

## PRIZE ESSAY.

## How can Greater Economy be Exercised in the Use of Fences.

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It would not be well for any one writing on this subject to lay down any particular plan of fence and say that it would suit all localities, as the cost of a fence must always depend a great deal on the prices and the easiness of access of the material required in its construction.

In erecting a fence the farmer should consider not only the cost of the fence at the present time, but its efficiency and durability, for, as a general thing, the best is the cheapest in the end. Another item which should be taken into consideration is the amount of land the fence is going to occupy, and the time and labor required in its construction. Any person going through the country will notice that the old rail fences are gradually disappearing, and are being replaced by wire, iron and sometimes a board fence, but a new rail fence is seldom seen.

No doubt the rail fence has answered a good purpose, so far, and may still in some localities; but its usefulness is gone in places where the timber is getting thin, and even in parts where timber is abundant; if it be within easy access to a railroad, it will hardly pay to use rails, as the only kinds of wood which are fit for fencing (such as oak, cedar, cherry, etc.) command prices for other purposes which would make it very expensive fencing.

At the present time there appears to be nothing which will equal barb wire as a permanent fence, not only on account of its cheapness and durability, but also because of the very little space which it occupies in the field in comparison to the rail or stone fences, which harbor so much thistles, burrs and other noxious weeds, besides occupying land which might be put to a better purpose.

Red cedar posts are what the majority of people recommend for a wire fence as being the most durable, but in some sections of country it is not to be had; in such case oak or white cedar might answer almost as well if treated with some of the methods adopted to preserve wood, such as charring, painting, etc.

Five wires properly spaced are all that is required for all ordinary purposes, and sometimes, where it is not expected that swine will run, four might be sufficient, which would lessen the cost. The posts should not be more than fifteen feet apart; if more than this, upright wires should be woven in at intervals between the posts to keep the wire from sagging.

To make a wire fence complete it should always be well banked up with soil beneath the wires. Not only does a good bank improve the appearance of the fence, but also make it more effective against stock; for it is not generally out of mere wantonness which makes stock receive injuries from the barbs, but it is rather out of ignorance of the nature of the obstruction, and as the bank is easily seen, they are not apt to go at it with such force as they might otherwise. After the fence has been completed in every other way, the simplest way to make a bank is to plow three furrows along each side, leaving the first as it is and throwing the other two above it, and beneath the wire. The hollow where the dirt has been taken from answers for a course to take off any water which

might lay about the posts. Keeping the bed of the posts dry is a good preventative from heaving with the frost. Wire fences are so common that everyone knows the best modes of erecting, so that it will be unnecessary to explain further.

Where cedar posts are not easy of access, some of the patented iron posts might be used, but their cost will be considerably greater.

Some advise farmers to plant trees, which will in time come in for fence posts. The Lombardy poplar is highly recommended for this purpose. But it is rather doubtful whether they will answer as well as posts, for every one knows that the efficiency of a wire fence greatly depends on the tension of the wire, which if nailed to trees would become strained and slackened by the swaying of the tree in the wind.

Economy in fencing depends a great deal on the manner in which the farm is divided. The farmer at the outset should try and lay out his fields in sizes which will be most suitable for the work which he intends to engage in. For a hundred acre farm fifteen acre fields are probably most convenient for most purposes, that is, if there is also an amount of portable fence used to divide it up, if necessary.

A very simple and convenient portable fence is used by some, a description of which might not be out of place.

The material used is elm, ash, cherry, etc., or whatever is handiest and best, cut into inch lumber 3 or 4 inches wide, nailed together into hurdles. These may be 12 or 14 feet long, and 4 feet 8 inches or 5 feet high. There should be five boards in them, the spaces to be 6, 7, 8 and 10 inches wide, the narrow spaces for bottom of hurdle. An upright strip 4 inches wide is nailed on both sides at each end and one or two between to strengthen it. Use wrought nails, which should be well clinched and a light carriage bolt at each corner. A man by making a pattern on the barn floor or any other level place, can easily make enough of this fence to do 40 rods in two days. After the hurdles are made, all that is required are the posts, which may be elm, oak or cedar, which are to be pointed to drive into the ground, and some straight elm pins one inch in thickness and a foot and a half long. In erecting it, one man goes first with a light pole the same length as the hurdle, and a crow-bar which is pointed at one end, with which he makes a hole for the post, while the other comes after with the posts in a wagon, drops one into each hole, and then drives them with a commander from the wagon. All that is now required to finish it is to draw along the hurdles and put the pins through the posts to hang them on. Two men can erect 40 rods of this fence in half a day. With the posts driven say 2½ feet, it will resist any storm. To remove, drive out the pins, load the hurdles on to a wagon and take them where they are wanted next. The post can be easily drawn with a short chain and hand-spike.

The points to be considered in this fence over other portable fences are: There are no patent rights to pay for, the material is easily had and not a great quantity required. It is useful to fence stock yards, etc. When it is not in use it can be piled up in a small space. Will last 15 or 20 years if taken care of. Occupies no more space than a wire fence, and a gate may be made in any part of the fence by driving out two pins.

But the greatest advantage in connection with this fence is that it may be made indoors in winter, or on wet days the farmer is not busy. While a rail fence costs 75c. a rod and wire 65c., this fence can be put up for 55c. or 60c. per rod.

In conclusion I would say that there is no occupation in which so much leakage may occur as farming, and no part adds more to it than inefficient fences.

## Stock.

## Horses for the British Army.

Col. Ravenhill, who, with two other officers of the Imperial army, have been visiting Canada for the purpose of reporting upon the horse producing capabilities of this country, and also of sending home such specimens as they could procure at the prices fixed by the Imperial Government for cavalry and artillery, favors us with the following statements, which cannot fail to be of great interest to every farmer in Canada:

As some of your readers may not be aware of the prices paid, or the class of horse required, they are as follows, viz:—For cavalry horses up to \$150, and for artillery horses up to \$175; geldings preferred. Color—bay, brown, black or chestnut, with a few riding greys. Age—between four and eight years. Weight—riding horses, for the light, medium and heavy cavalry between 1,000 and 1,150 lbs. For artillery or engineer horses for riding, between 1,100 and 1,250 lbs. For draught between 1,200 and 1,400 lbs. These horses must be sound, fresh unblemished stock, and may be in the rough straight from the plow or farmer's yard, so long as they are the right shape, make and action. Now as regards soundness, I would draw attention to the two principal causes of the many cases of unsoundness that must be only too apparent to even any casual observer of the horses bred in this country. 1st—A great deal of it is hereditary, and caused by breeding from unsound sires and mares. 2nd—The habit of driving three and four year old horses long distances and at a rapid rate, as is done by the farmers in this country in their buggies and wagons, is a certain way of producing premature unsoundness among the horses. If the farmers of this country are alive to their own interests, a large market is open in Europe for well bred horses, independent of the requirements of the Imperial army; 17,000 are yearly imported into Great Britain from other countries, and Canada supplies none. What is required to produce the riding and driving horses, always in great demand all over Europe, is the importation to this country of thoroughbred sires, horses with plenty of bone, good deep shoulders, long rein, powerful quarters, and good back and loins, and short legs. Nothing requires more care and attention than horse breeding, that is, to produce the animals that command prices in the European market ranging from \$500 to \$4,000.

A great injury is being done to the horse-breeding of this country by crossing the small mares with the large Clyde, Shire and Percheron sires. The produce is often an impossible brute fit for nothing, and if the Imperial army is to be supplied it can only be done from the produce of thoroughbred sires and three-parts bred mare. Each year must show farmers how precarious a living is that which depends solely on grain, and if only the same attention be paid to the rearing of good horses as is being paid to other stock, the result will be beyond all expectation; every day the class of vessels carrying cattle to Europe is improving, and horses can be landed as safe and sound in Liverpool and London, as in New York, with this difference, that for every dollar paid by American dealers, the dealers in Europe can afford to give a pound sterling.