

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 (large 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.

Frequent accounts occur in exchanges of the impudent operations of tree-pedlars, by whom many farmers are swindled. Some of these pedlars, it seems, show specimens of fruit preserved in spirit, in bottles to magnify. One of these gentry was showing a farmer a plum in a bottle, which happened to fall and get broken in the course of inspection. When the plum, which a moment before was as large as his fist, shrank suddenly to the size of an average gooseberry, the farmer's eyes became very widely opened.

WIRE FENCES.—"Rustic," writing in the *Weekly Mail*, says:—The modern barbed wire fence is not by any means an unmixed blessing to the farmer and fruit grower. It has its advantages, which are considerable; but, on the other hand, there are disadvantages which probably balance and perhaps outweigh the former. It is certainly pleasing to the eye to see straight clean fences such as those constructed of barb wire, in comparison with the old style snake fence, and a considerable saving of land is made by the adoption of the wire fence. Another advantage is the prevention of large snow drifts. Perhaps other good points might be claimed for the wire fence, but there is one drawback—a serious one—which requires more than passing attention, and that is the banishment of our small insect-destroying birds. We find year by year the birds becoming scarcer, more particularly in those localities where the barbed wire fence is most in use. The reason is plain to be seen. Along the line of the wire fence generally no rubbish is allowed to accumulate, the coarse grass is kept cut, no small bushes are allowed to grow, the land is cultivated close to the fence, and consequently there is no harbor or shelter for the small birds that live principally upon insects.

In the old style rail fence all sorts of rubbish would accumulate. Piles of stones, rank grass, small bushes, hazel, wild raspberry, wild currants, etc., would find a lodgement, affording the small birds shelter in rough weather, and protection and security in raising their young, for our common small birds do not build their nests in tall trees. It is not likely we will ever go back to the old snake fence again, but if we want to retain our friends, the birds, we must protect them, extend the blessings of the National Policy to the birds as well the manufacturers of barbed wire, and protect the birds who are unable to protect themselves.

The first thing to do, therefore, is to enforce the law prohibiting the destruction of insect-destroying birds, and any and every person found shooting or otherwise destroying the birds punished. As the wire fence appears to have come to stay, protect the birds by planting trees or hedges all around the farm, or at least on the north and west sides. The birds will be induced to stay, the trees or hedges will grow, and not only afford shelter for the birds, but form windbreaks which are becoming very necessary in some localities. The loss sustained by the amount of land occupied by the trees will be doubly repaid by the benefits derived in the shelter of crops from the bleak and raking winds and the retention of the farmer's and fruit growers' true friends, the birds."

"HORSES FOR THE ENGLISH ARMY.—Col. Ravenhill has written to the Minister of Agriculture to say that if the right stamp of horses can be secured in Canada, three hundred will be bought next year. Col. Ravenhill says the trouble with Canadian horses is that those suited in size and build for British military service are scarce, while many of them are unsound or blemished. The principal defect in Canadian horses is that their quarters are short and drooping. Col. Ravenhill suggests the appointment of a Dominion inspector of horse breeding and the offering by the Government of premiums to horse breeders for animals of good quality."—*Toronto Mail*.

This course would, we think, be productive of very beneficial results. If the breeding of superior stock were at once taken hold of with real energy throughout the country, the three hundred possibly to be bought next year might in a few years be indefinitely increased. The need for cavalry horses is urgent, and England could draw her supplies from no more convenient source than Canada, if only the right stamp of animals were bred. Nova Scotia, being on the seaboard, would be particularly favorable for export. But a radical reform in breeding must take place before this opening could avail her much.

The defect of the Canadian stock, from the army point of view, is not confined to short and drooping quarters. Want of solidity of barrel is very apparent. When the mounted police received their supply of the "universal" saddles in 1874 very few of their horses filled the girths, which had to be taken in to a remarkable extent; the ordinary length of the girths being, as every army accountant is made to certain well-ascertained measurements, a sure indication of the average of barrel in English horses fit for military purposes. Everyone familiar with the appearance of English cavalry regiments and artillery horses would take this in at a glance. When the 10th Hussars were in Canada they were largely horsed in the country, and the same remarks about girths were frequently to be heard among them. It is well worth the while of Canadians interested in horse breeding, who may visit the old country, to make the horses of cavalry regiments somewhat of a study.

A quarter of an hour at the Horse Guards at the hour of guard-mounting even is instructive. Anyone with an eye for a horse would be struck with the massiveness of body of the splendid chargers of the Life Guards and the Blues, which, when closely observed, very much modifies the first im-

pression conveyed by their apparent fineness of limb. These, of course, are not the type required for lighter cavalry, which preponderates; but there are always some light cavalry orderlies in attendance, which afford a means of comparison on the spot, and these also, in their degree, will be found to be characterized by a similar solidity—what might be expressively termed "chukiness."

The idea of dehorning cattle appears to be growing in favor in the United States. The great apostle of the movement is Mr. H. H. Haaf, of Illinois. This gentleman began his experiments some six years ago by the primitive process of knocking the horns off, arguing that this rough surgery inflicted no greater pain on the cattle than losing their horns by frost, or in fighting. He, however, soon improved his methods, and now uses the saw, claiming that if the cut is made at the right point there is little pain or loss of blood. Calves' horns are removed by nippers that take out just the right amount of skin with the little nut of horn. He attributes much of the so-called "horn-ail" in cattle to dead horns killed by freezing. Evidence is accumulating that removing the horns for six generations will develop polled tendencies, so that polled calves may be looked for. Assuming that the absence of horns is—as we think it is—a desideratum, and if it can be proved that the horns can be bred off from our present horned breeds, long years of waiting to stock the country with hornless varieties by importation, or by crossing polled cattle upon our horned stock, might possibly be saved. Nova Scotian farmers desirous of full information on this point might address Geo. M. Whitaker, editor *New England Farmer*, 34 Merchants' Row, Boston, Mass.

The feeding of apples to stock is highly commended in some of the New England agricultural papers. In a country like Nova Scotia, where it is almost unavoidable that there is an enormous waste of this fruit, the idea is well worth consideration to fruit growers who are also general farmers. Nature generally points out her own proclivities, and we all know how eagerly horses will avail themselves of apples whenever they can get them. But, as a rule, it is only pets who do get them. There is abundant evidence that unmerchanted apples are of high value as food for cattle—horses especially—to the extent of from half a bushel to a bushel daily. But they are also strongly recommended for cows, and the evidence is direct, tried and practical. As regards cows the yield of milk has been proved to have been augmented in quantity and improved in quality.

COSY CORNER.

A pattern to shape covers for tennis rackets is just issued. It will be used for gray or buff linen, plush, billiard cloth, felt, woollen canvas or cloth of any proper thickness or firmness. In its formation the number of sections necessary to duplicate the shape of the racket are united, and the construction is easily accomplished. A bunch of grass and field flowers is embroidered upon one side and the initials of the owner upon the other. Such a cover preserves a racket from the effects of bad weather, and is as pretty as it is useful.

A charming accessory to a costume is called a "chemisette and vest." The chemisette is made of soft goods and is attached to a standing collar which has its outer portion laid in folds. The vest sections pass along the collar and the sides of the chemisette, their edges overlapping below the latter and a closing being simulated with buttons. Heavier goods are preferred for the vest, and velvet is often associated with Surah, *crêpe* and *crêpe de chine*.

Handsome belts are worn with round full waists, or ribbons tied with loops and ends, falling directly in front, may be used as a finish.

Leg O'Mutton sleeves with deep cuffs or full sleeves gathered into a cuff, are appropriately used with such waists, and are almost universal for thin summer fabrics.

Dressing jackets made of China silk or fine French flannel may be prettily trimmed with rosettes of "baby" ribbon around the neck, sleeves, and down the front; all the colors shown in the material should be used in these rosettes.

Striped moire will be used a great deal for the lower skirts and decoration of cashmere costumes.

Sailor costumes are in high favor for both boys and girls. Blue or white serge or flannel is the best material for these suits.

Handsome bows of watered ribbon are set on the shoulder of white dresses, and a sash of the same color is passed around the waist and tied in long loops, and ends a little to one side of the front.

Hems and tucks on white or colored cotton dresses are finished with herring bone drawn work very prettily.

Short waisted dresses with long full skirt continue in favor for little girls from two to six years of age.

Long waists and short waists, styles historic and styles distinctly modern have each the approval of the highest authorities upon girls' attire. For the most part wash dresses will be fashioned quaintly, while holiday or best dresses are more likely to be the embodiment of present fancies. Elaborate garments are never popular for little girls.