



The Field.

The Destruction of the Sugar Maple.

One of the leading maple sugar makers claims that but very few productions, in the entire system of New England agriculture, realize to the farmer so large a profit as the manufacture of that commodity. As prices have averaged for the last ten years, it is certainly a feature of home industry well worthy of consideration. Many of the farmers on the hills who own and utilize large sugar orchards have become convinced by practical experience, that it is one of their very best paying harvests, and, of those yielding, perhaps, a greater net profit. Nature has appointed this harvest at a season when the farmer can accomplish but little labor to advantage, and unless he is engaged in this occupation, his time and efforts will yield him but little remuneration; yet, without taking this point into account, even did the work come at any other time in the year, it would pay grandly. Maple syrup and sugar hold a high price in the market, and without a doubt will sustain their present rates, with probabilities of advance in the future. In the face of these facts, it is certainly somewhat of a mystery why a large proportion of farmers should manifest such an utter indifference to the preservation and perpetuity of the sugar maple. In no other part of the country does it flourish so naturally and vigorously as among the eastern mountains; and wherever its delicious sweets are extracted, it repays the owner three-fold for the labor. Still our maple groves and forests are rapidly disappearing, and at the present rate of decrease, another half-century will witness their almost utter annihilation. The process of making maple sugar is evidently destined to become one of the "lost arts" unless some special interposition stays this work of destruction. The demand for broom-handles and other articles of utility, into which the wood is converted, is insatiable. Thousands of our grand old emerald-crowned monarchs of the forest are sacrificed to this demand annually, and of course the aggregate amount of sugar manufactured must decrease in ratio with the decrease of the material from which it is derived. It will soon become a luxury in the market, commanding a price that must teach every shrewd and sensible owner of maple orchards the expediency, even in a pecuniary sense, of preserving this beautiful feature of New England landscape. By all means, then, let our maple forests escape the invasion of that dire energy and cupidity, which are so rapidly and recklessly dismantling our lovely hills and valleys of their primitive grandeur and luxuriance. The maple-grove once destroyed, cannot easily be replaced. Its reproduction is the slow, lingering work of time; and it behoves the lumberman to remember this important fact when he puts the axe to its root. The perpetuity of the delicious luxury obtained from the sugar-maple is not the only incentive to the preservation of that tree. In a pictorial sense alone, with its wealth of unparalleled greenness and verdure in summer, and its marvellous mosaic of leafy glory in autumn, it is worthy of a wonderful immortality. — *Concord Patriot.*

Soils and Manures.

What is a good deal of common sense in the following remarks by a correspondent of the *Country Gentleman*:

Do manures on light sandy loam lands leach down below the roots of plants and become lost and wasted in the lower strata of subsoils? Or is this tendency in an opposite direction, and in dry, hot weather do they become absorbed and lost in the air?

I think neither of the above propositions points out the true tendency of manures applied to such kinds of land. My idea is that they remain in the soil where they are placed, and their only tendency is towards the roots of the plants, thereby constituting the food element upon which these plants feed. I believe that by a regulation of nature there exists an affinity between plant food in the soil and the roots of the plants themselves, whereby they are constantly drawn towards each other. I can not see how this arrangement can be broken up by the action of the wind or the sun, or by the influence of heat and dry weather on the other. For it during rains the manures these lands contained were subject to leach down, like water running through a sieve, they would soon pass beyond the reach of the roots of every kind of plant. Or on the other hand, in hot, dry weather, if their tendency were upwards, like the steam from a boiling pot, their strength would soon become absorbed by the air, and mingling with it would be scattered to the winds. And these lands, being constantly subject to the wasting power and influence of these elements, my friend some time ago, if they ever possessed any fertility, have become very poor, desolate and barren indeed, beyond the hope of recuperation.

Put on the contrary, there are thousands of acres of this kind of land at present covered with a heavy growth of wood or timber, thousands more in pasture and mowing fields, and under cultivation by the plough and hoe, and annually bearing very satisfactory crops; and still other acres of this kind of land that by skillful and persistent cultivation have become one of the richest and most productive lands in the world.

My idea is that the rains, the heat and dry weather, as they ordinarily occur one season with another, do not come to these lands as enemies, but as friends, to help nature to elaborate the plant food of the soil and carry out her kindly influence in the increase and production of growing plants. And though sometimes her operations may seem to be suspended, as during the severe drouth that prevailed for two years previous to last spring, yet we saw, after the rains came, that the lands which during that time looked so poor and barren, instead of parting with any of their plant food during those dry years, had actually been laying in an additional new and fresh supply of fertility, as is evident from the abundant harvest and the rich mantle of green that clothed the earth the past year.

Thorough Culture.

A correspondent of the *Cincinnati Gazette* writes: In 1869 I had a field of sixteen acres of like fertility. I expected to plant half the field in corn, but for some reason I did not. In the half that had been ploughed for corn after the ground had been broken, the weeds grew more rapidly. Consequently, I broke it again the 20th of June. On the 1st of September following, I ploughed the entire field, and sowed in wheat.

The result was as follows: The half which had only received a single ploughing, yielded per acre 13 bushels and 18 pounds; the half that received three breakings yielded per acre 23 bushels and 40 pounds, which made a difference of more than 10 bushels per acre! At one dollar per bushel, this would pay for the extra ploughing and leave a net extra profit of six dollars per acre besides.

Application of Manure.

M. L. Goodale, of South Amherst, Mass., writes his experience as follows to the *New England Farmer*: "On my warm, sandy loam, I plough in my long manure, for corn, not very deep, so that when I plough deeper in the fall and spring, when I seed the field to grass, the manure will be brought up nearer the surface and mingled with the soil. Thus prepared, the seed will catch better, as the manure will be well decomposed. I never have failed of having good crops when I have managed in this way, if I manured well and tended my crops properly. My theory is that, if I spread coarse manure on warm, dry land, it will dry up, and the strength of the manure or the ammonia will go off in the air, and come down on the farm of somebody else, on a rainy day. As a general thing I plough my most heavy soil in the fall, as late as I can before it freezes up; believing that in this way a good many worms are killed by freezing. On this land I put fine compost of manure and muck or loam; harrow it in well, to get the soil and manure thoroughly mingled together; then furrow about four feet apart, put a shovelful of good compost of muck and hog and horse manure in each hill, and tend well. I begin to plant by the 10th of May, if the weather is suitable. I have had good corn, managed in the way described, where I had a good sward to turn under. This moist land should be ploughed deep in the fall, so as not to plough so deep when I want to seed, for the season that it will cover the manure too deep for the seed to catch well. If the turf is not all turned by the last ploughing, the grass-roots will find it in time. I have ploughed moist, loamy soil land the first part of September, for winter wheat; put on about twenty cords of fine compost manure to the acre, made of about three-fourths of muck and one-fourth of barn-yard manure; sow a bushel and a half winter wheat; harrow in wheat and manure together, and get from ten to fifteen bushels good wheat per acre; seed at the same time to herdsgrass, and sow clover in the spring and bush in well, and get two or three good crops of grass or hay. I think I can improve my land faster in this way than I can to plant it to corn, for it will not take as much manure to keep it up. Corn is an exhausting crop, and does not bring price enough to pay for raising. Last spring I ploughed land with a good swivel plough; put in the hill a part of a shovelful of three-fourths muck, one-fourth hog and horse manure, and had a good yield—from twenty-five to thirty-five bushels of corn per acre—