

FARM CHATS

Too Cheap

M. Percy Blanchard, Hants Co., N.S.
 OW often are we inclined to judge the value of a thing by its price. I remember a marine motor that once arrived at the Bladcock wharf for Dr. Bell. It was very gay with nickel and aluminum paint. The wharf agent remarked to a bystander, "It's a magnificent engine; cost over seven hundred dollars." It was four cycle, four cylinder, and looked as if it was made by a stove builder in a sewing-machine factory. It had no end of faults. Its cams were fastened to the shaft with set-screws. There were no keeper nuts nor cotter pins; and in a week the thing had shaken itself all adrift. But it shone with nickel, cost a lot of money, and was "American" made.

And by the way, I have lost my conceit of that "made in the States" laudation. I got a potato planter made in the U. S. A. The major parts, such as the discs, the opening shoe, and so on, are excellent. The general principle of the thing is satisfactory. But the detail is simply rotten. There are set-screws where there should be key and key-ways. There are 3/8 inch carriage bolts instead of 1/2 inch machine bolts. The minor castings are store iron instead of malleable. The assemblage is a barrel factory job. This is not to depreciate American machinery; but the name is not an assurance of excellence.

All the same people are apt, with, say, three articles offering, to take the dearest on the assumption that the others are too cheap to be good.

It often happens that a machine when first offered shows under test many possible improvements; and perhaps many parts may be eliminated by a more direct drive. Compare the old-fashioned mower with the latest pattern, as an instance.

I remember a very crude implement old Captain Campbell used on a Cape Breton field for clearing off stones. It was new broken land, and covered with glacial stone; and after plowing there was a big work to get the stone off. The Captain fixed shafts on to a 4x4 cross piece, about four feet long, and in this cross piece were inserted iron teeth shaped somewhat like in a horse rake, but solid and much shorter. Behind he put cultivator handles. As he drove ahead with this implement, he raked every stone; and then, at stated times, he lifted the handles, dropped the stones, and so passed on. The completed job showed the stone in windrows, waiting to be gathered into the dump cart with the 5-prong fork. The machine was very effective, but too crude and cheap for an up-to-date farmer. To be of any value to-day it should have several wheels, a driving seat, a self-dumper, and be painted red.

The same statement holds good of the plank drag (and by the same token, of the split log drag for road making). It is too cheap and primitive. We made a plank drag of five overlapping 3-inch by 12-inch plank six feet long. The lower edges are faced with plate iron. Imagine hitching your team on to the top end of the cellar stairs and hauling them over the field, and you have the idea. Our soil is a gravelly or slatey loam and, unless too wet, crumbles readily. I had no end of trouble getting the men to use the plank drag. It was no good. But this year a Guelph gradu-

ate is with me. He judged a tool by its work, not its price. With green sod plowed this spring, disced, and then plank dragged, a very pretty result was the result. There was no machine on the place, nor combination of machines, and we have three other types of harrow, that could have given even near as good a job.

So after all, it is not safe to-day to judge a man by his overalls.

Orchard and Garden

Training and Pruning Tomatoes

By A. E. Roth.

WE have had experience in growing tomatoes, both in large quantities for the canning factories and only a few bushels in the kitchen garden. When growing for the canning factory, the vines are allowed to spread out at will, and no attention is given beyond good cultivation. In growing in small quantities, however, we have had better results by training the tomato vines to a stake or to a hoop elevated on three stakes, and the vines tied to the hoop. When the vines are staked in this manner, the plants may be set closely together thus economizing on land which is sometimes a consideration in a small garden, and the air is permitted of a free circulation, resulting in fruit of better quality.

Our general plan is to prune the plant to just three main branches. These branches are then tied to a stake or occasionally to barrel hoops as mentioned. The fruit growing on the remaining branches will be larger and will mature earlier than if the vines were allowed to develop normally. A single plant will not produce as heavy a crop as one left to grow

naturally, but from the same amount of land, with the plants set closer, more fruit will be produced than with the natural way. Its chief merit, however, is its easiness of pruning. We do not advise pruning away the leaves to expose the fruit to the sun. The exposed fruit will color a little earlier, but the quality will be considerably poorer as the fruit ripens prematurely. If the garden is in a shady location, or the weather has been unusually cloudy, we would under such conditions, prune away the leaves and give the fruit a better chance to ripen. Now is the time to start staking and pruning in most gardens in central and eastern Ontario.

Orchard and Garden Notes

SWEET corn, peas and beans are best when used immediately after picking.

The autumn-bearing strawberries may now be allowed to bloom and set fruit.

Keep the seed pods off sweet pea, nasturtiums, and other flowers if you want a good lot of flowers.

Keep the sweet peas cultivated. Green peas may be kept off by spraying with tobacco preparations or sometimes with soapuds.

Beets and carrots sown late in June or early July make tender roots of not too large size for winter storage. Keep them buried in dry sand till used.

Celery and late cabbage may still be set out. Turnips and rutabagas may be planted on that old strawberry bed which has just been plowed up.

Celery may be blanched with paper, boards, drain tile, or earth. Earth is not so good to use in warm weather as the other materials, but the celery is more likely to decay under it.

Cucumber Mosaic

THE Mosaic disease of cucumbers is not well known in Ontario gardens, but of late it has begun to appear more frequently, and growers should be on the watch for it. Recent investigations indicate that there are three types or kinds of Mosaic to be met with on cucumber, of which one is very damaging. This is the White Pickle Mosaic, which greatly dwarfs the plants and causes the fruit to grow in a lumpy, misshapen condition. The distortion in the fruit is due to irregular growth. Certain areas become sickly, assume a light yellow or nearly white color, and grow very poorly. The remainder of the surface is normal, retains its dark green color and grows much faster, thus producing distorted leaves or lumpy fruit.

In the other two types the leaves are the parts most affected. In one of these types the leaves are mottled with lighter, yellowish green areas and the plant is weakened and dwarfed, thus reducing the quantity of the fruit. Mosaic is not so damaging as the White Pickle type. The third type is known as the Speckled Leaf Mosaic, and while the leaves become spotted with sickly areas, the name indicates, this form of the disease is not considered to be very damaging.

Like other Mosaic diseases, these cucumber troubles are transmissible from one plant to another though they are apparently not due to any fungus or bacterial parasite. If the juice of a diseased plant be injected into a healthy plant, the disease will be produced, and in the field transfer of this kind is thought to be brought about by means of sucking insects. In view of the transmissible nature of the disease, it is advisable to destroy affected plants and to burn up the dead vines in the fall.

Pat, upon entering a crowded street car, was jostled into a nearby lady's lap when the car started suddenly.

Indignant Lady—Here, what kind of a man are you, anyway?

Pat—Shure, I always thought I was an Irishman, but now I think I must be a Laplander.

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