

## FOR FARMERS AND GARDENERS.

## THE SNOW-FLAKE.

BY HANNAH F. GOULD.

"Now, if I fall, will it be my lot  
To be cast in some low and lonely spot,  
To melt, and to sink unseen or forgot?  
And then will my course be ended?"  
'Twas thus a feathery Snow-Flake said,  
As down through the measureless space it strayed,  
Or, as half by dalliance, half afraid,  
It seemed in mid-air suspended.

"Oh, no," said the Earth, "thou shalt not lie,  
Neglected and lone, on my lap to die;  
Thou pure and delicate child of the sky;  
For thou wilt be safe in my keeping.  
But, then, I must give thee a lovelier form.  
Thou'lt not be a part of the wintry storm,  
But revive when the sunbeams are yellow and warm,  
And the flowers from my bosom are peeping.

"And then thou shalt have thy choice to be  
Bestored in the lily that decks the lea,  
In the jessamine bloom, the anemone,  
Or aught of thy spotless whiteness;  
To melt, and be cast in a glittering bead,  
With the pearls that the night scatters over the mead,  
In the cup where the bee and the fire-fly feed,  
Regaining thy dazzling brightness:—

"To wake, and be raised from thy transient sleep,  
When Viola's mild blue eye shall weep,  
In a tremulous tear or a diamond leap  
In a drop from the unlocked fountain;  
Or, leaving the valley, the meadow and heath,  
The streamlet, the flowers, and all beneath,  
To go and be wove in the silvery wreath  
Encircling the brow of the mountain.

"Or would'st thou return to a home in the skies,  
To shine in the Iris I'll let thee arise,  
And appear in the many and glorious dyes  
A pencil of sunbeams is blending.  
But true, fair thing, as my name is Earth,  
I'll give thee a new and vernal birth,  
When thou shalt recover thy primal worth,  
And never regret descending!"

"Then I will drop," said the trusting flake;  
"But bear it in mind that the choice I make  
Is not in the flowers nor the dew to awake,  
Nor the mist that shall pass with the morning:  
For, things of thy self, they expire with thee;  
But those that are lent from on high like me,  
They rise, and will live, from thy dust set free,  
To the regions above returning."

"And if true to thy word, and just thou art,  
Like the spirit that dwells in the holiest heart,  
Unsullied by thee, thou wilt let me depart,  
And return to my native heaven;  
For I would be placed in the beautiful bow,  
From time to time, in thy sight to glow,  
So thou may'st remember the Flake of Snow  
By the promise that God hath given."

## Bedding for Cattle.

We had designed penning some thoughts on this subject, deeming it of no trifling importance; but, in glancing through the pages of the *Am. Agriculturist*, our eyes caught the following, which so accurately coincides with our own views, that we insert it for the perusal of our farmers and, indeed, for the especial edification of all who have stock of any kind to care for. Wherever we see a clean, well-conditioned, sleek-looking, thrifty cow or other animal, we say to ourselves the owner or occupant of those premises is a careful and, it follows, as a thing of course, a thrifty man:

The importance of this is conceded for the horse, and most humane owners provide straw or refuse hay to put the nag at his ease when he lies down in his stable. It is quite as important for all the ruminant animals that we have domesticated. Instinct prompts them to seek the driest, warmest spot in the pasture for their sustenance. The wise farmer will profit by Nature's hint, and when he stables his cattle for the winter, will provide dry warm beds.

Bedding favors the accumulation of fat and muscle, by helping to retain the animal heat, and promoting quiet and comfort. It also promotes the secretion of milk in cows, for the same reasons. Any one can satisfy himself on this point, by experimenting with a cow a week in a well bedded stable, and a second week upon the bare ground in the barn yard. Cows in milk are kept much cleaner with a good bed, and this is an item of prime importance, with all who love clean milk. Quite a variety of substances are used for bedding. Straw and hay are the most common, as they are the most convenient, especially to farmers who raise grain largely, or who have a good deal of swamp land, yielding poor hay.

In cities and villages, they are often too costly, and this has led to various substitutes, some of them quite as good as straw, and having this advantage, that they add very much to the manure heap. Dry saw-dust, from saw and shingle mills, and the fine chips and shavings from planing mills, all make good bedding. Spent tan bark, when dried in the sun, also serves the same purpose, and makes a much more valuable manure. Eelgrass is also much used for this purpose, by the sea shore farmers, and answers well. Leaves from the forest, especially those of hard wood trees, make a still better bed, and form one of the best composts for the garden or field.

Dried turf from a salt marsh is, on the whole,

the best bedding we have ever used in our stable. It is cut in Summer, in blocks of about a cubic foot each, dried in the sun a few weeks, and then stored under cover for use. It is very light, spongy, and absorbs urine better than any thing we have ever tried. A layer of it under a horse will last about two weeks before it is saturated. It is then thrown into the barn cellar, to undergo fermentation.

One great advantage of this, and of the saw-dust and tan-bark is, that they put the animal heat of the stock to an economic use. It promotes the decomposition of the vegetable matter and swells the manure heap very rapidly.

Any one, or all of these materials are exceedingly valuable in the stable, and the stock owner should use them as largely as possible, for the purpose of increasing his stock of fertilizers.

## Smoking Meat.

The following excellent method is recommended by a correspondent of the *Chester County (Pa.) Times*, which is altogether practical and combines many advantages over the old-fashioned smoke house.

He says that he has a small room, through which the chimney stack passes, completely plastered; all the chinks about the door closed up, and the floor covered with zinc, so that no smoke can escape, and that by no possibility (although there is not a bit of danger), anything can catch fire. There are two holes, similar to pipe-holes, punched through the chimney—one about twelve inches from the ceiling, so as to admit of the ingress and egress of smoke from the chimney. The smoke will go in the lower hole, and out of the upper one. The meat can be swung round so as to expose all portions of it to the action of the smoke. He has sheet-iron slides put over the holes mentioned above, so as to render the room perfectly free from smoke, thereby surmounting any difficulty in the way of using the room for any other purpose.

If you have no room in the attic suitable for the purpose, a closet, say six feet square, can easily be built adjoining the chimney, at a very little expense and trouble, which will answer every purpose. The closet must be made "smoke-tight," and either lined with tin, or painted with fire-proof paint on the inside, so that there will be no danger from sparks which might enter from the chimney and set fire to wood.

I am sure, he continues, if my neighbors would try this plan of smoking meat, and save the expense of building an out-house for that purpose alone, they would see the advantage of it; and there would not be near so many "lo-cals" in our county papers, headed, "Smoke Houses Robbed," "Hams Stolen," &c.

## Variety in the Food of Animals.

No man is contented, says the *American Agriculturist*, with the same dish for dinner every day, neither will he thrive as well for confining himself to one article of diet, however wholesome it may be. The Creator has provided a constant variety of ripening fruits and grain to correspond with man's desire for change. Animals have the same want and to some extent the same provision. The ox ranges over the field to find out different varieties of grass. Animals in the yard will nose over the refuse heap to pick out something different from their accustomed food. The pig turns from his regular meal of corn, to root for nuts, bulbs, and other tit-bits. These facts should be kept in mind in the winter care of stock. An alternation of roots, cut feed, oil meal, etc., with an occasional treat of grain and shorts, will please their palates, keep up appetite, promote digestion and general thrift. Hogs as well as other animals need such a change. The sweepings of the barn, which contain clover heads, seeds, bits of hay and straw, etc., should be thrown into the pen where they will be eagerly devoured, and will contribute not a little to the health as well as the comfort of the animals.

## Scratching Hens.

A Yankee has invented an apparatus by which he proposes to abate the nuisance of having the gardens destroyed by fowls. The "machine" consists of a small instrument somewhat resembling a very long spur, attached to the hind part of the hen's leg. This instrument is so arranged that when the hen is about to scratch the earth the spur catches in the ground before her foot has fairly descended, and obliges her to bring the foot down quietly and harmlessly a little in front of the place which she aimed at. The hen thereupon tries the other foot, with a like result. She keeps on trying and, before she is

aware of it, the machine has walked her right out of the garden.

It might not be unprofitable for those who wish to keep hens in the city, to make an experiment with these singular propellers; as, if they should answer the contract, owners and breeders of the fowl species, by securely inclosing their own lots, could let their chickens run at large a considerable portion of the season without particular danger to the gardens. We trust, however, that none of our good neighbors will commence the war of extermination upon the fowl race until they have something in their gardens that can be destroyed by them.

## THE DOMESTIC GARDENER'S CLUB TRANSACTIONS.

## REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON VEGETABLES.

## CLASS 2d—VEGETABLE ROOTS WITH LIST.

## FIRST DIVISION—SUGAR BEET.

## CULTURE OF THE BEET.

The beet thrives well on almost any soil with good culture. A light, rich, sandy loam is, however, the best where a large crop is required for feeding cattle; but for the making molasses; the upland ground is preferred, as the proportionable quantity of beets grown on such locations yield more and better molasses than those produced on rich bottom lands, which often contain a great quantity of salts and other ingredients objectionable to making good syrup.

In the culture the ground, previous to planting, should be either dug or plowed a good depth and made fine and mellow, in order that the roots can penetrate deep to draw up the food and moisture in the dry season. When the ground is badly dug or plowed, beets have a tendency to make small roots near the surface, instead of striking deep, in which case the roots are always more or less injured by drouth, owing to the ground being hard, instead of loose and mellow, for the water to pass freely to the subsoil.

It is a fact that the part of the beet root which grows above ground contains salts, etc., in considerable quantities, while the part below the surface is comparatively destitute of these injurious properties and yields the greatest proportion of sweet.

## PREPARING THE GROUND FOR PLANTING.

Either for garden or field culture, the soil should be made fine and mellow. In the field it should be well dressed down with the harrow.

## GARDEN CULTURE.

As a general rule, beets should be planted in drills about twenty inches apart. The drills may be drawn from two to two and a half inches deep and the seed sown at the rate of one ounce to the square rod.

When the seed is sown, it may be covered by the hoe or rake with light, fine earth, being careful to keep out clods from the drills, which often prevent the young plants from breaking the surface freely.

## THE TIME OF SOWING.

For an early crop a little seed may be sown as early as the ground will work freely; but for a general crop, the sowing may be deferred until the middle of April or the first of May.

## FIELD CULTURE.

Four pounds of seed to the acre is sufficient for a general stand; but, as the insects, which are often very numerous and frequently destroy a great portion of the early sown beets must be fed, hence six or eight pounds of seed will be required. By the omission of this precaution in sowing, the planter sometimes does not realize more than half a crop, the young plants having been eaten up by the insects. It is therefore better to have a few plants to pull up than to find any necessity to fill up the rows by transplanting vacant places, which is not a very successful plan, besides such roots are always inferior to those which have not been removed.

In field culture, the seed may be sown about the first of May in dry upland locations, but in low rich ground it may be deferred until the middle of the month, especially if the roots are intended to be used for molasses. Beets sown very early do not retain so great a portion of sweet, as those which are planted later in the spring.

## WATERING THE GROUND BEFORE PLANTING.

When the sowing of beets is deferred to late in the season and the ground becomes dry and hard, it will be necessary to give it a good watering before plowing, in order that it may be moist and in good condition for the seed to germinate. When the ground is in good condition after watering, it may be plowed and dressed down for planting as before directed.

## SOAKING OR SPROUTING THE SEED

Is a good practice for late sowing, in order that it may germinate freely. In doing this, care should be taken not to soak the seed too long; it should be chitted only, so that the young root is just making its appearance through the shell or covering. If the seed is permitted to remain too long in water, which is often the case, the young roots, being feeble, will not cling to the ground and the seed often perishes, particularly if the ground is dry.

When the seed is sprouted, the ground should always be in a moist state and, if dry, the

drills should be moderately watered before planting.

## THE GENERAL CULTURE

Of the beet in the garden and field is very similar. Every opportunity should be taken to keep the ground loose and mellow by hoeing, and, in the garden, the young plants should be thinned out to the distance of six or eight inches apart in the row, when two or three inches high, and in the field from eight to ten inches apart.

Previous to watering, make drills between the rows from two to three inches deep. The water should not be applied too early, and should be moderately applied at the first; for when too freely used, the ground often becomes too wet—and the consequence is, the young plants are stunted in their growth and never make good, handsome roots. When the young plants are six or eight inches high, they should be earthed up, which is done with the hoe—drawing the earth each side the rows two or three inches high.

## DESCRIPTIVE LIST OF BEETS.

## No. 1—Early Blood Red Turnip Root.

This is an excellent early variety for table use, and when planted late is also a good variety for winter.

The root is of a moderate size, oval shape, dark red blood color, inside and out; flesh tender and makes an excellent pickle.

## No. 2—Long Blood Red.

The best beet in cultivation for table use in winter. The root is long, handsome shape, with a clear dark blood red skin; flesh tender, dark blood red and excellent flavor.

To the above, many intermediate varieties are often cultivated, but none equal in quality to the true varieties.

## No. 3—White Sugar Beet.

There are several varieties of the sugar beet, as the *yellow*, the *rose* or *red* color, and several intermediate sub varieties. The *white*, however, is the most generally cultivated and considered the best.

The true white beet is a well proportioned taper-shaped root with a clear skin of whitish green color and clear white flesh, containing the sweet or saccharine juice.

## MANGOLD WURZEL BEET.

This is a large, coarse variety of beet, by some called the "*Root of Scarcity*." It is much cultivated in Great Britain for feeding and fattening horned cattle and answer well the same purpose in this country. The culture is precisely the same as the beet, with the difference that the seed may be sown a little earlier and that the roots are not used for molasses.

## VARIETIES.

There are several varieties. Those most generally cultivated are the *red* and *yellow globe*; to which may be added the *long red*. The two first, however, are considered the best and are most generally cultivated.

## SELECTING ROOTS FOR GROWING SEED

Should always be done when the roots are dug. In doing this, the rule is to choose the handsome, well-formed roots, of clear skin, and those which are clear from long fibres on the main root.

Another rule may always be considered as essential; viz., that roots which have large, coarse tops are to be rejected, and that short, small tops indicate good varieties.

Care should be taken in cutting off the leaves that the top is left entire. When the crown or upper part of the root is cut off, which is often the case, the root, when planted, will produce several small stems from the top, instead of making one main shoot, which is always to be preferred, and produces the best seed.

## PLANTING OUT THE BEETS

May be done in the spring so soon as the ground is dry and works freely. A good mellow piece should be selected, which should be well dug for planting. The roots may be planted in rows from two to three feet apart with a spade.

In planting, the workman places a garden line where the row is intended to be and with a spade makes holes sufficiently deep to place the roots so that their crown is level with the surface. The roots are then placed and some fine earth well closed around them, in order that they may make new fibres freely.

## THE CULTURE

Is simply to keep the ground loose and in good condition about the roots, watering, etc., until the seed begins to be ripe on the main shoots. The watering may then be suspended; for, if continued, the tops will continue to throw out small, meagre side shoots that always produce small, weak, imperfect seed, which is to be rejected and separated from the good plump seed.

## GATHERING THE CROP.

This should be done when the good seed is ripe. It often happens that the first and best seed is left on the plants until it falls off, to permit the inferior to ripen, which is of no use. The first seed that ripens on any vegetable is always the best.

Yankee Jockeyism.—"What becomes of old horses?" asked a man of an investigating turn of mind of our friend George. "Why," said George, thoughtfully, "the final end of 'em is, they get traded off."