

AGRICULTURAL PURSUITS.

So wide is the field of the farmer's labor, and so many the objects connected with his various employments, that we see no reason, having aught of sound argument, why the farmer should not be the most learned of men. They have more to do with the element of nature than others, and are practical chemists, depending upon the earth for subsistence—they by time, separate, modify, and change the simple and compounds, so as to afford the several elements of which the vegetable kingdom is composed, thus making of the farm a workshop and laboratory. In plowing and preparing his land for seeding, he is a practical mineralogist and geologist; in observing and preventing the ravages of destructive insects, he is a practical entomologist. Indeed, to enumerate his various employments would be hardly possible. He is the practical botanist and meteorologist; but it is quite improbable that one man should be perfect in all these branches; yet the farmer, by a more attentive examination into the cause and effect of all which occurs under his immediate observation, may become a better natural philosopher than heretofore, and, by the cultivation of his mental powers, command and retain that respect to which he is so justly entitled, as one of the producers of the wealth of the nation, and as one of the many pillars of the constitution. Of all the various employments which have from time immemorial engaged the attention of men, none have been so pre-eminently useful, more honorable, nor so nearly connected with our interest as nations, as individuals, than agriculture; its pursuits offer to the ingenious mind more opportunities for research and experiment than any other science, yet it is a lamentable fact, that there exists among the farmers an apathy to the pursuits of knowledge, and a want of that spirit of inquiry respecting the nature and habits of those objects upon the perfected cultivation of which depends the production of real wealth. What is the cause of this? A want of the proper estimation of the pursuit of agriculture. Is the cultivation of the soil regarded with contempt?—'Tis an abused idea, and we believe it too generally prevails, else why are so many of our young men engaging in the professions, too full, long ere this, for the country's good? And why are so many ensconced behind the counter, to learn the art and mystery of measuring a piece of tape?—And why are the many mechanical branches so completely overstocked, while agriculture, the main support of the nation, holds out so many inducements for its pursuit, at once more interesting, more profitable, and, as improvements are made, less laborious than either the professions, the mechanical or mercantile pursuits?

Agricultural pursuits may be made profitable: and the farmer's profits are sure, while by the fluctuations of the market, the merchant or manufacturer may be robbed of the reward of their labor.—They may have done every thing which intelligence and industry could to ensure success, and yet at the year's end, wind up business with a loss, not only of profits, but capital too; but this cannot happen to the industrious farmer, his capital is invested in the soil, and he draws upon a fund which has never failed, since time immemorial, to honor all just demands; his profits may be diminished, but never wholly suspended. Although they are more imposed on than any other class of the community, and have less money, still they may grow rich. The mechanic may earn his six, eight, or twelve dollars a week, yet his condition is no better at the year's end than when he commenced it; while the farmer, earning from fifty cents to one dollar a day, grows rich. If the artisan lays down his tools, and the professional man is idle, they are sinking money; not so with the farmer: if he sleeps, his wealth still accumulates. Indeed the mechanic, physician, merchant, and idler, may receive their thousands yearly, yet die poor; while the farmer scarcely receives as many tens, and lives and dies as the lord of the soil. Many deem farming fit employment for such only as have not sense enough to pursue anything else; notwithstanding the glaring facts, that from the soil is drawn nearly all the wealth of the nation.—*P. Boy.*

THE VERMONT STUMP MACHINE.

Editors of the Cultivator.—When I first saw a draft of the Vermont Stump Machine, in the October number of the *Cultivator*, I resolved to make one, which I accordingly did the past winter. It appeared to me a very unwieldy thing, and as my land was uneven, I thought it not firm enough to answer the purpose. To obviate this difficulty, I made it somewhat different, and I think better.—The machine is much smaller than the one described in the draft. The wheel is only 8 feet 5 inches, shaft 11 inches, upright parts 7 feet high, and standing 8 feet asunder. I framed a piece 5 by 7 across, just near enough the tops of the posts to allow room for the shaft and chain to work, braced it at the corners with old tire, 2 ft 1 long, a 3 bolt through each end, and through the upright and cross piece which holds it firmly together. I then hollowed out the tops of the posts, so as to lay the shaft in them. The wheel works outside of the post as near to it as possible. Thus the objection urged by a correspondent, that it would crush down, is removed, and even on land that is hilly, by going up and down, it will work pretty well.—Some of my friends ridiculed the idea of drawing stumps with such an article, but their notions were changed when they saw it in operation. I consider it a valuable invention. The stumps that I undertook to draw had been cut some four years and not large. After breaking some of our common log chains, I procured one made out of 3 inch bar, which I think will stand a stronger machine than mine, but on putting a double team to the rope, I broke the arms of the wheel; so I let it stand, and planted my corn, intending to renew the operation again. The arms were only two by six inches. I think a machine can be made strong enough on this principle to draw any ordinary stump after being cut three or four years. If any one thinks it too much on one side, which might be the case if the wheel is large, let him put a wheel at each end of the shaft outside of the posts, which will balance. He then may apply force to one or both wheels as the case may require.

J. W.

Chester County, Penn. 6 month 3, 1944.

N. B.—I think the machine described in the February number of the *Cultivator* is about the right size. If he would frame a piece across, it would not require propping on the side of a hill, nor would the oxen pull it to pieces so easily. The piece may appear in the way, but the shaft being much larger, it will not be much obstruction to the chain.—*Alb. Cultivator.*

To destroy Rats.—The following recipe for the destruction of rats, has been communicated by Dr. Ure to the council of the English Agricultural Society, and is highly recommended as the best known means of getting rid of those most obnoxious and destructive vermin. It has been tried by several intelligent persons, and found perfectly effectual.

"Melt hog's lard in a bottle plunged in water heated to about 150° Fahrenheit; introduce into it half an ounce of phosphorus for every pound of lard, then add a pint of proof-spirit or whiskey; cork the bottle firmly after its contents have been heated to 150°, taking it at the same time out of the water-bath, and agitate smartly till the phosphorus becomes uniformly diffused, forming a milky-looking liquid. This mixture being cooled, with occasional agitation at first, will afford a white compound of phosphorus and lard, from which the spirit spontaneously separates, and may be poured off to be used again, for none of it enters into the combination, but it merely serves to comminute the phosphorus, and

to diffuse it in very fine particles through the lard. This fatty compound, on being warmed very gently, may be poured out into a mixture of wheat flour and sugar incorporated therewith, and then flavored with oil of rhodium, or not, at pleasure.—The flavor may be varied with oil of aniseed, &c.—This dough being made into pellets, is to be laid in rat-holes. By its luminousness in the dark, it attracts their notice, and being agreeable to their palates and noses, it is readily caught, and proves certainly fatal. They soon are seen issuing from their lurking-places to seek for water to quench their burning thirst and bowels; and they commonly die near the water. They continue to eat it as long as it is offered to them, without being deterred by the fate of their fellows, as is known to be the case with arsenical doses. It may be an easy guide for those who are desirous of following Dr. Ure's prescription, and may not have a thermometer at hand, to know that a temperature of 150° of Fahrenheit is equivalent to a degree of heat midway between that at which white of egg coagulates and white wax melts."—*Am. Agric.*

LABELS FOR STANDARD FRUIT TREES.

Great convenience is found, in large collections of fruit trees, in permanent names of the variety attached to each tree, and various modes of marking have been adopted. The best we have used, is a small slip of wood, two or three inches long and half an inch wide, suspended by a wire loop to one of the horizontal branches. The most suitable wood is red cedar; a block of it should be bored through one end with a small gimlet or carpenter's bit, so that when afterwards split into labels, a hole is left at the end of each for inserting the suspending wire. The best way to mark the name is to rub on a little white lead paint with the finger, and write immediately with a black lead pencil, which will last many years. Copper wire is best for the loop—it should not be less than a large pin or the fortieth of an inch in diameter. If of much less size, it will be repeatedly bent by the rattling of the label in the wind, and finally crack off. Iron wire soon becomes rusted, and brass is too stiff. A piece of wire seven or eight inches long should be attached to each label; and if placed on a small branch, it will be many years before the wire, by the growth of the branch, will cut into it. Twenty-five cents worth of copper wire will be sufficient for one hundred and fifty trees.

Metallic labels, with stamped letters are more durable, but attended with more cost and trouble. We have those made of wood as just described, which were marked five years ago, the letters still remaining distinct, although the paint and a part of the wood around the letters have worn away.

J. J. T.

—*Albany Cultivator.*