



I
The old practice of summer-fallowing, or working the soil for one year without a crop, for the purpose of gaining a double crop the second season, is now, very properly, obsolete. While some may question the propriety of this opinion, there can be no doubt as to the value of fall fallowing. The constant turning and working of the ground during the fall months costs nothing but time and labor, at a season when these cannot be otherwise employed, and so, in reality, cost nothing. Especially is this the case with heavy clay soils, and less, in a descending ratio, through the gradations from heavy clay down to light loams—at least it is so considered by many; and it is reasonable to suppose that if the atmospheric effects upon the particles of a clay soil serve to some extent to dissolve the mineral particles, they may easily do the same service for a sandy soil, and help to set loose some of the potash contained in the granitic or feldspathic particles of such a soil. The mechanical effects of the fall working are certainly more useful upon clay than a light loam; but there are other purposes to serve than merely to disintegrate the soil, and mellow and loosen it. There are weeds to destroy, and the forwarding of the spring work by the preparation of the ground for early sowing. These services are as useful for a light soil as a heavy one, and as it is reasonable to look for some advantage from the working in the way of gain in fertility on light as well as heavy soils, it is advisable that owners of either kind should avail themselves of whatever benefits the practice affords. Fall fallowing consists in plowing and working the soil with the cultivator or the harrow. This may be done at such intervals as may be convenient, or which will help to start some weeds into growth, when these may be destroyed by the harrow or cultivator. Heavy soils should be left in rough ridges at the last plowing, with as deep furrows between them as possible, in order to expose the largest surface to the effects of the frost and thaw. Light soils may be left in a less rough condition, but the last plowing should be so done as to throw the furrows on edge, and not flat, leaving the field somewhat ridged. A very little work in the spring will put the ground into excellent order for the early crops, and for

spring wheat, especially, this better condition of the soil will be of the greatest benefit. When thus treated in the fall, the soil is remarkably mellow, and is dry enough to work earlier than the compact stubble land which remains as it was left after the harvest. As to the time for doing this work, the sooner it is begun, and the oftener it is repeated, the better. It is not too late to finish when the ground is frozen or there is an inch of snow on the ground.

II
In ordinary farm practice by far the larger part of the liquid manure of the stock kept is lost. No effort is made to save it. There is no barn cellar, no gutter behind the stabled animals, no absorbents. Analysis shows that the liquid manure is quite as valuable as the solid, or even more so. In 1,000 pounds of fresh horse dung there are 4.4 pounds of nitrogen, 3.5 of potash, and 3.5 of phosphoric acid. In horse urine there are 15.5 pounds of nitrogen, and 15.0 of potash. In 1,000 pounds of fresh cattle dung there are 2.9 pounds of nitrogen, and 1.0 of potash, 1.7 of phosphoric acid. In the urine, 5.8 pounds of nitrogen, 2.9 of potash. These are the most valuable constituents of manure, and no farmer can afford to have them so generally run to waste. There is very little loss where there is a gutter well supplied with absorbents, and a barn cellar well coated with dried peat, muck or headlands, to absorb the liquids as fast as they can fall. But barn cellars are still in minority. Mr. Mechi had a very expensive apparatus for distributing the liquid manure over his farm, by means of tanks and pipes, and thought it paid, but failed to convince his contemporaries of the fact. However, that may be, it is out of the question to apply liquid manure in this manner, economically, upon the average farm. It takes too much capital and requires too much labor. By the use of absorbents, it can be done economically on a small or large scale, with very little waste. Some use a water tight box, made of thick plank, covering the floor of the stall. This is a very sure way to save everything, and the only objection to it is the expense of the box, and the increased labor of keeping the stall clean. We used for several years dried salt-marsh sod, cut in blocks eight or ten inches square, taken from the

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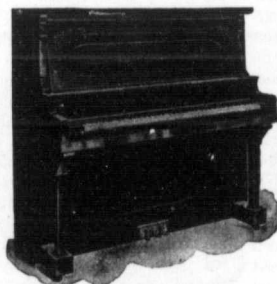
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