

## THE FARM GARDEN.

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### VEGETABLE-CULTURE.

ALTHOUGH we cannot change winter into summer, yet we can, by the exercise of a little care and thought, ameliorate winter conditions to a considerable extent. Hoeing is done in summer-time partly to destroy weeds and partly to preserve a fine surface that will act as a mulch and prevent evaporation of moisture. A fine surface during summer does not prevent ingress of air, which is very essential to the growth of plants, but a like condition during winter, when there is a greater rainfall and less and weaker sunshine, would not tend to encourage such growth as we have reason to expect and desire. It is also obvious that a rougher surface will expose a greater area to atmospheric influences, and is therefore most beneficial at this time. During summer-time one grows lettuces in deep drills, so that the roots are well away from the dry surface soil; in winter raised beds are the natural position. A trench a spit deep thrown out around a bed will tend to dry the soil even though there be no outlet for water, and such a thing is often very beneficial to growing crops, and particularly to beds containing seedling cabbage, cauliflower, lettuce, and onions. On some soils these precautions are not necessary—that is, where drainage is perfect and the soil light or porous.

Deep cultivation is necessary to ensure uniform success. Where the soil is heavy deep working is necessary to allow water to sink down in the rainy season, and also because when water lies near the surface during wet weather such soil is nearly always abnormally dry when rainfall becomes light, and unless roots get deep down the plants suffer from drought. On the farm this condition is met by subsoiling, but the improvement is only temporary, and insufficient for continued cultivation. When the site of a vegetable-garden is a fixed one, measures must be taken to meet the requirements of the various crops as well as the variations of weather. Soil naturally becomes worn by constant cropping. It also loses humus. Both losses must be compensated for. Shallow soils and also those that lack humus may produce fair crops while rain is frequent, but fail to give adequate return when dry weather sets in. Deep cultivation and restoration of humus is the only remedy under these conditions. Farmyard and stable manure is the only perfect manure for constant cropping. It supplies nearly all