

# Colonial Farmer

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J. D. M. KEATOR, Agricultural Editor.

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## THE COLONIAL FARMER

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The Best Way to Plough.

In the correspondence entitled "Ogden Farm Papers," in the *American Agriculturist* for January, the writer gives his views on the often discussed question *shallow vs. deep ploughing*. He speaks from actual observation witnessed by him during a recent visit to England, and his remarks are well worthy of consideration:—

"I applied myself during my recent trip to the obtaining of light on the much vexed question of deep ploughing, one which has always had a prominent place with our writers, and about which no definite early conclusion seems probable. It has certainly not been less talked about and written about and quarrelled about in England. When agricultural writing first commenced there it at once took a prominent position, and the columns of the British agricultural journals are to this day more taken up with it than any other topic on which opinions differ widely. Arguments on both sides are plenty—on either side, viewed by themselves, they seem convincing—and it is at least difficult to decide which has the least of the decision. In practice, the deep plowers find comparatively few adherents, for there as well as here it is the almost universal custom to plow only to the depth of about six inches. Personally, I have always sided with the deep faction, and I am not now disposed entirely to abandon their position. At the same time, the more I investigate the matter the less I am inclined to urge the adoption of their recommendations. There is much force in the statement of a recent English writer that if by deep plowing you convert the upturned subsoil (by the aid of manure) into a surface soil, you by covering up the surface soil convert it into a subsoil, and place its greater fertility beyond the reach of the developing action of the atmosphere and thus lose its effect. On the other hand, there is no getting around the fact that gardeners and nurserymen have great faith in the efficiency of 'trenching,' a process whereby the surface soil is completely buried beneath the upturned subsoil. In their cases, however, the quantity of manure used is much greater than is possible in the larger operations of the farm."

He further says with reference to the introduction of the steam plough:—"It was thought that the use of steam in plowing would finally decide the matter in England, and that with the increased motive power thus placed at the disposal of the farmer there would be a general deepening of the furrow. The result has been quite an opposite one—a general giving up of the furrow. Only where there is clover or grass to be turned under is the plow used at all in steam cultivation. In all stubble and fallow work (which is much more in proportion to the grass work than it is here) there is substituted for it a deep-tined grubber or cultivator which tears up and loosens the ground very thoroughly without reversing it at all. The cultivation is deep, it is true, but the top soil is kept on the top, and the subsoil is only torn mander and loosened where it lies. This secures the great advantages of deep plowing—better drainage and better protection against drought—without entailing the disadvantage of burying the richer surface soil away from the action of sun and air and out of the reach of surface roots. It is, in fact, more like our long advocated but too costly subsoiling, and it constitutes the most effective cultivation yet known."

The British steamship *Wallachia* has been destroyed by fire in the Harbor of America, Spain.

## An Experiment in Potato Culture in 1873.

We have before us a copy of the *Royal Gazette and New Brunswick Advertiser*, for May 12th, 1873. It is a very modest little sheet of 10 inches by 15 inches. There are no "locals," just two and a half columns of advertisements, and three sides mainly occupied with English news and accounts of the disturbances in Europe arising out of the French Revolution. Small as the paper is, three columns are taken up with a Report made to the New York Agricultural Society, giving an account of experiments in potato culture made in Ireland. The President of the United States had forwarded to the President of the N. Y. Agricultural Society, a pamphlet published in Ireland by the Rev. William Mansell, requesting that after perusal it might be returned. The pamphlet was handed to a Mr. De Witt to report upon it. It is entitled "Letters on the culture of potatoes from the shoots."

It will be noticed that the method recommended is different from the usual way of raising potatoes now, by planting the cuts containing more or less eyes—instead of which the shoots from the eyes are cut and used. The extracts will explain:—"By the shoots are meant those fibres or branches which immediately grow from the eyes of the potatoes after they have begun to vegetate without being put into the earth. The following are the methods which have been generally used in planting them: 1st, Drills of about six inches deep and two feet apart from each other, are made in ground previously prepared in the usual way. Potato shoots are then cut into lengths of about five or six inches each, and planted in the drills six inches asunder, with their thickest ends or shoots downwards. They are then covered with earth about one inch under. 2nd, A furrow is made with a plough, some dung spread in it. The furrow is closed back with the plough and the shoots planted in it as you would do cabbages with setting sticks. 3rd, The shoots are laid down in any direction in the furrow at proper distances from each other, and covered with the plough. Which of those methods of planting, is the best upon the whole, does not seem to be clearly decided by the experiments. When the shoots appear above ground, keep earthing them up at least 18 inches high, leaving always about two or three inches above ground, 'for,' says the author, 'the higher you earth them up, the greater will be the produce; for the potatoes from the shoots if properly attended to, will not spread on the ground, but ascend to the surface as you may see them when dug out, growing to the stock as onions tied to a trace.' The superior advantage of raising potatoes from the shoots instead of the potatoes themselves are the following: 1st. The seed potatoes which in Ireland are reckoned to be one sixth of the whole crop, are a clear saving. 2nd. The same space of ground will produce twice or three times the quantity. 3rd. The growth is more vigorous, the produce earlier, and of a better quality. 4th. The labor of cutting the seed potatoes into what are called sets or scullions is also saved. 5th. It is probable they will not be so apt to degenerate as in the old way of raising them."

There follows several certificates, one from the mayor of Limerick, and a resolution of the Common Council of that city thanking Dr. Mansell "for his very useful discovery, his indefatigable pains in reducing the culture from the shoots to a perfect system, and his liberal communication of the same to the public."

A long extract follows from the pamphlet itself, showing what a saving could be effected in the use of less seed, by the adoption of the author's system. We have given enough, however, to illustrate the author's ideas, and to enable some of our readers to make the experiment in 1874.

## Voices from the West.

The great unbanded Western Country of our neighbors in a farming point of view, does not reward the tiller of its soil with any greater certainty of large crops than those farmers can count on, who live in a climate supposed to be less adapted to agriculture.

In "Walks and Talks on the Farm," in the January number of the *American Agriculturist*, we have the following:—"J. B." of Decorah, Iowa, writes that winter set in a month earlier than usual. The crop of corn was very poor. Hogs are numerous, and there is not enough corn to fatten them. Corn sells at from 35c. to 45c. a bushel. Hogs 3c. per pound live weight, or 3 1/2 to 4c. dressed. Butter sold

for 10c. a pound in summer, but since the drought has advanced to 25c. per pound, and many farmers have to buy. "I was in town last Sunday," he writes, "trying to sell chickens, and all I could get offered was 10c. apiece, no matter how fat they were. Steers are selling for 2c. and 2 1/2c. per pound live weight; but," he adds, "I am sorry to say there are very few to call for."

Mr. Cusick, of Oregon, says: "Farming is generally carried on here (eastern Oregon) in a slovenly manner. Grain all sown in the spring, as the ground is usually too dry to 'bring it up' in the fall. It is harvested with 'headers,' which leave all the weed seeds in the ground. Consequently farms are running down. Land that produced 100 bushels of barley per acre ten years ago will now hardly produce 25 bushels."

A correspondent of the *Ont. Farmer's Advocate*, writing from Minnesota, gives the following ironical sketch of Minnesota's Marvellous Merits: "Winter never commences here before the middle of Oct., and generally is over by the first of May. This year it held off until Oct. 22nd. Now, Oct. 29th, we have good sleighing. And then the weather is so mild and unchangeable. The mercury seldom goes above 110 in summer, and not often gets lower than 45 deg. below in Winter in the shade."

Agriculture pays better than any other business, all get rich that follow that vocation; but the most profitable branch of it is raising wheat. Those who confine themselves strictly to raising it have more money than they know what to do with. Some complain that raising wheat does not pay very well. But, if a man comes with his money enough to buy a quarter section of land, and ready cash to stock it with four good horses, wagons, harness, cows, pigs, rapsers, mowers, and all things necessary for a prosperous farmer to have, including of course a good house and barn, if he be a man with a constitution that will admit of his working from four in the morning till nine in the evening all the year round, if he and his wife will both economize a little by going barefoot in summer and, when he must have something to cover his nakedness and keep him warm, in the place of going to the store and buying something for that purpose, let his wife go to his old bags (if he be fortunate enough to have some bags), and out of them make him a suit of clothes; if he will do all this he will soon find he will be able to make both ends meet.

But when the wives stand in need of anything in that line—well, I don't know what they will do. That is their look out. But should there be any children in the family, and they should ever want clothes, I see no other way than to make them from their mother's old gowns.

It would be a great help also if the wife would do the chores, such as milking the cows, feeding the pigs, making and tending the garden, planting and hoeing the potatoes, husking the corn, driving the reaper and mower, help stack hay and grain, and many other little chores that a woman who is all observing will notice, without having to be told about them every day.

If these suggestions are followed, I see no earthly reason why he cannot lay up money enough each year to pay his taxes, and buy his wife a new calico dress for Christmas, and once in two years may put on airs himself by wearing of a Sunday a pair of brogans. But if any one should conclude to come here who has not the means to open up a big farm, the most profitable business he can go into is to buy a few acres of timber near Dundas and go to chopping cord wood to sell to the prairie farmers, or get himself nominated on some of the numerous tickets as a member of the Legislature.

A VERY SINGULAR STORY OF A WEASEL.  
The following story was told to us as being a positive fact, the narrator professing to be one of the workmen who witnessed the performance of the said weasel: A party of men were prying stones in a field, and found under a large rock a nest containing four young weasels, which they captured and put to one side. Upon the return of the old weasel, quite a scene ensued. She became very much excited, and very angry, and at once set off, but soon returned, and going straight to the little pile containing the drinking-water for the men, she spit something in it, and was about to go off a second time, when she discovered her nest and her young, all alive and unharmed. She immediately returned to the pile and continued jumping and pushing at it until it was overturned, thus saving the lives of the men she evidently meant to punish for the destruction of her offspring.—*National Agriculturist*.

## Selections.

### The Tulip Mania.

Perhaps there are some of our readers who cannot perceive what relation tulips and the prices paid for them bear to the tulip mania. Tulips are sold for 2c. and 2 1/2c. per pound live weight; but," he adds, "I am sorry to say there are very few to call for."

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## TO RELIEVE CHOKED CATTLE.

A correspondent of the *Ont. Farmer's Advocate* gives the following novel mode of relieving an animal with a turnip in its throat:—

I will give you my experience in relieving choked cattle or horses, and you can give it to the public through your valuable paper if you think it of any value.

I was away from home. My wife and I were feeding the cows, and one of them got choked with a turnip. My wife sent for the neighbors, and they came to relieve the cow. One got her by the horns, and another poked a stick down her throat, and unfortunately it was a pine stick. They drove the turnip down, but broke the stick off in her throat; and the last choke was worse than the first. Then they put a clevis in her throat and could feel the stick run into the back of her head. Some advised my wife to kill her, but she said that she would not until I came home. I arrived home at 7 in the evening. The stick was broken in her throat at eleven o'clock in the morning. I went immediately to the yard to see the cow and found the stick in her throat. I got her by the horns to turn her around and she fell on a patch of ice, and then went straight for the barn and threw out the stick, which measured 2 1/2 inches in length and 1 inch in diameter; and then I could see there were other ways to relieve them without sticks and ropes. The next cow that I got choked I thought I would try an experiment with. I had a pair of bars leading to my barn yard. I took the top bars down and left three lower bars in, and I took the whip and made the cow jump over the bars, and she was relieved. That is the way I relieve all my choked cattle and horses, and I never knew it to fail. Sometimes I jump them over twice, and I find that the action of raising and the sudden drop on the front legs dislodges what is in the throat, and no injury is done to the cattle. A woman or a boy in this way can relieve a choked cow or a horse if the man is from home.

Winter and Spring Wheat.  
The distinction between winter and spring wheat is a difference in the time of sowing and not in variety. And spring wheat can be changed into winter, or winter into spring, merely by gradually changing the time in which either is sown. By gradually sowing spring wheat earlier every season, in a few years it can be sown in the fall, and become winter wheat. Or just before the close of winter sow winter and let it germinate slightly, then let it freeze up till spring, and next year it may be successfully sown in the spring. And as it is universally conceded that winter is better than spring wheat, it is a natural conclusion that the sooner wheat can be safely sown in the spring the nearer will it attain to the quality of winter wheat. The difference between red and white wheats, is not in variety, but is owing chiefly to the variety of soil on which it is grown. It is said that the hard wheats are all natives of warm climates, such as Italy, Sicily and Barbary. The soft wheats from more northern climates, such as England, Russia, Belgium, Denmark and Sweden. There is however one exception to this general rule, as the celebrated Polish wheat is hard, and from this reason it has been contended that it was not a native of Poland, but was introduced there from a milder climate. The English atmosphere is so humid that it is impossible to ripen any wheat hard, but in many cases it requires artificial heat to harden it before it can be ground into flour. Different soils and climate materially change the nature and variety of wheat.—*Ag. Dept. Report*.

## FATTENING CATTLE.

The following is from a prominent stock raiser in New York, and addressed to the *Drapers Journal*:—"The price of cattle fattened for market depends on the symmetry of the animal as well as the fat 'style,' as shippers term it. I want here to state that good blood is important, but not absolutely necessary, to make what is called a good seller. It is necessary in order to fatten a steer to bring the highest market price, that he be kept in a growing condition from a calf, and in no case allow to go hungry. It is the starving the first and second winters which wilts and shivers up the steer, and causes him to be sold at a reduced price. No amount of feeding will make him a first-class seller, no difference what his color or blood. An animal well fed (I care not what the blood—Texas or not) from a calf until the spring he is three years old, will be smooth, with bones well covered, and will sell at a profit; while the half-starving animal becomes crooked in the back, bones projecting, and shrivelled up; takes the best part of the summer to get in condition to live, and will not be in condition for market until he is four years old, and then will bring a price which is unsatisfactory to the producer and to every one that handles him. This is no theory, but a fact deduced from close observation, as I have tested the plan for several years. It will and does pay to feed cows to calves and yearlings. They start out on grass in the spring, strong and vigorous. You are then able to market your cattle the spring they are three years old, weighing 1,400 pounds, which is heavy enough to bring the first prize. The best steer I sold in 1872 was a common native. He had all he could eat from a calf, and was never hungry. He was a handsome animal, and was worth more per pound than anything I shipped in 1872. He weighed in Chicago 1,350 pounds, age three months. I now have a steer calf eleven months old, from a very ordinary cow. The calf now (May 21) weighs 660 pounds. I think it will weigh when three years old, 1,500 pounds. I do not wish it to be understood that I am not in favor of improving the blood as well as feed. I shipped two Texas steers this spring, which were three years old; they were smooth and nice, and I sold them with a lot of Durhams, four years old, at the same price, and they were worth as much per pound, and weighed better according to age. They were raised and fed by different parties. Mammoth, overgrown steers have had their day, and are now come down to the neat, compact well fattened animal, both in hogs and cattle. To accomplish this in cattle, good feeding from a calf is necessary."

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## A Varied Diet for Fowls.

There are no animals more omnivorous than fowls; fish, flesh, herbs and grains, being devoured by them with equal relish. We say equally, for though they commonly pounce upon meat with greater avidity than upon grain, this is generally because it affords a rarity, and a flock kept for awhile almost entirely on animal food will show the same greed for a few handfuls of corn.

Now, those animals accustomed to use a varied diet should not be confined to an unvarying one. There are, indeed, some species which are naturally limited to one or a few kinds of food. Thus, cattle do well enough, although kept month after month on grass alone, and a tiger will thrive with nothing but lean meat upon his bill of fare. But with other animals, and with the human race, for instance, the use is different, for no person can maintain the highest efficiency when confined to one article of food. No matter how fond we may be of a particular dish, we lose relish for it when

allowed nothing else for a number of consecutive meals, and the intense craving for variety indicates as its source something more than meat appetite. It gives evidence of real necessities of the system which is constantly varying with the changing circumstances of weather, employment and other conditions. The fondness for variety shown by fowls is as significant of real needs as we have found it to be in ourselves. In purveying for the table, a judicious variety, selected from the three general divisions—at all seasons absolutely necessary for young and old in order to make them perfectly thrifty. True they will not starve on hard corn and water, neither will they pay a profit when so kept.—*The Poultry World*.

## How does Food Nourish Us?

Taking aliments into the stomach is only a preliminary process. There it is mixed with a peculiar fluid which oozes from the inner wall of that organ, which is a powerful solvent. Meats or vegetables are quickly melted down, as it were, the product always appearing within an hour as a grayish, pulchreous mass. Next, it passes from the stomach (on the right side, just under the ribs) into a membranous tube, which is thickly studded with glands, each pouring out a fluid peculiar to itself, to combine with the onward moving ingesta. At the distance of twelve inches on the route, bile from the liver is added, and then a bland secretion from the pancreas, or sweetbread, which alone, of all others in the system, dissolves butter, oils and lard, converting them into an emulsion. Millions of tubes, smaller than hairs, open within the tube, sucking up a milky fluid (chyle), the product of the food and the admixtures since it arrived at the stomach. Then it is conveyed by the distal extremities of the lymphatics (the small tubes above mentioned) in a tube the size of a wheat straw. Once in there, it ascends up the whole length of the abdomen through the chest direct. Thence, mixing with impure venous blood, it goes to the right chamber of the heart, and thence is sent into the lungs. By drawing in a breath, the oxygen in the air is united to the new fluid and the returned old blood; it revivifies one and vitalizes the other. From the food, the solid parts of the body are not only made, but kept in repair.—*Scientific American*.

## Masculine Characteristics in the Male.

To say nothing of the teaching of science as to the matter we are considering, it would seem to be, to all practical men, a self-evident proposition that a strong constitution, with full masculine development and vigor, are most important points to consider in selecting a male animal for breeding, not only because we want this vigor in the offspring, but because such an animal is much more impressive or prepotent as a sire, that is, much more likely to transmit his characteristics to his progeny than an animal of a feminine and delicate form and quality. Therefore it has come to be a rule of universal application, that in selecting a bull, ram, boar or other male animal for breeding purposes, we must not dispense with masculine characteristics belonging to robust and healthy males of the race, all which we can have without coarseness. The head and horn may have a stout appearance without that awkward and sluggish look which indicates bad temper and inferior breeding. The position of the ear, the expression and prominence of the eyes and nostrils will indicate the breeding and temper. And though the arm be of the largest and strongest mould above the knee, the fine breeding of the animal will be indicated by the smallness of the bone below; which indicate, also, the dense and fine texture of the whole body structure. And as to the hair, the thicker it is, and the more we have of it in long wavy curls on the bull's head and neck the better.—*National Live Stock Journal*.

## Cutting Grafts.

It makes but very little difference in mild winters what time grafts are cut; but when there happens to be very severe cold, it deadens or lessens the vitality of the young shoots, and those that have been cut beforehand are therefore the best. It is therefore advisable to cut early in winter. Grafts are often packed in earth or sand, an objection to which is the grit thus imparted to them, to the injury of the fine edge which every good grafter gives to his knife. Damp sawdust in boxes in cellars answers well for packing them in, if in small quantities, but in large boxes (a bushel or more) it is ferment or heat and injure the grafts. Pulverized damp moss is the best of all—is light, easily handled, retaining its moisture uniformly, and keeping the grafts perfectly clean and clear from grit. When cutting grafts, be careful to have them well labelled, to prevent all mistakes.—*Country Gentleman*.

## Driving Horses.

If horses become frightened and run, in all cases, keep your seat, unless they stop so that you may jump out safely. Jumping out when moving swiftly is sure to throw you severely against obstacles. The carriage itself will protect you in many cases. If the harness breaks while you are driving up hill where there is a bank on one side and a precipice on the other, turn the horses' head toward the bank, if you have a four-wheeled vehicle. This will cause the wheels, in backing, to turn against the bank. But if you have a two-wheeled carriage, turn the horse towards the precipice, which will run the wheels from it. Observe the same precautions if a balky horse should commence backing.—*Tucker's Rural Register*.

## ASHES AS A MANURE.

Wood ashes constitute a most valuable manure on almost every soil. There chemical constituents consist of saline, alumina, oxide of iron, oxide of magnesia, potash, soda, and phosphate. These constituents are essential to the growth of plants, but potash is most important to all. It is always needed to decompose the various organic substances which exist in the soil—a change is requisite to their becoming food for plants.

HERSE TAMING BY A MEXICAN.—A gentleman recently purchased a big-spirited horse that had never been shod. On the smith attempting to shoe him, he resisted all efforts, kicked aside everything, and nearly crippled himself against the anvil, when he was finally returned to his stable unshod. In despair his owner was about consigning him to the plough, when a gentleman, who had been a traveller and touched Mexican soil in his tour, took a cord, put it into the mouth of the horse like a bit, and tied it tightly on the animal's head, passing his left ear under the string, not painfully tight, but tight enough to keep the ear down and the cord in its place. This done, he patted the horse gently on the side of the head, and commanded him to follow, and instantly the horse obeyed, subdued and so gentle and obedient as a well-trained dog; suffering his feet to be lifted with entire impunity, acting in all respects like an old stager. The gentleman stated that this was a means resorted to in Mexico and South America for subduing wild horses. The plan is as ingenious as it is simple, and well worth the attention of those who have unmanageable horses.

KILLING WEEDS.—Spading the garden in the fall, though beneficial in other respects, will not kill weeds. The seeds of weeds are not to be frozen out. The only way to get rid of weed seeds in the soil is to allow them to germinate, and then kill the young plants. If taken at the right time this may be done in the garden with the rake. Do not hope to destroy the vitality of weed seeds either by freezing or by burying; as soon as the influences are favorable they will grow as sure as fate.

POSTAGE IN TEXAS.—The common practice in Texas is to allow the cattle of different proprietors to roam at large, promiscuously, without attention by owners or herdsmen. When a man wishes to send a lot to market, he drives up such as are most convenient, a large portion of which being, as might be expected, the property of other breeders. Of these he keeps account, giving credit by the brand, at a public office, where final settlements are made, not by dollars and cents, but by the number of cattle each man has received. Upon the lot driven to market, the proprietor puts what is called the road-brand, and starts the drove on their journey through the prairies of the Indian Territory, Kansas, etc.

## Cutting Grafts.

It makes but very little difference in mild winters what time grafts are cut; but when there happens to be very severe cold, it deadens or lessens the vitality of the young shoots, and those that have been cut beforehand are therefore the best. It is therefore advisable to cut early in winter. Grafts are often packed in earth or sand, an objection to which is the grit thus imparted to them, to the injury of the fine edge which every good grafter gives to his knife. Damp sawdust in boxes in cellars answers well for packing them in, if in small quantities, but in large boxes (a bushel or more) it is ferment or heat and injure the grafts. Pulverized damp moss is the best of all—is light, easily handled, retaining its moisture uniformly, and keeping the grafts perfectly clean and clear from grit. When cutting grafts, be careful to have them well labelled, to prevent all mistakes.—*Country Gentleman*.

## Driving Horses.

If horses become frightened and run, in all cases, keep your seat, unless they stop so that you may jump out safely. Jumping out when moving swiftly is sure to throw you severely against obstacles. The carriage itself will protect you in many cases. If the harness breaks while you are driving up hill where there is a bank on one side and a precipice on the other, turn the horses' head toward the bank, if you have a four-wheeled vehicle. This will cause the wheels, in backing, to turn against the bank. But if you have a two-wheeled carriage, turn the horse towards the precipice, which will run the wheels from it. Observe the same precautions if a balky horse should commence backing.—*Tucker's Rural Register*.

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