

HOUSE AND FARM.

Farmers and Patents. A farmer sees a gate, a clevis, or some other useful contrivance illustrated in the Agriculturist or some other paper, and it meeting his wants he makes one and uses it. His neighbor living several miles off sees the affair and makes one like it, and so the thing gets into use throughout a large section of country. At length there comes along a chap who claims that he holds a patent upon the gate or other device, that the farmer has infringed upon his rights and threatens immediate prosecution if royalty is not paid. In nine cases out of ten the farmer is intimidated by the assurance of the fellow, and to avoid trouble pays the sum demanded, and the fellow, who is in nine cases out of ten a swindler, goes on to fleece the next farmer. This, in brief, is the story that comes to us so often that we are sure that a large amount of swindling is carried on in this manner. Being in Washington a while ago, we had an interview with the Hon. Commissioner of Patents, with a view to see what could be done to stop this now grievous nuisance. The Commissioner is entirely in sympathy with the farmers, and is ready to do all in his power to save them from imposition. He told us several things in relation to the matter which it is not advisable to publish, as the rogues would be put on their guard. We give our friends the following advice: In the first place, do not be frightened. Most farmers are willing to make almost any sacrifice in order to avoid anything that looks like a lawsuit, and these swindlers know it. Acting upon this knowledge, they bluster and threaten. Let them blow. They can not, under any circumstances, bring you into court under several months, and "bluff" is their chief reliance. A man claims that you have infringed his patent, demand to see the patent. If he cannot show it, or give you its date of issue and the name in which it was issued, do not bother him. Demand the date, and if you get it tell him to call again. Pay no money until you have written to the Patent Office at Washington, to ascertain if such a patent was issued on such a date. Be particular about the date. Do not fear, that being an unknown individual the application will be unnoticed. It is a part of the business of the office to answer just such letters. If the pretended owner of the patent is a fraud, he, finding that you are not frightened and know what you are about, will not trouble you any more. Still there are cases in which the farmer may have unwittingly infringed upon the patent right of an invention. Publishers of journals are sometimes imposed upon by persons who send them drawings of things that have already been patented. An honest owner of a patent is likely to be a fair man, and when you are fully convinced that you have unwittingly trespassed upon his rights, there will generally be no difficulty in effecting a settlement. It is only the pretenders who bluff and bluster. Do not be afraid of any who try intimidation, but adopt the course we have here connected.—Exchange.

Driving Fence-Posts.

On one occasion the writer desired to erect a board-fence around a field which was free from stones, and he proceeded on the following plan: The line of the fence was laid out perfectly straight, and small stakes were driven into the ground sixteen feet apart. A sharp wedge-shaped pointed crow-bar was procured, with which holes were punched in the ground where each stake was placed. By working the bar back and forth in the ground, the hole was made large enough to fit the post closely, and two feet and a half deep. The post was pointed very evenly on each side so that it would drive straight. The top was beveled so that it would not split in driving. A triangular stool, with three legs three feet long, and a heavy beetle completed the outfit. The beetle was made out of a piece of set maple, fifteen inches long, cut from a small tree about a foot in diameter. The bark was trimmed off, and the edges were beveled off about three inches; a handle of ash two inches thick was put through

the beetle, and was trimmed down so as to be an inch and a half thick one way and two inches in another. This prevents it from turning in the hands when striking with it. When the posts were all ready to be driven, a man held one of them with the point in the hole, while another mounted the stool and drove it down with the beetle. With a little care, the man who held the post kept it upright and in a line with the rest. As the posts were driven, two men followed, nailing on the boards. These four men completed a five-board fence around a square ten-acre field in one day and a half, making the labor equal to six days' work. Had the holes been dug, the job would have taken at least four times as long. The cost of the labor was less than ten cents a rod; the men were good mechanics, or it would have cost much more, their labor at two dollars and a half a day being probably twice as cheap as common labor at half that rate. In addition to the superior rapidity and cheapness of the work, the fence was much firmer than it could possibly have been had the holes been dug for the posts.

The Cream of Milk.

Few persons are aware, probably, of the extent to which the percentage of cream is influenced by the condition of the cow. It is a curious thing that any excitement to which the animal is subjected, causes a very large loss of cream on the milk. At the Barre meeting of the Massachusetts State Board, Dr. Sturtevant, of South Farmingham, said: "Under the same feed, and under the same circumstances, the same cow gave, one day, nine and a half per cent. of cream, and another day eighteen per cent. of cream." Thereupon, Mr. Lewis, an old experienced dairyman, said: "I can tell a bigger story than that. I have taken a great deal of pains to test the value of my milk that I have worked into cheese. I have granulated glasses for the purpose, and I have found that a cow, whose uniform percentage of cream was eighteen per cent. reduced to six, in twelve hours—not from any change of food, but from a little excitement. You gentlemen, who make butter, be careful to adopt my advice, and always treat your cow kindly and gently; never get her excited, because every ounce of excitement will take from her milk one per cent. of cream. I have known a cow abused by a furious, brutal milker, and the percentage of the cream went down one half. It is astonishing what an effect excitement has on the percentage of cream in milk that a cow produces. You will be astonished if you will make the test, and make it carefully. I have known a cow, excited from natural causes, to drop her percentage of cream in her milk from fourteen to sixteen per cent. in twelve hours. So I would again repeat, whoever abuses his cow knocks out of his milk a large percentage of cream." It will readily be seen how important it is to keep the cow quiet and free from fright and all excitement. The worrying dogs, the hurrying and hallowing of boys when driving the cows home from pasture, the kicking and pounding of an angry milker, or any similar cause of excitement will be sure to reduce the quality of the milk to the extent of several per cent. of cream. This fact is too well attested by many careful and experienced dairymen to admit of a doubt, and the first object of concern with the butter dairymen, especially should be to see that his cows are treated with the utmost gentleness all the time. The boys who drive the cows home, will make note of this, and when spring comes and the cows go out, just mark what we say.—Mass. Ploughman.

STRAWBERRIES.—Why are they called strawberries? is a question most people have asked about the ruddy fruit. We have heard that the name is derived from a custom long ago prevalent in England, of the children stringing the berries on straw or grass and selling so many strings for a penny. Can any of our subscribers give us any other reason why they are called strawberries? Has it anything to do with spreading straw under them to keep the dirt off?

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