

**Agricultural Department.**  
WEDNESDAY MORNING, Feb. 10 '09.

**Can the United States Raise its own Barley?**

Large quantities of barley are annually imported into the United States from Canada, and in addition to this it is said that orders have recently been sent to England for many thousand bushels. The fact is a significant one. Barley requires good land and good culture. We have abundance of good land, but what shall we say of its culture? Let the price of barley answer.

There was a time when it seemed doubtful whether we could afford to improve our farms in the older settled parts of the country as long as we had to compete with the cheap and fertile land of the West. To spend \$30 in draining an acre of land in Western New York, while this sum would buy 20 acres of choice land in Iowa, required more faith in good farming than most of us possessed. But the truth seems to be that land, in itself considered, has comparatively little value. What is its worth in parts of Texas or South America? It is the labor, skill and capital, expended upon it directly and indirectly that gives it value. We build roads, canals, railroads, towns, cities, churches and school-houses, and every dollar so spent adds to the value of the land. In this view, the land in the West is not so much cheaper than at the East as is generally supposed; and at all events we need not hesitate to expend capital for needed improvements on our farms, for fear that the fertile lands of the West will so flood our markets with cheap produce that we cannot make a living. At any rate, if we cultivate our land at all we must cultivate it well. The only farmers who have been greatly benefited by the high prices of the last six years are those whose land is in good condition; and this will always be the case. We think there can be no doubt that our general system of farming is improving, but there is still great need of more thorough culture and manuring. The high price of barley, and the fact that we obtain such large quantities from Canada, where the soil and climate are no better than with us, and that the freight, duty and premium on gold, give us at least 25 cents a bushel advantage in price, is a sure indication that we are not farming as well as it is for our interest to do. Barley, as we have said, requires high culture, and at present prices we can certainly afford to put our land in proper condition to produce a large yield.

We do not, at this time, propose discussing the best method of growing barley. Our object is to call attention to a fact that affords encouragement to those who are expending capital in the improvement of their land. Poor farmers can raise good barley. Let those who are under-draining and otherwise improving their land, at the expense, take courage.—There is an absolute necessity for an improved system of agriculture, and those who are getting their land in good condition will assuredly have their reward.—*American Agriculturist.*

**Management of Cows in Winter.**  
A correspondent of the *Agriculturist* inquires: "When cows are stabled in winter, how long should they be allowed to remain in the yard during the day?" This depends a good deal on the weather, and also on the food and whether the cows are expected to give milk or not. When the object is to obtain milk in winter, if water is supplied in the stable we would seldom turn them out at all. And if necessary to turn them out to water, we would let them out twice a day, say for ten or fifteen minutes. Cows like to be humored a little in regard to watering. They will not drink as readily as a horse. They should be allowed no giving milk of it is desirable to have them eat coarse fodder, they should be turned out for several hours during the day. They will eat this class of fodder much better in the yard than in the stable. Judgement, however, should be exercised. If the weather is stormy; they will be better in the stable, and at all times, if they seem cold and are not eating or enjoying themselves, let them be immediately tied up. Let the stable be well ventilated and cleaned out twice a day, and made as dry and comfortable as possible. The great defect in most stables is in not having sufficient ventilation. The ventilators should be so arranged that they can easily be adjusted to suit the weather. Make it a rule to visit the stable before retiring for the night, and see that everything is right.

**Foul Water in Cisterns.**—"A reader" says that the cisterns for watering cattle in his vicinity have become foul, and wants to know a remedy.—This is occasioned sometimes by the falling in of earth worms or rats from the top, which die and putrefy. The remedy for this would be the cementing of the top of the cistern so as to keep out the worms and vermin.—Sometimes the cistern has no ventilation, and the water is drawn by a pump. If the cistern were opened and an endless chain pump or a bucket with windlass were introduced to draw the water, the difficulty would be remedied. Even in wells the water is thought to be benefited by frequent agitations. Cisterns should be thoroughly cleaned once a year, and it is a safeguard against untidely cracking to make a wash of hydraulic lime and brush over the interior.—*American Agriculturist.*

**Card the Cows.**—One would think that any kind-hearted man, when he sees how grateful his operation is to a cow, would be willing to spend a few moments daily in carding her. It pays as well as to clean a cow as a horse. All who have fairly tried it find great benefit from the operation. And yet not one farmer in a hundred makes it a practice to use the card or curry-comb in the cow-stable. Who know stupid men who laugh at the idea as a mere notion of some fancy farmer. But, in point of fact, no cow can give the best results at all unless this matter is attended to, especially in winter.

**Fix Up the Implements.**

During the winter every implement and machine that will be required next spring and summer should be overhauled and repaired. Examine the plows, and if they have been neglected and are rusty, wash off the dirt and then apply with a swab fastened on the end of a stick, a mixture of one part sulphuric acid and two parts of water. Rub the mould-board and other parts that are rusty, with this liquid until the rust is removed; then wash it off and rub it dry. Then smooth over it with crude petroleum or some other cheap oil, and next spring you will be saved from the loss and annoyance of clogging. Every farmer should buy a barrel of petroleum, and use it freely on all his wagons, machines, implements, etc. It will keep the iron from rusting and the wood from decay, and in cold weather it is a useful lubricating oil. We find it absolutely essential to keep on hand several sizes of carriage bolts. With these and a brace, and a set of bits, nearly all ordinary fractures can be easily repaired. It is a great convenience, also, to have a vice, and to keep an assortment of nut nuts, with the tools for making the thread in them and also on the bolts. All these things can be obtained at a hardware store, and a farmer who buys them will never regret it. But if it is necessary to take anything to the blacksmith's shop, now is the time to do it, and when it is repaired, clean off the rust, paint it with linseed oil, and put it away for use in the spring. If the farmer or his son would go over all the implements, machinery, wagons, hay racks, tools, etc., paint them, oil and tighten the bolts, and see that everything is strong and in good order, it would not only greatly lessen the blacksmith's bill, but would save much precious time and no little annoyance next spring and summer.—The winter is also the time to make whitewashes, and three-horse eveners. It is a great advantage to have an extra set of these on hand.—*American Agriculturist.*

**Tree Peddlers.**—"T. M." Goshen, N. Y., writes: "It would be an excellent plan if you would call the attention of your readers to the importance of not patronizing the men who are going about canvassing for fruit trees. I have bought several times, and the trees are now beginning to bear, but out of fifty different varieties that I purchased, not one is true to name. In fact, they are all one kind of apple, small and sour. I hear this complaint all over this section. It is necessary that we who want trees should go to some reliable nurseryman, and state to him what we want. One of my neighbors bought 300 apple trees and 150 pear trees; they were to be of the best varieties of fruit, and the apples turned out to be crab apples, and the pears at present it is hard to name, for there is scarcely any taste to the fruit, and it is very small. You can do a great amount of good by writing an article, and urging upon your readers the importance of avoiding such scamps as these tree agents are." If friend "T. M." had the *Agriculturist* for many years he would have seen frequent warnings against tree peddlers, and the advice to order directly of the nurseries. As a class, the tree peddlers are a bad lot. They get orders and fill them with what they can pick up. In condemning all who travel and solicit orders for trees, some very worthy people will be included. Some of the best nurseries have travelling agents, who will fill orders faithfully; but these are not of the class to which our correspondent alludes. It is always the safest to order direct, and never safe to order of a stranger unless he can give satisfactory proof that he is a duly authorized agent of some nursery of good reputation.—*American Agriculturist.*

**How to Make Rails Durable.**—Almost every one notices a difference in the rails used for fencing material. Timber left with the bark on rots very much quicker than that which is split and seasoned. Some rails last but three or four years, and others are good for fifteen or twenty. There is a difference, of course in the woods used for this purpose. Birch poles are sometimes worthless after a year's use, and chestnut is very durable. Experiments show that rails cut and split soon after midsummer last much longer than those prepared in winter.—But summer is usually fully occupied with tillage and harvest, and of necessity fencing material must be prepared at a time of more leisure. If cut early in the winter, (and none should be cut late) have the logs split immediately, and the rails piled where the sun and wind can have free access to them. It is a good plan to draw them to where they are to be used, so the ground is now frozen.—Peel poles too small for splitting.—*American Agriculturist.*

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**Tree Peddlers.**—"T. M." Goshen, N. Y., writes: "It would be an excellent plan if you would call the attention of your readers to the importance of not patronizing the men who are going about canvassing for fruit trees. I have bought several times, and the trees are now beginning to bear, but out of fifty different varieties that I purchased, not one is true to name. In fact, they are all one kind of apple, small and sour. I hear this complaint all over this section. It is necessary that we who want trees should go to some reliable nurseryman, and state to him what we want. One of my neighbors bought 300 apple trees and 150 pear trees; they were to be of the best varieties of fruit, and the apples turned out to be crab apples, and the pears at present it is hard to name, for there is scarcely any taste to the fruit, and it is very small. You can do a great amount of good by writing an article, and urging upon your readers the importance of avoiding such scamps as these tree agents are." If friend "T. M." had the *Agriculturist* for many years he would have seen frequent warnings against tree peddlers, and the advice to order directly of the nurseries. As a class, the tree peddlers are a bad lot. They get orders and fill them with what they can pick up. In condemning all who travel and solicit orders for trees, some very worthy people will be included. Some of the best nurseries have travelling agents, who will fill orders faithfully; but these are not of the class to which our correspondent alludes. It is always the safest to order direct, and never safe to order of a stranger unless he can give satisfactory proof that he is a duly authorized agent of some nursery of good reputation.—*American Agriculturist.*

**How to Make Rails Durable.**—Almost every one notices a difference in the rails used for fencing material. Timber left with the bark on rots very much quicker than that which is split and seasoned. Some rails last but three or four years, and others are good for fifteen or twenty. There is a difference, of course in the woods used for this purpose. Birch poles are sometimes worthless after a year's use, and chestnut is very durable. Experiments show that rails cut and split soon after midsummer last much longer than those prepared in winter.—But summer is usually fully occupied with tillage and harvest, and of necessity fencing material must be prepared at a time of more leisure. If cut early in the winter, (and none should be cut late) have the logs split immediately, and the rails piled where the sun and wind can have free access to them. It is a good plan to draw them to where they are to be used, so the ground is now frozen.—Peel poles too small for splitting.—*American Agriculturist.*

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