



Home-Made Tools.

THERE is an idea worth thinking a good deal about in the following little incident which a Fairfield county correspondent sends to the *Country Gentleman*: "A new tool made from an old one would have been considered an impossibility a few weeks ago, but necessity is the mother of invention. The garden fork got broken. It was a beautiful late spring morning, the garden was in fine shape to be planted and the seeds and their mistress impatient to have the work go forward. It was miles to town. We had no substitute for a fork but a clumsy stable shovel, not even a gardener's spade. Just when ready to give up the job for a still later opportunity, one of the boys was heard vigorously using hammer and cold chisel at the barn. In a few minutes he came into the garden, flushed with success and pride, bearing aloft what appeared to be a short, stiff spade. A few words of explanation showed it to have been made of an old shovel which had lain idle for a number of years because the point was worn off it. He had merely cut off the sides, leaving the stiff back and middle portion

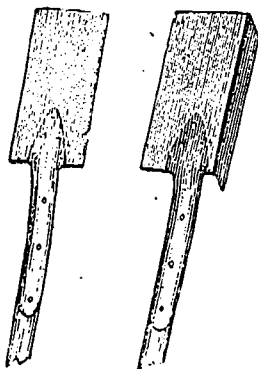


Fig. 1.

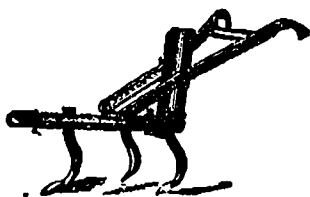
Fig. 2.

of the shovel, about eight inches wide (fig. 1). A derisive laugh met his presentation, but when the new tool was tried, it was unanimously pronounced timely, useful and permanent—useful not only in preparing the garden, but in digging horse-radish, setting out small fruits, pie-plant, young trees, and a dozen other jobs where even a fork would not serve well. In digging post holes, it performs a most useful mission.

Many another shovel might be thus transformed, and many a farmer who does not know the usefulness of the English *slane*, could easily provide himself with one of these tools by bending the broad blade of an old shovel at an exact right angle with itself, as shown in fig. 2. For the rapid getting out of peat and muck, this tool has no equal, as it will cut two sides of each block at one stroke, and when the bog is once opened, every motion produces a complete brick.

A Ditch Digger.

THE question of drainage is, as all farmers know, a most important one, and any contrivance which simplifies or reduces the labor of digging is welcome. The following cut shows



how simply it is made, and the interview which

was furnished by Mr. L. Coggsall, of West Croton, to Mr. Chapman, a writer on the *Rural Yorker*, explains how useful it is:—

"If I could find a man to hire," says Farmer Coggsall, "he would dig the ditch for 25 cents per rod, but I would have to board him. Those 200 rods just cost me that finished, including the cost of picking up the stones. The loosening of the dirt is the hard part, and the digger saves about half the cost and a good deal of backache, and this suits me pretty well when I am in the ditch myself."

"How do you work it?"

"In loam I put one horse on each side of the ditch. I have a long, round evenner which does not drag the dirt back into the ditch, like a square one. In hard clay I put a team on each side. Oxen are best in mud and very soft places."

"How deep can you dig?"

"The handles are adjustable so that I can dig four feet, if necessary."

"Do you use any other tools?"

"We go through with a plow and turn the sod, and plow back in the trench, then shovel out; then put in the digger."

"Do you break it ever?"

"No! It is durable; it will last a lifetime."

"How much did you ever dig in a day, anyhow?"

"With two teams and two hired men I dug 40 rods 2½ feet deep in one day. It took one man another day to level the bottom ready for the tiles."

"What was the soil?"

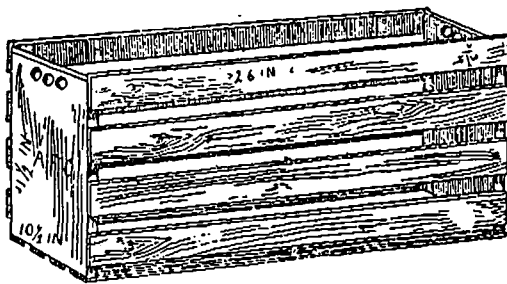
"About a foot of muck and the rest hard clay."

"That's pretty fast work. How do you level the bottom?"

"I like to wait till the water starts and lay by that. There must be no sags to do good work. The fine dirt, silt, will settle in low places and stop up the throat."

Potato or Apple Crate.

THE following crate has been found to be very handy on the farm. It is made to hold an even bushel.



A wagon will hold three of such boxes when placed side by side, and as many as one may wish can be piled on top of these three. They can be steadied on the wagon by raising the top slats a quarter of an inch above the ends. A farmer provided with 50 or 100 of these distributed in a potato field, when digging, can fill and leave them standing until he is ready to draw them, and will find them a great saving of labor in handling, besides being very handy for marketing or cellar storage.

BETTER wait until the soil dries than plow it when wet and cold.

REGULAR hours for rising, going to work and quitting work are just as essential to success on the farm as in the store or office.

DON'T forget to get in a barrel of air slacked lime. Nothing is better for sprinkling over the platforms after you have cleaned off the manure. Also scatter liberally over the hen house floor.

THE currant worm shows himself now; kill with a dusting or two of hellebore before he has time to get large or raise a second generation; and he is not a very formidable foe.

THE rains of May have brought up a luxurious crop of weeds which must be rooted up at once before they become too strong. The very small children ought to be trained to weed seed beds carefully and their spare time from lessons could not be more profitably nor, as a rule, more pleasantly employed.

It is now nearly a year since the first consignment of frozen meat from Australia was delivered into Egypt. The trade seems to have already become a permanent one.

THE best crops should be housed early. Remember this applies to the children. House them early at night and see that they are housed at school early in the morning. The children are the best crop on the farm.—*Maryland Farmer*.

THE cold weather having thrown garden work behind, a great deal still remains to be done which should not be neglected, though later than usual. It pays to attend to the garden, and the extra labour in the present rush will be forgotten when the yield is gathered in later on in the year.

A RUSSIAN army officer who has been experimenting in the training of falcons to carry despatches, says that these birds are superior to carrier pigeons for messenger service. The falcon is much the stronger, and some of them have carried a weight of four pounds without material hindrance to speed.

IN seeding for permanent pasture, about one-eighth of the seed should be meadow foxtail (*Alopecurus*). This is not the troublesome weed (*Setaria*) called foxtail, but a most valuable grass relished by cattle, and very nutritious. It is three or four years in reaching maturity, as the more permanent a grass is, the longer time it takes to attain its full growth and sod.

CHILDREN should become early acquainted with the names and habits of insects. This they can do by guarding seeds and plants from their ravages. While engaged with nature, let them become naturalists and let their information, scant though it may be in many cases, be exact and methodically obtained. Combine the pursuit of a study with practical utility and you train the mind to habits which are easily acquired in youth and are of immense value to the grown up man or woman.

THE *Gardeners Monthly* gives the following good recipe for the shading of greenhouses:—Take one pound common whiting, one ounce of the best glue, one-quarter ounce bichromate of potash. Soak the glue the day before using melting in a common glue pot, and then dissolve the bichromate in warm water. Mix the materials and thin down to the consistency required. This compound after exposure to light is almost as adherent as oil paint. By reducing the amount of bichromate, the material can be made also retentive.

A coat of this wash on the greenhouse will last the whole summer, and it is easier to wash off than the limewash. Stir constantly while applying.