from remaining in the dark cool cellar, I think it best to leave them there during the wet, chilly spring. Before moving my hives I opened the collar in the evening and let in the cold air. This thoroughly quiets any of the bees that may have become restless, and makes

it an easy matter to carry them out on the following day. I now have fourteen hives, and have made preparations to hive every colony that swarms this year. I find that honey cells about as quickly as anything produced upon my farm, and that the work of looking after the bees is comparatively a small matter.
W. J. L., Annapolis County.

NEW ANNAN, N. S.—Mr. Editor: I have been a fruit grower for the past twenty years, and from practical experience I have discovered that in the event of drouth during the blooming season, young fruit trees are greatly benefited by being thoroughly watered about the roots. I believe that when this is done the trees will become bearers at least a year earlier than they otherwise would.
Yours,
TOMKINS.

GREENHOUSE AND WINDOW PLANTS.—Whether in the greenhouse or the window-garden, plants that have done their best all winter are now being made ready for their season in the open air. While they remain within, the increasing heat requires that they have greater care in ventilation and in freeing them from insects. Plants that are taken out in summer, if wanted to bloom in pots next winter, should be kept in the pots; if turned out in the open ground, they cannot be satisfactorily potted again. It is much better to start with new plants from cuttings. Such plants may often be plunged in the border, in the pots, with good results. Pots that are set out should stand on a layer of coal-ashes to keep out worms. Such plants should be set in partial shade, but never under the drip of trees. Roots of dahlias and cannae, and bulbs of tub-roses and gladiolus, if laid in boxes of soil, exposed to the sun during the day, and taken in at night, may be appreciably forwarded, and ready to plant out.

OUR COSY CORNER.

MIRROR-PAINTING.—The first step in mirror-painting is to decide upon the design. If this is but a copy, take a tracing of it off upon ordinary tracing-paper; if it is to be an original, arrange the selected flowers in a good position, exclude all but the north light, and draw them to size upon drawing-paper, and tint them with water-colors to indicate their coloring, where the deepest shadows should fall, and where the reflected lights thrown from a transparent leaf or petal on to another part of the design appear. By thus obtaining permanent directions as to the management of these important details, the worker can re-arrange the real flowers daily, so that the same effect is produced throughout the painting, and she will not be worried by finding that, at a second sitting, all her flowers that were in full shadow are now in light. Take a tracing of the chief outlines of this sketch, rub the glass quite clean with a chamois leather, and lay the tracing-paper upon it, with a sheet of red carbonised paper between the glass and the paper; with the point of a hard pencil go over the traced lines steadily, and remove both papers, when the outline will be clearly seen on the glass. Mix a little flake-white with medium, add to it a color that matches one of the flower tints, and secure their outlines by going over them with this color in a fine brush. Match one of the shades of the leaves, and work in leaves and stems with the green mixture, but work in the first painting of the flowers before the outline has dried and before the leaf-outline is secured. Work in the deepest shadows first, then the half-tints, and lastly the high lights. Mix all these shades on the palette with the medium, apply them with an even hand, and soften and run their edges into each other with a clean and dry brush. Use as little paint as possible; put it on with but few touches, and be careful that the outline of each petal is clear and not ragged-looking. Having toned in the chief petals, work at the under petals and imitate the transparent look of the natural under part of a petal through which the light is passing by a soft gradation from dark to light, making the tone lighter than nature, and running the paint together with a fine brush, whose hairs are softer than sables. While the paint is drying, outline the leaves and fill in their shadows, medium, reflected, and high lights, and leave the work until dry, when re-paint the flowers and leaves, softening the color but bringing it up to its natural tones, deepening such shadows as lie close to the high or reflected lights, and blending together crude masses of coloring. In the final painting add the peculiar markings of the flowers, vein the leaves, and lightly apply washes of transparent color where the colors require warming up or toning down.—*Lady's World*.

CHEAP MODE OF RENDERING GARMENTS UNINFLAMMABLE.—The following is given as a cheap mode of rendering fabrics uninflamable: Four parts of borax and three parts of sulphate of magnesia are shaken up together just before being required. The mixture is then dissolved in from twenty to thirty parts of warm water. Into the resulting solution the articles to be protected from fire are immersed, and when they are thoroughly soaked they are wrung out and dried, preferably in the open air.

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 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.