

FOR FARMERS AND GARDENERS.

THE POETRY OF THE POTATO.

The following parody on Woodworth's "Buck-et," should be set to music. The verses are the conclusion of what might be called an anthem to the potato:

"That delectable plant I would praise while I'm able,
For often at noon, when returned from the field,
I found it superior to all on the table—
The best flavored edible nature could yield.
With what eager appetite, sharpened by labor,
I piled knife and fork with a hearty good will;
Alas! there are none of the old-fashioned flavor;
None like the 'real Simons' that grew on the hill.
The mealy potato, the Irish potato,
The thin-skinned potato that grew on the hill.
"How prime from the full heaped dish to receive it,
As poised on my fork it ascends to my mouth;
No appeal to the palate could tempt me to leave it,
Though affected by 'rot' or a long summer drought.
And now far removed from that loved situation,
Where I used to partake of the root to my fill,
Fancy fain would revert to my father's plantation,
And sigh for the 'kidneys' that grew on the hill.
The mealy potato, the Irish potato,
The thin-skinned potato that grew on the hill."

WET LANDS AND DRAINAGE.—Although, in this Territory, there is comparatively little land that may be called wet or marshy, there is sufficient, in various localities, to induce us to print the following practical remarks on drainage, from the *New American Cyclopaedia*:

Wet lands are well known to be unfavorable to the production of large crops; it is also true that grains, potatoes, grass, etc., are of sounder and better quality when grown upon lands not subject to excess of moisture. The soils that retain it are correctly described as cold, while the more porous soils of a sandy nature are called warm. The former are chilled by the evaporation continually going on, while the latter are warmed below by the rain water which percolates through from the surface, and are heated by the direct action of the sun's rays.

By the experiments of Mr. Parkes in a bog in Lancashire, it appears that by giving free passage to the water through a cold soil by thorough drainage, its temperature at the depth of 7 inches may be raised 10 degrees above that of undrained adjoining land of the same quality. Thus, drainage produces the effect of a warmer climate, and may add, in fact, many days to the length of the season; and this not merely by reason of the warmth extended for a longer period, but in the spring the soil is sooner prepared for cultivation, and may be in a condition for plowing and planting even two weeks before neighboring land of similar quality, in other respects, would admit of the passage of oxen and horses for working. An instance of such a gain in time was reported in 1856 by the Secretary of the Board of Agriculture of the State of Maine.

In the late spring of the Northern States, where the snow often lies in April, and the ground is saturated with moisture in May, the advantages thus secured are of greater importance. While frequent accessions of water is a great benefit to lands through which it finds a ready passage, its retention impairs in various ways the fertility of the soil. It prevents the pulverization of the earth by the plow and harrow, and the circulation of air to the roots of the plants. It nourishes a growth of noxious plants, and in woodlands its injurious effect is seen in the production of many lichens, fungi, and other parasites upon the trees.

Even the cattle and sheep pastured upon wet lands are subject to diseases from which those in dry fields are comparatively free, and are moreover pestered by swarms of flies and mosquitoes, which disappear as the same lands are drained. Man himself is often the greatest sufferer from undrained lands, which tend to engender fevers and agues; and these are known to prevail long after the forests have been removed, showing that the cause is not so much the decay of large bodies of vegetable matter, as the cold dampness produced by the saturation of the earth with moisture.

By the recent researches of Dr. H. I. Bowditch, of Boston, it appears that consumption also is more prevalent in those localities in Massachusetts which are badly drained; fifty out of fifty-five districts in the State of decidedly consumptive character, being found wet by contiguity to ponds or marshes, or by reason of low and springy lands. In the vicinity of the wet and unhealthy localities are often found others which appear to be as free from any tendency to induce or aggravate the disease as the distant regions to which patients are sent for recovery.

It is a singular fact, fully established by experience, that undrained lands are more liable to suffer from drouth than those thoroughly drained. The former in a dry time become baked and compact, and do not readily absorb moisture from the atmosphere; but a well pulverized and open soil receives into its pores and absorbs like a sponge the dew and aqueous vapor in the air. The moisture finds its way to the lower portions of the soil and is there taken up by the rootlets, which penetrate deep into the loosened materials.

Deep or subsoil plowing is thus seen to be most advantageously employed in connection with underdraining. The same which prevents the penetration of the water also keeps near the surface the fertilizing substances applied as manure; and these exposed to the heat of the sun are in great part dissipated, their richest ammoniacal portions going off in exhalations to be precipitated by the rains upon other lands.

Undrained soils in cold climates suffer from another cause. They are liable to freeze when saturated with moisture; and as they thaw, or, in popular language, as the frost comes out of the ground, they are so heaved and broken up, that the roots of the grass and winter grains are thrown out, and the plants are destroyed: this is what is called winter killed. By draining and subsoiling, a way is opened for the moisture to sink beyond the reach of frost, and the soil is left too dry to be disturbed by the thaws of spring.

From these remarks may be inferred the inutility of mere surface draining. Open trenches may convey away the surface water, but do not reach the cold stagnating repositories beneath the soil, which check that free circulation of fluids, which is as essential to the health of vegetable bodies as that of the air to animals. Such ditches should be used only as brooks in the lowest grounds to convey away the water discharged into them by the underground drains coming down the slopes.

Thoroughly drained marsh lands are not unfrequently found to possess uncommon fertility, combined with a mellowness and depth of soil quite desirable for more easy culture as well as for profitable yield.

Much of that land which now lies submerged in water and covered with coarse grass or cane, might, by draining, be rendered good farming lands, or, if preferred, turned into meadows and sown with Timothy, Red Top or Hungarian Grass—from which heavy crops of excellent grain or fodder might be produced, where such crops would never succeed, in their present state.

As to the most proper time for draining, we believe that March, or as early in the spring as practicable, is a good time, for the other spring labors are not yet pressing and, where draining may be largely advantageous, every rod of drain made will serve to help forward the plowing, sowing and harvesting.

Now is the time to determine where drains should be made. The *American Agriculturist* says that drains are wanted "wherever the surface water remained last spring, hindering the plowing and planting. They are wanted where the water collected and remained a long time when you dug post holes late in the season. They are wanted where the soil was cold and stiff, heavy in Spring and Fall, and hard as a brick-bat in Summer. They are wanted in yonder orchard, where the trees are mossy and stunted. They are wanted in yonder pasture, where the ground 'gives' under your feet, and where the grasses are coarse and sour."

Drains from two to three feet deep and fifty feet apart will generally be sufficient; but these proportions will vary according to the kind of soil—clayey, impervious soils requiring more drains than loose, mucky lands.

Look to it, all ye farmers who own wet lands, and consider whether they may be rendered more remunerative to you by draining.

Current Wine, when properly made, is truly a delicacy and possesses properties peculiarly adapted to restoring a healthy equilibrium to the system debilitated by temporary indisposition, to which most people, particularly females, are more or less subject. We have already printed other receipts for making this wine, but the following, from the *Germantown Telegraph*, being a mode adopted by the editor of that journal for some years past, seems a good and quite simple way and is worthy the attention of all who have large quantities of currants and who contemplate manufacturing wine:

For several years we have made a ten gallon keg of current wine, which is of as good quality as any we have tasted, and is generally so pronounced by those who have had an opportunity to judge. The mode of manufacture is simple, and can be easily followed by any family having the currants and the disposition to make the wine. For general information we give the receipt after which we make it, and cordially recommend it.

The currants should be fully ripe when picked; put them into a large tub, in which they may remain a day or two; then crush them with the hands, unless you have a small patent cider press, in which they should not be pressed too much, or the stems will be bruised and impart a disagreeable taste to the juice. If the hands are used, put the crushed fruit, after the juice has been poured off, in a cloth or sack and press out the remaining juice. Put the juice back in the tub after cleansing it, where it should remain for about three days, until the first stages of fermentation are over, and removing once or twice a day the scum copiously arising to the top. Then put the juice into a vessel—a demijohn, keg, or barrel—of a size to suit the quantity to be made, and,

To each quart of juice, add
Three pounds of the best brown sugar, (we prefer this to the loaf.)
And water sufficient to make a gallon.

Thus, ten quarts of juice and thirty pounds of sugar, will give you ten gallons of wine, and so on in that proportion.

The cask must be full, and the bung or stopper left off until fermentation ceases, which will be in twelve or fifteen days. Meantime the cask must be filled up daily with water, as fermentation throws out the impure matter. When fermentation ceases, rack the wine off carefully, either from the spigot or by a siphon, and keep running all the time. Cleanse the cask thoroughly with boiling water, then return the wine, bung up tightly, and let stand for four or five months, when it will be fit to drink, and can be bottled if desired.

All the vessels, casks, etc., should be perfectly sweet, and the whole operation should be done with an eye to cleanliness. In such event, every drop of brandy or other spirituous liquors added will detract from the flavor of the wine, and will not in the least degree increase its keeping qualities. Current wine made in this way will keep for an age, unless it is—**DRANK**.

From grapes, rhubarb and currants, there is no question that we might be able to produce for ourselves all the wine necessary for family uses

and medicinal purposes, thereby removing all cause for purchasing an imported article called wine, which, in nine cases out of ten is manufactured from alcohol adulterated with poisonous drugs and, when taken medicinally, as it generally is, has a tendency to aggravate rather than alleviate disease.

We have heard it stated by gentlemen whose veracity was not questioned and who had carefully investigated the mysteries of the wine trade, that not a single bottle of genuine Port, Madeira, Malaga, or any other French wine, can be obtained in the United States, except through the hands of the individual who imported it; and even then, we question seriously whether it would be genuine; for wine is manufactured from alcohol even in France, on the borders of the vast vineyards, the juice of whose grapes has given a world-wide fame to the wines of France.

When we hear any person express a preference for wine—the poisoned alcohol of the merchant—we want to whisper in his ear, If you really need a stimulating draught, drink that which is not poisoned—the pure juice of the grape; the unadulterated distillations of the rye, corn, wheat; or the extracts, in a milder form, from barley and other grain. Even these, however, if used at all, should be used as medicine. But if there are any who would fain emulate the death of Socrates, let them, like that great philosopher, drink deeply and make a quick end of the matter! Do not indulge in slow-poison libations.

We have already continued our reflections on wine-making and wine, further than at present we had designed; but, as the subject is before us, we may here add, that some are induced to believe that those casks of what is called custom-house wines are generally pure and unadulterated—being captured from smugglers, direct from France, and then becoming the property of the government. This view was not so generally credited when the fact eked out that extensive manufactories were found in various parts of France where the "choicest wines" were made without the aid of the grape; but it is now nearly obsolete—quite so with the initiated—it being a well established fact that pure juice, by the French wine-makers, is put up in bottles, carefully corked and sealed—very few of which are ever permitted to reach the shores of America.

In Cincinnati, Ohio, during the past ten years, vineyards have become numerous and extensive, and several thousand gallons of a good wine have been manufactured there yearly; but this is mostly consumed in Cincinnati and vicinity.

What hope, therefore, have we of ever obtaining pure wine, either for family use or for sacramental purposes. Can it be had from the vineyards of California, where large quantities are yearly manufactured? No—it is all consumed at home. They have none for exportation. We must manufacture our own wine, if we would have it. Can we do so? Why not? Until the hardy varieties of the grape are generally cultivated among us; let all who want wines, procure some choice currant shoots, or roots, and from these, together with the rhubarb, every family may have, next year, at least one bottle of pure wine, which, if not previously required for some urgent occasion, may be kept forty or fifty years and then, following the example of the good woman in England, presented to the Apostles.

The Harvesting season is now with us. That all the labors thereof should be carefully and promptly performed is of the utmost importance. The *Prairie Farmer* thus pertinently reminds the farmer of some things, attention to which is absolutely essential to profitable farming—to say nothing of the credit and satisfaction accruing from having performed work in a thorough and systematic manner:

By all means, and for the sake of a good name and a profitable one, do not do a loose business in the harvest field. There is no place where the practice of putting off till to-morrow what can be done to-day, is more disastrous. Cut less grain and secure it. Provide now for its security. Calculate a little. No man this season can afford to lose from neglect.

Another thing, and an important one. Go into the field with a sickle as soon as the grain grows golden, and cut your seed. Select that earliest ripe of course, with other good qualities to correspond. Exclude chaff heads. Thrash it with a flail and store it away from the rats and mice. We will warrant every kernel to grow, and no deterioration, such as running out will follow. Talk about wheat running out! No wonder when such stuff is sown, and so little care taken to preserve the good qualities of a variety!

Thrashing—with a great many farmers costs more than five times what it should—costs more in the waste of grain, caused by the haste to get through, the rioting of men, and the general pow-wow made of the event. Thrash and clean, so that the grain when marketed will be no disgrace to the name farmer. Good wheat will bring a price corresponding to its value over the mixture of our markets. Let every farmer hold it until it does, if possible. We never saw a farmer yet that could not sell a good article at very near its value. Exceptions find a cause in the supply or demand. A good fanning mill will pay for itself in two years, and last a lifetime if cared for and kept under shelter.

The True Scale of Prices.

Hearing some expressions of dissatisfaction at the low rates of vegetables as hawked through the streets by certain individuals, we called upon Mr. J. E. Sayers and ascertained the prices fixed upon by the gardeners of this city, which to us seemed fair and equitable. At our request, Mr. Sayers furnished us his views on the subject, as follows:

It is not without reason that many complaints are made of the low prices at which garden vegetables are sold, in comparison with other articles of food. This subject, although apparently of little consequence to the community, upon a little inquiry, will be found to be worthy of serious consideration.

It will be readily seen that all communities must in a great measure live from the produce of the soil, and it is from the garden as well as the farm that a great portion of the elements that contribute to our home supplies are derived.

Under this supposition it has been held as a general rule that the produce from the soil should be in proportionate value with the price of merchandise and other articles in the market.

The present prices of vegetables are far below what is usual in the States, while the articles of foreign growth and manufacture, such as tea, coffee, sugar, rice, tobacco and all kinds of wearing apparel are from three to four times dearer than in the States from whence they are imported.

Now the question is, why not sell at prices in proportion to the prices of the articles that are to be purchased? In New York or St. Louis a bushel of green peas sells for \$1.50. Suppose that this money is spent for sugar at 10 cts. per lb.; the exchange would bring 15 lbs.

In this city peas are sold at 25 cts. per peck, or a dollar per bushel, and, when exchanged for sugar at 65 cts. per lb. will bring one pound and a half. Coffee, tea and every other article will bear the same restriction. Other vegetable products, also, are sold at the same low price of peas.

Now carry out this manner of sale or exchange and the consequence will be a scarcity of vegetable food, and many must suffer from parting with their garden produce when not in a matured state.

The great item of universal economy in domestic produce is to use as little as possible of vegetable food until it comes into a state of maturity. Let any person for a moment estimate the value of a bushel of green peas as food, and then compare the same when ripe, and it will be seen that the latter are far the most valuable. So also with beans, carrots, beets and most kinds of vegetables.

It may be argued that every person has a right to dispose of any produce they raise in any way that they think proper; and why should any one control that which they have no right or claim to? This is an argument which cannot be disputed; but, as the smith, the painter and most other mechanics have agreed to conform to certain prices as a fair compensation for their industrial labors, why should not the gardener, the farmer and all cultivators of the soil also agree to conform to certain prices, equivalent to their labor?

Many have cause to say, "I have vegetables for sale, but do not know what to ask for them; I do not know the price." This can be ascertained in no other way than by estimating the actual cost of labor and other expenses in growing garden produce.

Upon a fair estimate of the expense of producing articles from the garden I find that, in order to sell without a loss, peas are worth 50 to 75 cts. per peck; green beans the same; beets, turnips, etc., 25 to 30 cts. per dozen; onions, 15 to 20 cts. per dozen; cucumbers, 20 to 30 cts. per dozen; cabbage, 75 cts. to \$1 per dozen; and other things in proportion. I hear of young potatoes being sold at this time for 50 cents per peck, which should be sold for \$1 to realize a fair compensation, as one peck at this time will make three or four pecks in the fall, when fully grown.

I am well aware that it is not my province to dictate prices to others. My object in writing this article is merely to draw attention to the subject so far as it relates to the welfare of the community, trusting that every one will duly consider the propriety of making the most and best use, in all respects, of the produce of the soil, as a duty we owe to the Giver of all.

Whether necessity, in some extreme case, has induced any person to thus barter away their produce, as it were for a mere song, we have not yet learned; but have no hesitation in urging that, as "necessity is the mother of invention," those who get so "hard up" for gew-gaws, fancy-fixings and imported luxuries, at exorbitant rates, should either dispose of their vegetables, etc., at full value or invent some means of dispensing with the use of imported goods.

The Graham Tobacco in Mr. G. D. Watt's garden, alluded to a few weeks since, is now blossoming. The seed plants are about four feet high. The measurement of a single leaf of this tobacco astonished us. We give the dimensions to our readers: Length of leaf, two feet and nine inches; width of leaf, eighteen inches; circumference of the stem, near the ground, five and a half inches. The leaf of this variety is rough, while that of the other variety is smooth, of entirely different shape and vastly inferior in size. There is yet encouragement for the inveterate chewer and smoker; but this plant is most highly recommended for "bruises and all sick cattle," for which uses Mr. Watt bears testimony, from