

Transmutation of Species.

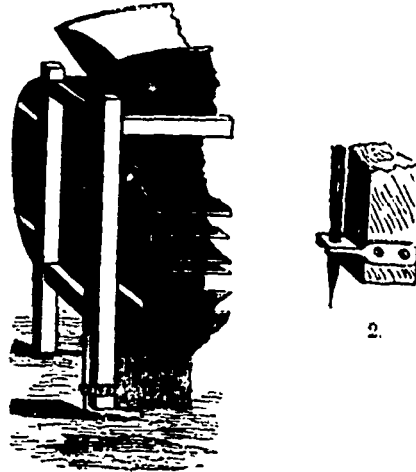
We were surprised to find in the columns of a contemporary daily paper recently a statement, on the authority of Elihu Burritt, that in a field near St. Ives, in England, a crop of barley was produced from oat seed. The thing, it is needless to say, is simply impossible. We are all familiar with the changes that result from hybridization. These are numerous and remarkable, but have, nevertheless, their limit, and never, under any circumstances, effect the transformation of one species into another. No amount of crossing would produce a horse out of an ass; and just as absurd would it be to expect by any process to transmute oats into barley, or any other distinctly marked species among the cereals. The subject brings up the long-vexed question of the conversion of wheat into chess, of the probability of which, notwithstanding the strongest evidence to the contrary, some not very close observers are still confident; and one of this class has even ventured to back his opinion by a wager to the amount of \$1000, that he will grow wheat from chess. On this subject we note the following very just remarks from the *American Agriculturist*:

WHEAT—CHESS—A \$1,000 OFFER.—Some still complain because we do not open our columns to a wider discussion of this subject. We have been looking into the matter for more than twenty years past—have studied it in its scientific relations—have received and read thousands of pages of manuscript, pro and con—have offered prizes, and had men come hundreds of miles with specimens to claim the prizes, and seen them return perfectly satisfied that they had made a mistake. We doubt not that many are honest in their belief that wheat will really produce chess; but we are just as sure that it will not—can not; and while seeking to devote our columns to such topics as will most benefit the largest number of our readers, it does not seem profitable to take up further space on this particular subject. Please allow us the same liberty of judgment in this respect, that we cheerfully accord to others.—We will only add here, that Mr. L. Gore, Chagrin Falls P.O., Ohio, an old and successful farmer, is fully convinced that wheat will turn into chess, and to show his faith, and, if possible, settle the question, he offers to wager \$1,000 that he can produce chess from wheat or rye, or both. His neighbour, Mr. David Robinson, will make affidavit that he has taken a kernel of chess from a wheat stalk, where it certainly grew. Mr. Gore's directions for securing the change are as follows: 1st. Sow rye in spring, and pasture it all summer; the next spring it will yield chess. 2nd. Sow winter wheat, or rye, or both in June, pasture until December, and let it grow the next season.—If any are disposed to try the question with Mr. Gore, they can correspond with him—we give his full address above. We have not time to take part in the correspondence, but we advise Mr. G. to look out for his \$1,000, if an enterprising man should accept his proposition. Perhaps he could not better use the money for the good of mankind, than to lose it in "settling" this "vexed question." Please excuse us, if we do not publish or answer the next hundred letters that come in about Wheat vs. Chess.

GROWING WATERMELONS.—At a recent meeting of the Herkimer County Farmers' Club, Judge Owen stated that he had a piece of land ploughed a foot deep, turning up the clay subsoil, which he planted with watermelons. The plants came up; but the sun dried and hardened the clay, and the vines did not thrive. He then went to the dung heap, and took from the centre a wheelbarrow load of manure that had thoroughly decomposed into a black mass. This was thrown into a barrel filled up with water. Commenced watering the plants with this liquid, and directly they began to grow vigorously. Thinned out the plants to two in a hill, and continued the application of the liquid, filling up the barrel with a fresh lot of manure and water from time to time. When the plants got fairly under way, they would make a growth of ten inches in twenty-four hours. Finally thinned out, leaving only two plants, and they in time covered all the ground. These made an enormous yield. One of the melons weighed twenty-eight and a-half pounds; six others weighed one hundred and twenty pounds. From this patch he picked all the melons he wanted for family use, and for the entertainment of his friends, and to close up in the fall he took off half-a-dozen wagon-loads of unripe melons. This satisfied him that the best way to apply manure to vegetables is in a liquid state.

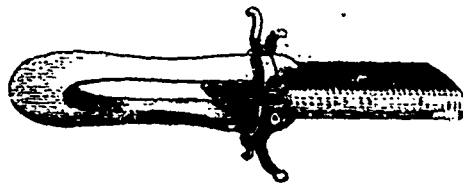
Fixed Foothold for a Fan-Mill.

BARN floors are somewhat uneven, and fan-mills have not weight enough to stand steadily when turned with a strong arm, to give a forcible blast, so they slide and dance about unless fastened by cleats or otherwise. Mr. Ellwood Hughes, of Fowlersville, Penn., sends the *American Agriculturist* the following description of an attachment to his fan-mill, which he finds of great service: "A bar of round $\frac{3}{4}$ iron, long enough to turn a short handle above the top of the leg of the fan-mill, has a thread cut at the bottom and passes through a nut fastened at the bottom

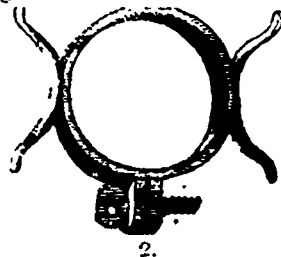


of the leg. The end of the rod is sharpened to a point so as to take hold in the floor, and the top passes through a staple in the top of the leg. Such a rod should be attached to two of the legs of a fan-mill, so that they may be screwed down to take hold in the floor. Thus the mill will retain its place while in use, and stand level, no matter how uneven the floor. When one has done using the mill the rods may be run up, and then the mill will slide smoothly over the floor." Figure 1 shows a portion of the fan-mill with the rod attached, and fig. 2 gives the screw at the lower end of the rod with the nut.

WHETSTONE HOLDER AND GUARD.—In using a stone for sharpening a scythe, beginners or inexperienced persons often cut their hands against the edge. Then, again, the best stones are usually fragile and likely to be broken into pieces too short to hold in the hand. We bought in London a little instrument use-



ful in both of the above cases. Fig. 2 is a little ring of zinc-coated iron, with four flanges or prongs and a tightening screw on one side. This is slipped over



a wooden handle cut out in the centre like a clothes-pin, (fig. 1). A whole stone, or a broken half of one, is securely fastened by turning the screw, which enables one to use up fragments, or to use very short stones; while the flanges guard the hand from being cut, if a wrong movement happens to be made.—*American Agriculturist*.

Plaster as a Manure.

GYPSUM, or plaster of Paris, is a sulphate of lime, in other words, a combination of lime and sulphuric acid in certain proportions. It is found in certain localities in the form of a hard, white, semi-opaque rock, which is dug out or blasted, placed in kilns, and subjected to a strong heat, which drives out the water, &c., and renders it brittle; it is then ground fine in mills erected for the purpose. When first ground it is very dry, but by exposure to the atmosphere gradually imbibes water, which adds greatly to its weight. It can hardly be called a manure of itself, for it only acts as an absorbent of ammonia and other salts that exist in the moisture of the atmosphere. Its good effects are most manifest when applied as a top dressing to clover, peas, and other leguminous crops, at the commencement of dry weather, when, from its absorbent power, it draws and retains the moisture from the night dews, (which contain much ammonia,) to the roots of the young growing plants. It also greatly benefits corn, potatoes, and other hoed crops, when applied sparingly to the surface of the soil, close to the young plants, when they are two or three inches high. 100 lbs. per acre is about as much as will be necessary to sow on clover, but more may be sown with advantage where the soil is deficient in lime. The lighter and drier the plaster is the better, and it should be kept in tight barrels in a dry place till wanted for use, as if once it gets wet its value is destroyed.—*Er.*

The European Larch.

This is well known as a beautiful ornamental tree, and as such is to be found in most gardens that have any shrubbery about them. From its quick growth, the *Country Gentleman* recommends its culture for timber, and estimates that in twelve years the larch crop on an acre of ground would be worth twelve hundred dollars, thus giving a yield of one hundred dollars per annum to the acre. Our cotemporary also advises the use of this tree as a screen, since though it is deciduous, it affords a much better protection than other trees which drop their leaves, on account of the profusion of small shoots which break the force of cold winds. The larch is easily grown from seed, which should be sown half an inch deep in beds of fine, rich mould, and shaded from the sun the first season.

WHAT OUR FARMERS REJECT.—The *Ogdensburgh Journal* says:—The canal boat *Solon F. Case* is at Anvil's dock in that city, taking in a cargo of leached ashes, which have been purchased from the asheries there. These are taken to Long Island and Connecticut, and sell at from eighteen to twenty-five cents per bushel as a fertilizer. Yet, says the *Mitchell Advocate*, here, where our farmers can get them for nothing, they are rejected as worthless. Science and experience, however, teach otherwise, and we find those who possess the knowledge coming nearly a thousand miles to procure what our farmers reject."

WORMS IN CORN.—If your cornfield is troubled with worms, scatter salt around the hills in small doses of a handful to a half-dozen hills, or at the rate of five or six bushels to the acre. Mr. Greeley has tried it; and finds that nine-tenths of the worms in the ground are killed by it, particularly the wire-worm.

SHOULD POSTS BE PLANTED UPSIDE DOWN.—A correspondent of the *Farmers' Club, American Institute*, says he has tried both ways—that in which the tree grew, and reversely—and in ten years' trial has found no practical difference.

HOPS.—People entering into the hop business had better count the cost before commencing, lest they hop out faster than they hopped in.—*Cor. Country Gentleman*.

Bones and Ashes.

BONES and ashes pass through the housekeeper's hands every day. Wood is still the chief fuel in the farm-house and the value of the ashes is pretty well understood. They are prized for the lye they yield, and if there is a surplus from the soap-making they help the kitchen garden at the back door. The bones are generally thrown to the dog and lost. Now if the careful housewife would save the bones as regularly as the ashes, she would practise a wiser economy and help her kitchen garden twice as fast. Bones are worth twice as much as ashes for manure, if dissolved, and the ashes will reduce them. Put both into a barrel in the cellar, if you please, and after mixing them half and half, keep them constantly moist with soapsuds, the hotter the better. The suds should not be poured on in such quantities as to leach the ashes. In a few months the bones will be disintegrated, and the whole mass may then be mixed and will make an excellent fertilizer for the flower border or the kitchen garden.—*American Agriculturist*.