

Communications.

SEEDLING POTATOES.

Editor Vermont Farmer:

Perhaps my experience with seedling potatoes this season will be of interest to some of your readers. C. G. Prindle of Charlotte, Vt., sent me a small package of seed which he wished me to plant. The seed balls he said grew on the Early Rose, and were fertilized with pollen from the Excelsior.

I planted the seed in a hot bed in April, and transplanted to the open ground the last of May, setting the plants one foot apart. They were not set in the best of soil, and did not have the best of care, but as I expected only tubers the size of peas and walnuts, I was happily disappointed in the result.

The largest tuber weighs 12½ ounces. The four largest average ½ lb. The largest amount from a single plant was 3½ lbs. Nine tubers from this hill were of suitable size for the table, averaging ¼ lb. One plant gave five tubers which average ¼ lb. The ten best hills gave 25 pounds of potatoes.

These of course are among the best. Many of the plants gave but a few small tubers. I have saved one hundred and thirty-five varieties which I intend to plant next year. Should be glad to hear the experience of others.

H. P. CLOSSON.

Thetford, Vt., Dec. 6, 1870.

We thank our friend Closson for his interesting note. It is only within a year or two that it has been found that it is possible to bring the potato tuber to full size from the ball seed the first season. Within the past year several successful experiments of the kind have been recorded, showing, as Mr. Closson's experiment shows, that it is only necessary to give the plants a long season, by sowing the seed early, under glass, in order to achieve this result. We should be glad to have a description, from Mr. Prindle, of his method of cross-fertilization with the potato.

Mr. Closson surprises us with the number of his varieties. Does he consider each separate plant so produced necessarily a distinct variety? We should suppose that many of them would be identical, or at least, indistinguishable. Such is our experience in raising seedlings.

ED. VT. FARMER.

A lot of thoroughbred horses belonging to Sir Lydston Newman were recently sold in England. *Wilkes Spirit* quotes *Bell's Life*, and says: "They fetched miserably low prices. High-bred brood-mares, with foals at their feet were virtually given away. Fifteen guineas (\$90) for Ernestine by Touchstone, with a filly foal at her foot! Thirty-five guineas (\$210) only for Chancery by Blair Athol out of Equity by Sweetmeat. Ten guineas (\$60) for Miss Rothschild, by King Tom out of Prioress by Sovereign, grandam Reel, by Glencoe. The fact is that thoroughbred horses are now a drug in the market in England.

The Secretary of the American Dairyman's Association has been calculating and he concludes that with the average milk it takes a little over 24½ pounds of milk to one of butter, and ten pounds of milk to one of cheese, and when cheese is 14 butter should be 35 cents a pound.

It is doubtful whether there is a better root than the potato for feeding for milk. A farmer in Ohio has found that 36 quarts of carrots gave him 32 pounds of milk and 36 quarts of potatoes gave him 40 pounds of milk. The other food given the cow was dry hay.

OVER THE RIVER.

[The recent death of the author of the following poem has again called the attention of the public to it, and it is going the rounds of the papers. It was written about thirteen years ago by Mrs. A. C. Wakefield, who died at Winchendon, Mass., a few days ago, at the age of thirty-three.]

Over the river they beckon to me,
Loved ones who've crossed to the further side;
The gleam of their snowy robes I see,
But their voices are lost in the dashing tide.
There's one with ringlets of sunny gold,
And eyes the reflection of heaven's own blue;
He crossed in the twilight, gray and cold,
And the pale mist hid him from mortal view.
We saw not the angels who met him there,
The gates of the city we could not see.
Over the river—over the river—
My brother stands waiting to welcome me.

Over the river the boatman pale
Carried another, the household pet;
Her brown curls waved in the gentle gale—
Darling Minnie! I see her yet.
She crossed on her bosom her dimpled hands,
And fearlessly entered the phantom bark,
We felt it glide from the silver sands,
And all our sunshine grew strangely dark.
We know she is safe on the further side,
Where all the ransomed and angels be;
Over the river—the mystic river—
My childhood's idol is waiting for me.

For none return from those quiet shores
Who cross with the boatman cold and pale—
We hear the dip of the golden oars,
And catch a gleam of the snowy sail;
And lo! they have passed from our yearning hearts,
Who cross the stream and are gone for aye.
We may not sunder the veil apart,
That hides from our vision the gates of day;
We only know that their bark no more
May sail with us o'er life's stormy sea;
Yet somewhere, I know, on the unseen shore,
They watch, and beckon, and wait for me.

And I sit and think when the sunset's gold
Is flushing river and hill and shore,
I shall one day stand by the water cold,
And list for the sound of the boatman's oar;
I shall watch for a gleam of the flapping sail,
I shall hear the boat as it gains the strand,
I shall pass from sight with the boatman pale,
To the better shore of the spirit land;
I shall know the loved who have gone before,
And joyfully sweet will the meeting be,
When over the river—the peaceful river—
The angel of death shall carry me.

TRAPPING MUSKRATS.

There are numerous ways recommended by our agricultural exchanges for trapping muskrats, but it is seldom that any one of them possesses any merits. We have done something at this ourselves, but succeeded only when the common steel-trap was used. But it was never baited. If there is a spring or run it will be noticed that the muskrat will always, if shallow enough, use that to reach its feeding-ground to the last inch. If the trap is laid on the bottom in this, with no bait, fastening the trap with a piece of wire to a stake pushed in the ground the arrangement is a certain thing. We captured one season eight in our garden in this way. After the seventh, there was only a portion of a foreleg in the trap, but the next morning we found a fellow with only three legs. The following season we got two more, and after that they did not make their appearance for several years, and when they did the same plan was renewed. Whenever the trap was set it was always placed under water.—*Germanantown Telegraph*.

Much excitement exists in mining circles in consequence of the discovery, on the north shore of Lake Superior, of a whole island of silver, from which millions of silver are being taken out. The island, which is about one hundred by forty feet, and usually submerged, was owned by the Montreal Mining Co., who sold it to an American company, who have since, by means of cribs and pumps, succeeded in working a vein eight feet wide, much of which yields, on an average, seventy per cent of pure silver.

Agricultural Items.

Buffalo brags of a sheep shed a thousand feet long.

A Connecticut agriculturist has just finished a \$2000 hog pen, all grained and papered.

The grape crop of California has a wine capacity of 7,500,000 gallons.

The dairy product for 1869 was valued at \$400,000,000 and the wheat crop at \$375,000,000.

Canadian millers are importing wheat very extensively this season from Chicago and Milwaukee.

A farmer of Springfield, Ohio, recently picked four hundred bushels of cranberries from three acres, and sold the lot for \$1520.

Virginia's peanut crop is 400,000 bushels this year; Tennessee's 300,000. Georgia and the Carolinas will add 200,000. Rejoice, youth!

Brine is recommended as a remedy for lice on hogs. Two or three salt water baths will destroy them. It is equally efficient as a remedy for lice on cattle.

The old fashioned spinning wheels are still much used in the up-river counties of Maine, and a large wholesale business is done in these articles in Bangor.

In Switzerland a milkmaid who is a good singer gets more salary than others because under the influence of music cows "give down" better and give more milk.

One tablespoonful of sulphur in dry bran, given once, or in bad cases twice a day, to cows giving bloody milk is recommended by a correspondent of the *Rural New Yorker*.

It is stated that of all the holiday beef exhibited last year at Chicago, there was not a single animal with less than three-quarters Shorthorn blood in its veins.

A savan in France has been trying how long he can keep eggs, and he concludes that rather thick linseed oil smeared over the shell as a varnish is better than lime or salt, or hot water.

A Morgan Co., Ind., farmer last spring weighed a yoke of cattle, and then turned them out to grass. A few days ago he weighed them again, and found them to have gained 1,800 pounds.

Four very large squashes, weighing in the aggregate 500 pounds, were recently taken into Bay City, Mich. The largest weighed 199½ pounds, and is seven feet in circumference. They were all raised on one vine.

There is a general complaint in New England that apples are not keeping well, and those grown in New York and further west are having the advantage over those of this region, where the drouth was so severe.

The exports of hops from this country during the last year were 16,357,631 pounds, the value of which was \$2,517,784. As two pounds of hops are used to a barrel of beer, the quantity exported was sufficient for over 8,000,000 barrels.

Potatoes that were planted on or near the top of the ground in the sections where the drouth has been excessive were hardly worth the digging, while those in adjoining fields which were put at the bottom of a deep furrow, and never hilled at all, have yielded well.

John T. Alexander of Illinois, who has two farms, one of 97,000 and another of 27,000 acres, has concluded to sell the latter as soon as it can be subdivided into small farms of four hundred acres each. He thinks one man cannot profitably manage more than 97,000 acres.

The arrivals of wool at Detroit from all quarters for the present year, is stated at 4,772,045 pounds, against 5,566,314 for the corresponding period of last year, showing about three-quarters of a million of pounds difference.

The Woodstock (Vt.) *Standard* says:—"We saw in our streets, a few days since, a drove of fine wool sheep which had been bought for \$1.35 a head—a circumstance which illustrates quite forcibly the low state of the wool and sheep market."

The Cheshire Co., N. H., Agricultural Society has taken measures to procure a number of stock animals for the use of its members. It was also voted to invite the State Board of Agriculture to hold a meeting in Keene during the coming winter.

Mr. Loomis of Connecticut has recently sold to H. M. Armes of Springfield, Vt., twenty Cotswold ewes, making a flock of fifty or more breeding ewes, which are mated with Emperor 2d, a ram bought by Mr. Loomis in England at a cost of 130 guineas.

Hearth and Home says of Brezee's Prolific potato:—"All accounts from quarters where potatoes have done well at all agree in according to this variety great excellence. It is an abundant cropper. The potatoes are of large size, fair shape, and of most excellent quality."

A farmer a few days since purchased in Bangor, Me., some barrels in which to preserve cider. Upon rinsing them out he found in a whiskey barrel, seventeen large plugs of tobacco all soaked in whiskey, which had evidently been placed there to improve the flavor and "body" of the liquor!

The fears entertained some time since that the United States would lose her cotton supremacy, and that India would be the competing country through which England would rule the cotton production and manufactures of the world, are at length dispelled. The cotton of India is of inferior quality, and no effort will bring it up to the American standard.

The Shakers of Tyringham, Berkshire County, Mass., have decided to sell their entire property there and remove to Lebanon Springs, or possibly to other settlements of the sect. The estate is very valuable, comprising 1300 acres of valuable farming land in Berkshire County, meadow, tillage, pasture and woodland, besides their substantial dwellings.

The sugar beet crop at Chatsworth, Ill., says the *Prairie Farmer*, has been harvested in good condition and is of good quality, yielding, so far as manufactured, a fine percentage of sugar. Our readers will remember that the above named place is the point where extensive and costly experiments in beet sugar manufacture have been conducted for several years. The result has shown abundance of sugar in American grown beets; but the conditions of success have not been fully met at Chatsworth, and so far the experiment has been a financial failure.

The Maine Board of Agriculture having by the act of the Legislature which makes it a State institution, acquired the right to say for what purpose one-half of the State appropriations to each County Society shall be used, has decided that one-fourth shall be devoted to the organization and support of Farmers' Clubs, and the other fourth as a premium to encourage wheat. No Society can obtain State aid unless it complies with the terms of this decision. The result is said to be that Farmers' Clubs have been organized and are organizing all over the State, and that four times as much wheat was harvested in 1870 as in any two of the ten years previous to 1869.