

## Correspondence.

For the Willamette Farmer.  
FAMILIAR TALKS.—No. 10.

I well recollect, when a boy, my father purchased and moved to a farm that had been occupied about thirty years. In the one hundred and three acres, there were probably forty acres of clay knolls, the clay of which would be a white color when dry; the balance sandy streaks and patches, and swale or creek bottom. The place had been badly "run" until the yield of corn was not more than fifteen bushels to the acre. In four years' time that same land yielded sixty-five bushels corn and twenty-two bushels wheat to the acre, and that too without a shovelful of manure hauled upon it. The magic wand that wrought this change was red clover. A given area was sown each year, a crop of hay, then seed taken the first year; a crop of hay the second year, and the aftermath plowed under. And such a crop of roots as had grown, penetrating deep down where the plow had reached, which eventually rotted, and formed available plant food for the incoming crop. The land became dryer, without underdraining; mellow with light harrowing; in a word, wrought a complete change in the texture and productive capacity of the soil.

If Oregon wheat-growers would sow twenty acres of wheat instead of thirty, and put the ten acres in clover, and so follow up in rotation, I firmly believe they would get more wheat from the twenty acres than they now get from the thirty acres. The soil would not be impoverished so rapidly as now, as clover gathers from the atmosphere with a lavish hand. And such pasture and hay, that would make the cows fairly laugh and the pigs grunt with satisfaction. It is amazing that there has not already been more clover sown. One peculiarity here is that we never see an animal slobber from the effects of clover. As we must house all our hay in this climate, there is not that objection formerly urged against clover that "we can't stack the hay out."

I have neighbors that laugh at me for giving the calves away instead of raising them. This question must be settled by each according to his surroundings. While we can get fifty cents a pound for butter, and have no extra range and feed for stock cattle, then it will not pay to raise the calves, unless of good or extra stock. If summer feed is abundant and winter cheap and inconvenient to market, then the case is different. If a person cannot go into stock-raising and carry on the dairy, then he must choose between the two. So long as my cows will make a pound of butter a day, I can not afford to give one half of the milk to a calf that will gain in value less than ten cents a day. The pork made from the offal milk is worth about as much as the calf, and leaves you the whole mess to skim instead of half of it. You say, what if everybody was to do this, then where would we get our cows? I answer that there is no danger of this; that if too great numbers made the change then stock-raising would become more profitable, and more would engage in it. Like the governor to a steam engine, this, like all other questions of supply and demand, is self-regulating.

Will the present high price of wool be sustained for any length of time, is a question of vital importance to many farmers. Wool is higher now, gold value, than at any time during the last twenty-five years, not excepting the time of the war of the rebellion. During the rebellion, the price of wool, reduced to coin value, was but a cent a pound, in round numbers, higher than for an average of thirty-five years prior to that date. The immense importations, duty free, of wool on the skins, together with the decreased demand consequent upon the dis-

bandment of our armies, caused a reaction, until in 1860 four million sheep were slaughtered in the United States for their pelts and tallow. The world's market is now bare of wool, but we must recollect that sheep multiply very fast, and that if cotton is low and wool high, there will be a partial diversion of the kind of goods used. Still, if our tariff remains as now, levying duty upon wool-skins as well as upon the fleece, the prospects of the wool-grower will be good. It is best to be cautious, however, and not rush into a business of which we not fully understand the drawbacks, yet if one's location is suited to the business, it is best to make haste slowly about selling good stock sheep now on hand.

I would not advocate the policy of living on a puncheon floor, or even upon undressed lumber, or to have bare floors in the sitting room. Still, if a person cannot have both, then by all means first have a smooth, tight floor in his milk house. This should never be swept or scrubbed, but simply cleaned with a wet cloth. If scrubbed, water will "seap" through and cause a musty smell; if swept, dust will rise to settle on the milk.

We have just re-laid the floor of the milk room, and, despite all the former care, there was a perceptible musty smell. To get rid of this, first spade the ground over deep. I then laid the foundation timbers for the floor, and filled in the space (near six inches) with charcoal close up to the floor. This will not only absorb and arrest any bad smell from the ground below, but also take up anything that may come from above.—There should be precious little from this source if one expects to get fifty cents per pound for his butter.

The old Quaker fashion of building frame barns while living themselves in log cabins—in providing first more stately and apparently more comfortable quarters for their stock than they did for their families—occasioned many an unkind remark. These men would not hesitate to incur a debt if necessary to purchase a farm, or stock, erect a barn, or in fact anything that promised a money value return. They abhorred indebtedness, and would shun expense for show or appearance. And right here is a distinction often overlooked.—Because neighbor A borrowed money, or went in debt (perhaps at the store) and lost his farm, neighbor B argues that it is unsafe to incur any debt, although his farm is not paying half the clear profit that it would if properly stocked, a certain drain laid, or a barn or stock shelter built. It is the abuse of credit, not the use, that causes failures. The Quakers were right, as time soon proved to them that observed closely; but few years would elapse until a handsome dwelling would take the place of the humble cabin, but never upon a mortgaged farm.

In many localities in the alluvial river bottoms the well water is not good, being impregnated with iron and other substances, that causes the water to present an opaque appearance and give a bad taste. We have had trouble in this way, especially when the water got low in the well. I took a barrel and put in charcoal, pounding each layer of six inches with an ax, much after the old-fashioned way of pounding cabbage for sour-kraut. After the barrel was filled with this powdered charcoal, the water is poured on, and allowed to trickle off into another barrel filled with stone. The water comes out as clear as the purest spring water, and is drawn off from the barrel as needed for use, nice and cool. I do not know that this is the best way to construct a filter. It is so cheap, however, that no family should be without one a week, that is now using impure water. If you will, get a better filter after a while, but for the present have one that will secure you against bad health from poor water, poor butter from the same cause, and a wry face from unsettled coffee. Try it.

## LETTER FROM UMATILLA COUNTY.

FROM US BY BETTY CHICK, 40 miles from Postoffice, Umatilla Co., April 27.

ED. FARMER: Only think of the many difficulties in living forty miles from a postoffice, and in a thickly settled country. Our mail arrangements are a kind of "perhaps" business. We are now compelled to depend upon "mightbes" for our mail to be brought from the Umatilla Postoffice—and just here is where the perhaps comes in, for perhaps we get our mail, and perhaps we do not; if we chance to get it, we are forced to note the fact that it is well near worn out, being perused by a large number of anxious readers along the route. I have suggested to some of these "anxious readers," to subscribe for a paper, but I am informed, "I can't get my paper, I live so far from a postoffice; I can't get time to read," etc.

A petition was circulated about one year since, and numerous signed, asking the Post Master General to organize a new mail route direct from Pendleton, the county seat of Umatilla co., direct to a certain point on John Day's river, which would pass directly through the most wealthy part or settlement of the county. The county authorities immediately opened a county road to comply with the petition to the boundary line of Umatilla county, and at that point it connects with a county road in Wasco county, but up to this time, I am not aware that any notice has been taken of the matter by the proper official. I have recently been informed by the post master at Umatilla that he called the attention of the Postal Agent to these facts, and that a notice of the matter was promised, and here the perhaps will again come in, and he will let the matter "drap," to our great inconvenience.

The great "hard winter" which so many wise persons predicted last fall, has come and gone, and we can now sing:

"Once more the Monarch of the North,  
The Ruler of the storm,  
Shrinks back upon the verge of Earth,  
And hides his snowy form."

Again the tender grass puts forth  
Its timid, spear of green,  
And, blushing o'er the second Earth  
Unnumbered flowers are seen."

The great loss of stock by so many, reported, has been greatly over estimated, and it now turns out that not one tenth part of the stock have died that was at one time supposed, much of which having left their usual range, but with the return of spring and luxuriant grass, the missing stock, much to the surprise of their owners, have again made their appearance. Stock of all kinds are now doing extremely well, and grass now promises a magnificent supply. Stock raisers are now exerting every nerve to provide a good supply of feed for the coming winter.

I have recently noticed an article in the FARMER from Mr. David Newsom, in which he assumes the character of the "blunt man," and I am inclined to believe that he is not well posted on Eastern Oregon if Umatilla county is included in his term, "east of the mountains." Mr. Newsom seems to regret that "tens of thousands of cattle are driven east of the mountains to die." Now it is evident that while this "blunt man" knew some things, he is not well posted on others. It is true that "all flesh is as grass," but Mr. N. seems to entertain the idea that large numbers of these cattle must starve east of the mountains. But I am happy to inform persons that more cattle die at the hand of the butchers, than by the slow piece-meal death of starvation. The past winter was much more severe than common, and yet thousands of cattle passed the winter safely without any assistance aside from what nature provided; and I am quite positive that the snow did not at any time cover the ground to the depth of one foot, and that there was not over four days but what my cattle went to the hills to feed, and that there was not over six days but what we were favored with what is called a "Chinook wind," and on the 14th of January, 1872, grasshoppers made

their appearance. From that date up to the present we have had some cold days and some snow, well interspersed with warm, growing weather, and frequent showers of rain, and here within a few miles of almost perpetual snow in the Blue Mountains our gardens are well advanced, strawberries, cherries and peaches are now in bloom, and my table is well supplied with the delicious pie-plant. Mr. Newsom also says in his letter that "it is useless to talk of tame grass east of the mountains."

Now I wish to ask Mr. Newsom if he has traveled in that country which he styles east of the mountains, since it has been settled by the whites? I am of the opinion that greater improvements have been made east of the mountains during the six or eight years last passed, than in any part of the Willamette valley, during the same period in the early history of that valley. Timothy meadows can now be counted in Umatilla county which contain their ten, twenty and even a hundred acres in the same field, and so level and unobstructed that a rabbit can be seen from one side of the field to the other, and I would suggest to Mr. Newsom that during the coming summer he can enjoy a season of information by taking a trip through the county of Umatilla, and taking a good look at our starving cattle and other matters of interest to him. J. C. F.

## The Horse.

## WATERING HORSES.

A writer in the *Country Gentleman* makes some suggestions on this subject well worthy serious consideration. There is much culpable negligence in supplying water to horses while at work, aside from being cruel and inhuman, often results in the loss of or permanent injury to the animal itself. The correspondent referred to says, with much truth, that since the introduction of mowing and reaping machines, the work in harvest is comparatively light; however, every farmer who has cradled heavy wheat or mown lodged grass, in company with durable and skillful workmen, must know something about excessive thirst, and what a dreadful punishment it was in those circumstances to work half an hour, or even fifteen minutes, without water, through whose cooling and refreshing influences alone he would be enabled to continue his work, and also that at such work he would require water every hour, whereas at more moderate work, he could do perhaps with two drinks between meals.

The principles that apply to the master are equally applicable to his horse. Their thirst is increased in proportion to the severity of the work and the temperature of the weather. Hence the necessity and duty of the owner seeing well to the frequent and imperative wants of the noble (though dumb) animal, whose comfort and future usefulness depend so much upon the humanity of his present master.

It was stated that a horse watered but three times a day would not sweat so much as those watered oftener, which was therefore used as an argument in favor of that practice. Admitting the truth of the above assertion, it does not follow that his comfort is promoted, nor yet his power of endurance increased thereby. No good driver would think of speeding his horse without first sweating him thoroughly. Nor does a man feel comfortable in the harvest field until his garments become moist with perspiration, which carries off the surplus heat, thus controlling the temperature of the body, and to a great extent neutralizing the effects of the sun.

Men working at furnaces drink freely and perspire profusely, without which the skin would actually burn off them, and those who do not perspire cannot endure the heat, and are obliged to seek other employment. If therefore, a horse ceases to sweat from absence of moisture in the system, it is the most positive proof he

needs water; that he is in a suffering and dangerous condition; and every moment it is kept from him is only adding fuel to the flame, which would in a short time of continued exertion terminate his existence. As often said, a horse may look well and appear to do well with such treatment: nevertheless his life, like that of many men, is shortened and rendered miserable by irregularities.

In the absence of other proof, we think the following facts sufficient to prove our position, namely, that in the long days of summer, farm horses should have water at least five times a day.

When a horse has worked two or three hours, and sees water, or hears its peculiar sound so grateful to the thirsty animal, he will look, and often call for it in a way quite as intelligible to the human, and those familiar with his habits, as if he were to express his desire in plain English. And again, give him his liberty after having worked three hours, and he will go directly to his trough and supply the demands of nature. Now when his thirst is so great in moderate weather, with three hours, exertion, what must be his condition, in six or seven hours, one of those sultry, oppressive days we frequently experience in the latter part of the summer?

It is true horses are sometimes injured by water, but it is when they have been too long without it, and when their respiration is very rapid. Nor is it strange under such circumstances he would drink too much, when man endowed with reason will do the same. It is no uncommon thing in harvest to hear men say, I don't feel well, I worked too long without water, and when I got it, drank too much.

Our practice when traveling has been to ride or drive slowly a short time before watering, which would do as often as we thought the horse was thirsty, and in the evening we would go very leisurely after watering within a mile or two of our destination, thus bringing the horse into his night's quarters in good condition.

## The Fast Horses of 1871.

The *Spirit of the Times* gives a list of all the horses that have trotted in 2:30 or less in 1871. We have room for only a few of them:

AMERICAN GIRL.—She won more than 20 heats, varying in speed from 2:20 to 2:34—but in 1866 she won a heat in 2:19.

LUCY.—This mare has become famous in her races with Goldsmith Maid, but only one race to her credit during the year, when she beat Geo. Palmer at Narragansett, June 16, in 2:26, 2:25, 2:24.

J. J. BRADLEY.—At Prospect Park, June 6th, made one dead heat with Nonesuch in 2:25.

JOE.—At Boston, Oct. 3, 2:25, 2:26, 2:26.

WESTERN GIRL.—At Omaha, Oct. 13th, this mare beat Joe Hooker in 2:28.

GOLDSMITH MAID.—The full record of this wonderful mare is of the greatest interest. In fourteen races she lost but a single heat, which was the first of the third, to American Girl, in 2:20. That she should have trotted one heat in 2:17, has been a matter of no little controversy, and has afforded the whole world a sensation. But when we consider that she has ten heats below 2:20, five below 2:19, and two below 2:18, there is no ground for legitimate astonishment that she should have placed one in 2:17. As I look at the campaign, my attention is not riveted upon that single heat of unprecedented speed, but upon the wonderful ability to substantially repeat it over and over again to the very last. It is possible Dexter might have gone through such a campaign, and might have made ten heats below 2:20; but there is no use discussing possibilities so long as the record gives him only two in harness and three under the saddle, while the Maid has thirteen in harness.

CATERPILLARS.—It is generally considered that intense cold destroys insects. France, in eighty years, has not had so severe a winter as the one that has just passed, and yet never were caterpillars' nests so abundant. The law has been put in force, compelling owners of trees to gather every chrysalis and bring them all to a fixed spot to be burned.

CLEANING BRASS.—One of the best liquids to clean old brass is a solution of oxalic acid.