

# THE PRAIRIE FARMER

## A WEEKLY JOURNAL OF THE FARM ORCHARD AND FIRESIDE

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### FARMS WITHOUT GARDENS.

We know of nothing that has a worse look than a farm without a garden; and yet there is no sight more common throughout the entire west. As a rule, the best gardens are to be found in villages; the next best are on small farms; while the worst specimens are to be seen in the possession of the great grain and cattle kings. Indeed, on many of these great estates there is nothing to be found worthy of the name of a garden, though there is ordinarily some sort of a place where some of the commoner sorts of "garden truck" is produced; where a small spot of ground is grudgingly given to raising cabbages, beets and turnips. In many cases this spot of land is unfenced, so that cattle can run to it whenever they escape from the yard; the poultry can roam over it whenever there is anything to tempt their appetite, while the dogs are at liberty to run there unrestrained at all times. If this garden gets any regular attention, the labor comes from those whose duties are in the house. If the farm hands labor there at all, it is only between showers of rain, or when the weeds have become so rank that they threaten to take the entire possession of the ground.

There are entire towns throughout Illinois, which is by nature the garden of America, where none of the finer sorts of garden vegetables were ever grown; where the fruit of the egg plant would be as great a curiosity to the children as would the fruit of the palm tree; where a stalk of celery was never seen, and where asparagus is only used to decorate looking glasses after its stalks have matured the seed. On these farmers' tables there is no horse-radish in March, no spinach in April; no lettuce in May; no radishes in June; no cauliflower in July. The spring lamb is served up without mint sauce and eaten without green peas; the spring chicken is devoured without Lima beans; while the rank flavor of mutton is never hidden by the fragrant parsley. No savory messes of pottage are ever served up here to tempt a man to sell his birth right for one of them. On the tables in these houses there is no sweet corn, no sweet potatoes, no sweet marjoram, no sweet herbs of any kind; nothing sweet outside the sugar bowl and molasses pitcher. The vegetable oyster is as much a stranger in these houses as is the oyster from Saddle Rock; and the boys think the Jerusalem artichokes can only be grown in the land of the patriarchs.

Now besides the matter of having luxuries on the table every day in the year, "without money and without price," the garden has yet other uses. The best school for farming is the garden. Little boys take to the garden hoe and rake as naturally as little girls do to doll babies. Because little is sold from the garden is no argument that it is unprofitable. Rightly managed, a garden will supply the delicacies for a table that the crops from the best ten acres of the farm could not buy. Most farmers are so situated that most of the meat used in the family during the summer is necessarily salt. The injurious effects of this kind of food, clearly proved by sailors on long voyages and by soldiers in campaign or in isolated posts, is greatly lessened by the use of an abundance and a variety of fresh vegetables. Physicians tell us that dyspepsia is becoming almost as prevalent among western farmers as scurvy is among sailors engaged in making long voyages at sea. Is not salt food, eaten without a variety of vegetables, the cause of the former disease as of the latter?

Every year considered, a good vegetable garden saves very much to the farm. There are many hours in the course of a season that can be spent in garden work that would otherwise be wasted. Work can be done in it in the early spring before the fields are in a condition to be plowed; work can be profitable done in the fall after the field crops are harvested; there are odd hours between showers in the summer when it does not pay to go at a distance from the house; times after supper when one is not quite tired enough to leave off work, but is too tired to engage in heavy labor. Old men past the age of "bearing heavy burdens in the heat of the day," delight in this garden work, and are fond of an occupation that requires but little strength and furnishes a variety of employment. The women, the girls, all like the garden, and providing it is well fenced, plowed or spaded, and laid out as it should be, will do much both in the way of tilling and beautifying it. In short the only person about the house who is not enthusiastic about having a good garden, is the head farmer, who too often sees in it nothing but

a place to waste valuable time, that should be devoted to field crops.

The failure of potatoes, which have heretofore been the vegetable more used than any or all others, should incite farmers to find other esculents to take the place of that which promises to be destroyed by the pest that has come to us from the Western mountains. Every year the ravages of this pest become greater, and seem to point to the time when the raising of potatoes will become well nigh impossible. Though they are not the leading article of food with us, as with some nations in Europe, they are certainly the leading vegetable. In view of a short crop, or a total failure of potatoes in coming years, it is wise to look out for substitutes. These may be found in sweet potatoes, turnips and other root crops. Sweet potatoes are being raised over a wider extent of country every year and are coming into favor every season. Taking into account their large yield, and the great amount of labor required in killing bugs on Irish potato vines, it is a question if they are not the better paying crop in many locations where no attention has hitherto been given to their culture.

But the garden should not all be taken up by vegetables. A part of the space should be occupied by small fruits. There should be an abundance of pie-plant, strawberries, raspberries, currants, gooseberries and blackberries to supply the table during the season of each, and still have some for canning purposes. Roots or cuttings of most of these can be obtained for the asking of some person who has them in abundance. In any event they can be procured of a nurseryman at a less sum than is spent in a few weeks for dried fruits. Nearly or quite all of them will bear fruit, the second year, sufficient to pay for the plants and the trouble of transplanting them. As a rule there is vastly more of the small fruits eaten by families in cities than by those in the country. In the one instance they are only obtained at from twenty to fifty cents per quart, while in the second case they can be had at the expense of a few hours' work.

### SHIPPING FROM SOUTHERN ILLINOIS.

In a recent last issue I see that you notice the effusions of a small fruit shipper from this station against the Central Railroad Company, which is unjust to the company and Southern Illinois. When there is fruit to ship the company run a fruit train from this station at rates which are as reasonable as could be expected, and satisfactory to all reasonable shippers. When the fruit train is discontinued, fruit and vegetables are shipped upon a fast freight train, in fruit cars, hence to Chicago for 84 cents per hundred. The present express company (M. U.) does better than the old Adams. They have reduced rates to Chicago 25 per cent, and ship direct by their line. Under the old arrangement shippers had to pay two companies. The Illinois Central Railroad Company, who are large land owners in Southern Illinois, have done much to encourage fruit growing here, as it was to their interest to do so, and the insinuation that they are destroying the fruit business here is uncalled for, and not true in the opinion of

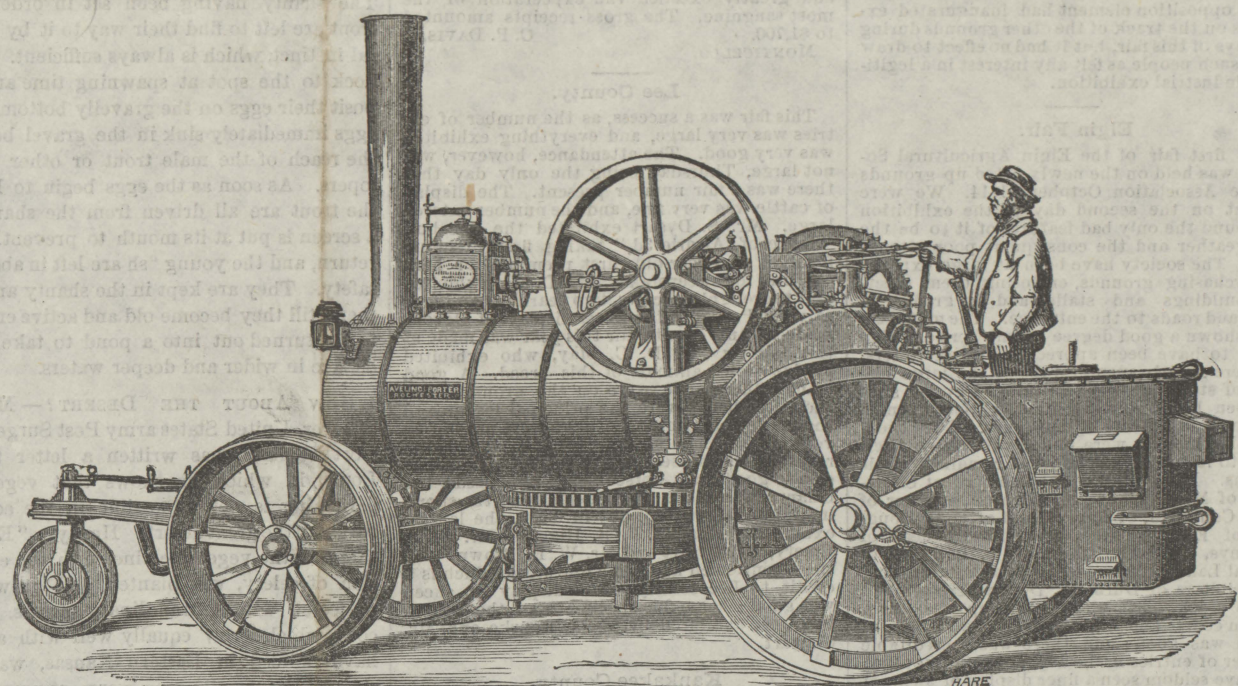
JONESBORO, ILL.

### FASTENING FOR FARM GATES.

Our correspondent W. J. B., writing from the Michigan Agricultural College, tells how they fasten farm gates there: "They use a piece of  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch round iron bent into the form of a letter U. The bottom of the letter turns square corners and the arms are far enough apart and long enough to reach by the gate and hold it closed. This is secured by a couple of stout bolts in a notch cut into the post. Turn up the U against the post and the gate can open; drop it and all is more secure than when held by old wooden pins. It is simple, cheap, durable and handy. One of the students here invented a very nice gate fastening for which he received ten thousand dollars."

### BLACK NEW BRUNSWICK OATS.

Last spring I obtained one quart of Black New Brunswick oats which I sowed broadcast on ground without plowing, but on which potatoes were planted last year. I have just threshed the product, and the yield is four bushels and three pecks—at the rate of one hundred and fifty-two bushels from one! Considering the fact that the oat crop is very light in this section, and that those who sowed the famous Ramsdell Norway oats, have harvested only from thirty to thirty-five bushels to the acre, I think it speaks highly for the Black New Brunswick. Who has a variety that has done better? LINN CO., IOWA. EDPORT.



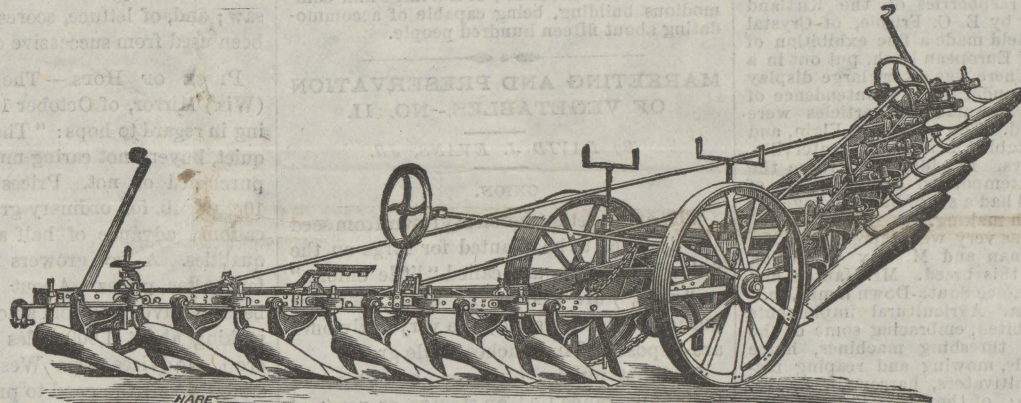
### STEAM CULTIVATION.

We this week present to our readers an illustrated description of the English system of steam plowing and cultivation, together with perspective views of the traction engine fitted with the winding drive, the balance plow and the cultivator used in steam tillage operations.

the engines being ready to start for a fresh field the moment they have stopped work.

The numerous owners of tackle on the double engine system are unanimous in their testimonials as to its efficiency and economy, and their published reports prove their investment to be highly profitable. It is precisely this arrangement that is now in use in New Jersey, by Col. Patterson of Philadel-

phia, with steel skiffs, and is adjustable to different widths of furrow. The skiffs and coulters are fixed on a level beam, and, by altering their position along the beam, in either direction, a wider or narrower furrow is cut. Digging breasts can be used with the implement in place of the ordinary mould board; their effect on a level is equal or superior to spade husbandry. The "Bal-



This system, which is a combination of the inventions of Messrs. Aveling & Porter, of Rochester, England, and Messrs. Fowler & Co., of Leeds, is conceded to be by far the most advantageous and economical arrangement of steam cultivating machinery as practiced in Europe. The engravings represent the "Double Engine Plowing Tackle," and consists of two of Aveling & Por-

ter's patent double speed locomotives, with Fowler & Co.'s winding drums, 800 yards of steel rope, 8 Aveling & Porter's traveling rope porters, and a Fowler's balance plow. The cultivator—which is a newly patented arrangement—is self acting, is made to turn at the headlands, and is an extremely simple and effective machine. Its plan of operation is as follows: As soon as the cultivator is brought up to the headland, the engine on the opposite headland begins to work, and, pulling the lever round, lifts the lines out of the ground; when lifted the height required, the lever strikes against a stop and pulls the implement round into new ground; the driver (who never leaves his seat) releases the catch, the lines drop into the ground, and the implement is drawn across the field. On average soil, forty or fifty acres per day may be effectively cultivated by this implement.



The two winding engines are worked on opposite headlands, and each alternately draws the plow towards itself, the engine which is not at work, paying out the rope while moving forward into position for the return pull. The principal advantage of this system, as compared with the single engine tackle, are: 1st, its simplicity; 2nd, its short working rope; and 3rd, the facility with which the tackle is set to work, and taken up,

ance Plow" is made to turn two, three, four, six or eight furrows, as circumstances may require.

The traction engines, when not being used for plowing, are put to drive thrashing machines, saws, pumps, &c., and they also haul these machines as well as drive them; and economically convey, instead of horses or other animal power, the produce of the

farm to the railroad or place of sale. On many farms in England, where twenty horses had previously been employed, one-fourth that number have sufficed after the introduction of the agricultural locomotive and steam plowing. It remains to be seen whether our agriculturists will adopt steam cultivation now that the necessary machinery can be purchased at little more than its cost to our English friends, by reason of the import duty having been temporarily removed. Full particulars with reference to steam plowing machinery may be obtained of the manufacturer's agent, Mr. W. C. Oastler, 43 Exchange Place, New York.

PAINTING FARM HOUSES AND IMPLEMENTS.

I have been thinking for some time that I would drop you a line on the above subject, and now is just the time when our farmers need to attend to it; if deferred it will soon be too late for this fall.

In years past I had found our paints, both lead and oils, even those warranted to be pure, often so adulterated with fish oil, benzine, cotton oil, rosin oil, whiting chalk, lime, &c., &c., that one could hardly get one

coat of paint fairly dry in our extremely hot and trying climate, before it would begin to rub off just like whitewash; and need another coat over it to preserve it. So that I had become quite discouraged, and neglectful about painting anything at all, whether buildings or tools, as it seemed to cost more to keep them painted than it was worth to them.

Another difficulty, and great addition to the cost was the fact, that fashion or caprice seemed to dictate that the house should be of one color, the trimmings of another, the blinds of another, the doors of another, the fence of another; while again, the wagons, the carriages, wheel-barrow, plows, rollers, bee hives, fruit ladders, &c., coming from different shops were all of different colors, so that at every painting there must be a dozen or two of old kegs and paint brushes, with slops of wasted paint of different sorts, left over.

But I have learned a better way. Some two years ago I sent and got from a barrel to a barrel and a half of Averell's Chemical Paint, of a light dun color, which I thought would suit me well enough for all work; houses, doors, blinds, fences, bee hives, wagons, tools and all. I put two good coats upon my residence here, and run over some three or four of my smaller farm houses on my farms. With what was left I painted my bee-hives, wagons, wheel-barrow, rollers, harrows, fences, &c., and on all these buildings, implements, tools, gates, &c., that paint is as hard and glossy to-day, so far as I can see, as it was a month after it was put on, and bids fair at least to hold its own for five years to come. If not ten of them, better than ordinary white lead and oil does for even two years.

I know nothing how this paint is made or who the man is that makes it, nor do I care. I know he has got something that will in fact stand our climate, if well put on, and at a moderate cost, and that is all I care to know about it. I have heard it said however, that the principal ingredients in it, were the best boiled, pure linseed oil and zinc, chemically combined by some flax, which gives this paint its unequalled polish, finish and durability.

I have watched it now for about two years with interest and care, and I have never found a single spot in it where it either peeled, cracked or chinked off as our other paints do, not even on the wheel-barrow used to wheel wood in, except where the throwing in of the wood has jammed paint, wood and all off, by extreme violence. Others who have used this paint like it equally well. But the point is: I can take one and the same keg and brush, and go over all my buildings, wagons and tools, with no needless waste of brushes, paint or time, as the darker trimmings of the house can be put on with the same brush just as well. The paint comes to hand all ready for use, and any man who can spread his own bread and butter can spread it, or if he cannot his wife can. For this reason the professional painters seldom like it; they think if it comes into general use, "Othello's occupation" will be in a measure gone, and so it will. It is quite as good for inside finish and even better than for the outside as it leaves a coat that shines and washes like glass.

It was so hard and smooth that at first when I carelessly painted my bee-lighting boards with it, standing at an angle of 45 degrees, the bees tripped up and slid down so, on its smooth face, that I had to roughen it with a file. There may be many better paints than this, but I am not acquainted with them, and all who try it in this month of October, will find it a great saving over the old order of things, and I think all will agree with me, that after so fine crops, and so good a State fair, our farmers ought, for their own credit and that of the State, to brush up their old houses, gates, buildings, wagons, reapers, tools, &c., both inside and out, and look a little slicker for a year to come, than in the past. Any color of this paint desired, from a pure white, to a brown, dun, red, blue or black, can be had, as I understand, to suit the taste of the purchaser, and I presume it can be got in any of our larger towns and cities. J. B. TURNER.

JACKSONVILLE, ILL.

BRACKS, with swamp grasses and sedges, may often be cut to the extent of several tons to the acre; and if stored where they will not get soaked by the rains, will make a very good litter for the barn yard, cow shed, or for the stables and hog pens. Some of the more succulent kinds rot rapidly if not well dried and protected; but all the sedges which constitute most of what is called swamp grass, require little drying, and will lie months in cocks simply, without decaying.