

THE PRESS AND FARM

THE DUTY EDITORS OWE TO THEIR RURAL READERS.

They Should Be as Prophets Who Stand in All Manner of Dry Bones' Valley to Quickened These Dead Things Into Active, Useful, Beautiful, Glorious Life—A High Ideal.

The press can help the farmers very much by giving continuous prominence to the most of being good tradesmen from boyhood upwards, quick and capable in the handling of tools, in the making of things, in the doing of things, in the bringing of things to pass in the right way at the right time. An editor is no less fit for his chair, but all the more likely to be influential and forceful with his pen, if he is more of an expert in handling type and printer's ink than in using scissars and the paste pot.

Sowers of Seed.
The agricultural press and the newspapers of Canada do a great deal for the farmers. They help to content them with the comparative isolation which the nature of their employment imposes. They furnish information, they make general knowledge thoroughly helpful by pointing out how it may be used by the farmers in their own localities. Newspapers are essentially sowers. They plant the seeds of opinion, they determine, as well as describe, the attitude of people towards social, political and moral, as well as material questions. Out of the opinions and attitudes of the people grow their characters. These rise and expand or sink and shrink, as noble or mean ideals are held before them continuously. In every sense, wretched is the man who has lost the noble and ennobling ideals of his youth. Blessed is he who believes that life and meanness have no necessary relationship, except that of constant hostility.

The newspapers can encourage the people; and as a people are helped in their hearts to be brave towards difficulties, they are helped in the very best way. The press has been one of the main forces in the progress of civilization; and has exerted an enormous power in the progress of that one branch of it which I am considering this morning under the name of agriculture.

The Press as a Prophet.
The surface of the earth is covered with the decaying remains of dead things. All sorts of forms of life that have had their day leave parts of organic matter to be resolved again into original elements. These are what make fertile the top foot or two of arable land. They are the skeletons of life, the remains of life, the microbes, of fungus growths, of worms and creeping things, of the roots and blades of grasses, of roots and stalks and leaves of bigger plants, with occasionally parts of the bodies of higher forms of life.

More men are wanted in the press who are really prophets, not prophets who are playing the clownish role of predicting the weather or forecasting the results of elections, but prophets who will do as did the prophets of old when commanded by Jehovah. We need men who will stand in every valley of dry bones, dry bones of material things, of mental things, of spiritual things, and prophesy with authority until the mysterious forces of life, acting upon and through inert matter, shall quicken these dead things and make them again active, useful, beautiful and glorious. That is an aspiration and opportunity to put before the man with the most burning and lofty ideals in newspaper work.

Praise Is the Power.
By what method can that best be done in the prosaic routine of working days? A good beginning can be made by praising good things in the locality and making no mention of the ugly and unattractive and undesirable features or occurrences in life. If A.B. has a particularly good field of oats let it be praised until his neighbors are envious. If C.D. has a specially fine herd of cattle let their excellence be mentioned until every farmer is stirred up to give the live stock of his place a better chance. If E.F. has built a new fence or put up a substantial barn or erected a cosy home let some in the quality of each be brought to the attention of the readers of the press and the uplifting will be surprising. Such matter is eagerly enjoyed by the ordinary reader who sits down with expectations of sincere delight for an hour with their newspaper. Writers have no other such susceptible readers as those who hold and almost hug the newspapers in country homes. So far as newspapers praise the good things in their localities, so much the more quickly and generally will there be good things there to praise. It would be a good thing if denouncing and blaming and fault-finding were left out of speech and left for only small corners of newspapers for at least one decade. As farmers are encouraged through wisely administered praise to do better, the newspapers will find more subscribers, more advertisers, and every citizen better neighbors.

The Young Man's Monitor.
The newspapers can play a great part through the influence they exert on young men when they are about to decide what course of life they will follow. The appreciation of one's fellows is perhaps one of the strongest incentives to self-denying and arduous effort. The newspapers can let the young men know that the men who have the best appreciation of their fellows are not those who do the most talking or secure the most publicity for their names.

It would be a good thing if the real charms and advantages of country life could be kept before the young men as they can be kept only by the skillful pen of a mature man who has lived in the country and has also been cribbed and cabled and confined in a narrow office in some city. The sense of incarceration to get a chance to make a living is the great dread of most people in the cities. Life on the farm assures every man of intelligence and industry a good living and something better, some leisure and a chance to give his children a good start in life. That is a great deal. Let the newspapers keep proclaiming it.

To Shape the Course.
Newspapers can do a good deal in shaping the general course of agriculture in a locality. I do not suppose they can be some instructors of the farmers in the specified details of any part of their business, but they can create a body of public opinion bearing on what, in a general way, the farmers in a locality should aim at. Repeated statements of fundamental principles in clear, concise and vigorous language will have its effect on the course of farming. The farmers need such help.

PICKLE CUCUMBERS.

How a Successful Farmer Raises Them and Makes Them Pay From \$100 to \$200 an Acre.

Any well-drained soil, rich enough to produce good corn, will raise good cucumbers. If the soil to be used is loam or clay loam, apply a coating of manure in winter or early spring, to be plowed under in April. This manure may be fresh from barn, or old and well rotted, but do not spread too thick. Two inches is enough, putting on a little every year, rather than too much at once. If the soil is light and sandy, you will need to spread manure just before plowing, and probably use fine manure or fertilizer mixed with soil in the hill under the seeds. Men manure saved during winter, excellent for this purpose on any kind of soil. Cucumbers are a good crop to raise on sod freshly plowed. Plow the ground in April and harrow down fine. For the central States about May 1 is the time to plant, though if wanted only for small pickles they may be planted as late as June 1. In my experience those planted early produce just as good late pickles and as many of them as those planted later. When ready to plant I take a horse-hoe to mark rows and make place to plant seeds, the middle back tooth making a mark about one inch deep. These are made five feet apart and the seeds are dropped in groups four feet apart, ten or 12 seeds in a place, in a straight line one inch apart; cover an inch deep. If planted in a straight line you can do much better work with cultivator than when they are scattered in a round hill.

In most places the plants, as soon as they break through the ground, must be watched closely or they will be destroyed by the cucumber beetle. These usually appear after an extra warm day or two, near the end of April or early in May. I have seen patches left 24 hours and found them ruined. I go over the field twice each day, and on first appearance of beetles dust plants and ground near them with a dust of fine sand or wood ashes as it is put into a bucket for use. The plants may be dusted with this two or three times before they are out of danger. Watch them after a shower. When vines begin to grow, hoe and cultivate carefully and hill up a little around the plants. Cultivate with a horse hoe until vines cover the ground. As soon as plants are out of danger of beetles thin to four plants to a hill.

To get a crop of good-shaped cucumbers, good seed is necessary. Seeds of the same variety from different seedsmen will often be different in shape. A good seed of improved White Spine will make as good small pickles as any. The Arlington White Spine and Peerless White Spine are good strains. Bismark is also good. Long Green does not like it is liable to be badly shaped. About one pound of seed will plant an acre, if you do not have to plant on account of beetles or late frosts.

For my market I do not raise cucumbers for pickles only, but for selling also, try to get them as early as possible, sharp knife, leaving a little stem on. If wanted very early in cut every other day. The most common size I sell is about two or more sizes and sell at 25 to 50¢ per 100. I have sold slicing cucumbers 10¢ per dozen and again for 50¢ per bushel, but 8 to 10¢ per dozen is the average price. Cucumbers pay well, bringing from \$100 to \$200 per acre.—Frank Alkin, in American Agriculturist.

A Valuable New Apple.
One of the most remarkable apples introduced within recent years is the Bismark, from which the name is given herewith. It is a seedling raised in New Zealand, and from that far-off country was brought to Germany for propagation.

It is a tree of medium size, with a spreading habit, and is very productive. The fruit is large, yellow, red, and very handsome; flesh tender and mild subacid. The Bismark apple has created no little sensation all over Europe, and wherever tried in this country it has proved hardy, vigorous and highly satisfactory.

Deep Plowing Is Profitable.
Land that is plowed deep endures the droughts better than shallow plowed land, as there is a greater absorption of moisture. In other words, the deeper the soil is plowed the more water it holds. To prevent loss of this moisture the top soil should be cultivated so as to simply loosen it, which prevents evaporation and at the same time keeps the weeds down. The water in the soil escapes at the surface, and that should be prevented by a mulch of loose dirt over the surface, which is effected by cultivation.

A Cheap Bagholder.
A cheap and convenient bagholder may be made as shown in the accompanying illustration. The device is so simple that anyone can see how it is made. It can be made of any material, but is best made of strong and handy, and there are no royalties on it. Anybody can make one. The upright boards should be seven inches wide and cut the length to suit your bags. Two scantlings with a plank nailed firmly across, as shown in illustration, are better as a base than a solid plank, as they adjust themselves more readily to any unevenness of the ground. The whole should be solidly nailed or screwed together in such a way that the tops of the upright boards must be sprung together to receive the bag. The tops of these should be cut slightly Y-shaped, as shown. The entire cost is about 15 or 20 cents. Make one.

A PRICELESS RELIC.

THE FAMOUS BLACK STONE OF THE TEMPLE OF MECCA.

How This Treasure of Islam Appeared at the Presses of Dr. and the Various Theories of Its Origin—Guarded by Mohammedans.

So carefully is the black stone of the temple of Mecca guarded, even to this day, that the accounts given by different writers as to the nature and appearance of the black stone exhibit some considerable variations, for orthodox Mohammedans cannot be prevailed upon to give a straightforward description of it, and mere adventurers, like the several European ladies, who in pursuance of the others could only gratify their intelligent curiosity by stealthy investigations. Detection in the act of pursuing such investigation would have cost the travelers their lives. In pursuance of the Mohammedans suppose of the law of the prophet. Your faithful Mohammedan cannot understand that any other motive than worship should lead any one to visit Mecca.

The Mohammedans believe that this famous stone was brought down from heaven by angels. It is set in the wall of the Kaaba, which stands within the great colonnade. The stone is four feet nine inches from the ground and is kissed and touched with great veneration by every pilgrim to Mecca.

Mr. Bate mentions what intelligent travelers have recorded concerning the nature of the black stone. One of them tells us that it is undoubtedly a large aerolite—an opinion which scarcely harmonizes with its reputed quality of containing a large percentage of heavy metallic matter, such as iron pyrites.

Another traveler reports that it looks like a piece of lava, containing small extraneous particles of some white and yellowish substance.

Still another of these authorities affirms that it is a fragment of volcanic basalt, sprinkled throughout its surface with small, pointed, colored crystals and varied with feldspar upon a dark ground, like coal, excepting one of its protuberances, which happens to be a little reddish.

Others, again, claiming an equal title to exact knowledge, give it as their opinion that it is nothing else than an ordinary piece of stone from quarries in which the Meccan territory abounds.

These last mentioned travelers, however, appear to overlook the circumstance that this opinion of theirs does not take due cognizance of that property of the stone to which we have just alluded and also the circumstance that only kind stone yielded by the Meccan quarries is a sort of gray granite.

Not so difficult is it to form an idea as to its size and present appearance. To form it is an irregular oval, the inequality of its two longer sides imparting to it a somewhat semicircular appearance. It measures about 6 inches in height and 8 in breadth, the diameter on the longest side being 2 1/2 inches. The surface is protuberant and somewhat knobby or undulating and has the appearance of being composed of a number of smaller stones of different sizes and shapes, securely fitted together with cement and perfectly smooth.

Its appearance is as though the original piece of stone had been broken to pieces by a violent blow and then repaired. And, as a matter of fact, this appears to be the true explanation of this irregularity of the surface, for it is recorded by the Arabian historians of the Kaaba that in the year 413 of the Hijra an emissary of a certain Egyptian khalif, known as "the Mad Khalifa Hakim," shattered it to pieces by a stroke of a club, and they relate that after this event the pieces and even the first also were carefully restored and the fragments cemented together.

The protuberances mentioned are 13 or 15 in number and are such as to impart to the surface of the stone a knobby or pebbly appearance. Near the middle there is a hollow which reaches to about as much as two inches below the outer edge of the stone and is of a kind to suggest to the visitor the surmounting eminence of protuberances may have been removed.

The color of the surface of the relic at the present time is a deep reddish brown, or, as some have described it, a metallic black, and notwithstanding the polished appearance imparted to it by the constant touching of unnumbered myriads of devotees, it yet bears on its undulating surface what appear to be evident marks of volcanic origin.

These knobby protuberances, however, are attributed by the Moslem authorities to the incessant oscillations and rubbings of the faithful. The smoothness may perhaps be attributable to this cause, but the obviously fractured and pebbly appearance is not accounted for in this way.—Asiatic Quarterly.

SPANISH INSOLENCE.

Masculine Manners as They Are Displayed in Madrid.

Smart life is very little seen in the streets of Madrid. Women never walk about unattended and seldom do more than descend from and enter their carriages. Men, as a rule, are gravely polite, the best of them genuinely so and the others with a varnish which does very well when not scratched. They stare out of countenance every woman who passes. This, they explain, means nothing, and is indeed a delicate sort of flattery, but by American ladies it is often taken for insolence and is always very trying.

In the Royal Opera House at Madrid an apparently well bred Spaniard will not hesitate to walk down the aisle during the interval, and, taking a favorable stand near the woman he wishes to regard, stare at her for two minutes at a time, with or without glasses. No sooner is the curtain down than nearly all the men in the house—as a rule handsome fellows and well dressed—bunch together in the middle aisle and take the measure of their surroundings. It is a solemn moment. Nobody smiles or jokes, and there does not seem to be much talking. Hats are worn, and every man looks about and stares. When an acquaintance is desired in one of the boxes, he gravely lifts his hat and replaces it, but his features retain their impassive gravity.

The women, when one does see them, seem to be handsomely gowned, but they are not as good looking as the men. They go about in fine looking carriages, drawn by spirited horses or by a spanking pair of mules. I have never seen such mules as are to be seen at times on the shopping streets of Madrid. You will often find on these crowded thoroughfares equipages that would look well on Fifth Avenue, flocks of sheep and turkeys and slow moving oxen, not to mention the omnipresent donkey. The cafe life is an imitation of the French article.

ENEMIES OF RATTLES.

Hogs and Black Snakes Kill the Venomous Reptiles With Impunity.

The two greatest enemies of the rattlesnake are the black snake and the hog. The rattlesnake is slow and sluggish in movement, while the black snake is intensely rapid. The latter will circle around his foe and with a sudden dart grasp the venomous reptile by the neck, so that it has no chance to use its poisonous fangs, and quickly squeeze it to death. A hog, especially if fat, is no danger from the rattlesnake. He will march boldly up to the coiled reptile, allow himself to be struck in his jaws once, twice or three times, as the case may be, and will then calmly proceed to swallow the reptile without concern. The reason for the hog's immunity is due to the fact that the blood vessels are so minute and infrequent on his cheeks, where fat is predominant, that the venom of the snake cannot carry it through the porcine system. Hogs have been used in droves to clear some of the islands of the southern seas of poisonous reptiles and have proved successful.

By remembering two simple facts any one can distinguish a poisonous serpent from a harmless one. The venomous reptile invariably possesses a triangular head and a blunt nose, while the harmless one has a rounded head and a pointed snout. Any snake that tapers smoothly from the middle of its body to the tip of its nose and to the tip of its tail as well as gradually and gradually and regular manner, is absolutely devoid of venom.

Bodily Confused.
Lord Bramwell, says the biographer of that jurist, used to tell a story illustrating the complete paralysis which may affect the human mind at trying moments.

One day when he was on board a Rhine steamer he noticed a lady, evidently in great distress, trying by signs to explain to the officials some matter of importance. Fancying that she was a countrywoman of his own, he asked "Do you speak English?"

The poor lady had really lost her head, and she could only stammer out, "Un pen"—that is a little.

The Lord Bramwell continued the conversation in French, but it became evident that the lady understood scarcely a word. German and Italian gave equally bad results. Finally she muttered something about her husband and regular manner, is absolutely devoid of venom.

Intemperance in Drugs.
There is a source of nervous ailments entirely special to this age and the unexpected outcome of our present day chemistry and advertising. Intemperance in drugs is becoming more common, and it may possibly outstrip the abuse of alcohol in its evil results. The manufacture of new chemical products is supplying the public with endless carbon derivatives of high molecular power and of imperfectly known physiological action. Some are most dangerous, and their continued indulgence lead to confirmed neuritis or hopeless neurasthenia, and it thus comes to pass that as the therapeutic activity of the profession tends to abolish disease that of the public is manufacturing it.—Medical Journal.**Plaster of Paris.**
The setting of plaster of Paris may be retarded by the addition of 5 to 10 per cent of powdered althaea root. This addition not only retards the hardening of the plaster, but also enables it to be cut, filed, sawed and tugged. An addition of 8 per cent retards the complete setting of the plaster for about an hour, so that the mass may be used for any purpose where it is to remain plastic for at least a portion of that time.

SONG OF THE TREE TOP.

My love is the wind, and his heart is mine. Here under the midnight sky. We sleep, and we dream in the starlit gleam. And wake to the sea bird's cry. When the day comes back and the sails unfurl. As blue billows drift into foam. We laugh in delight at the hurricane's flight. And kiss when the ships come home. —Herbert Randall in Connecticut Magazine.

UPSET BY AN UMBRELLA.

It Came Very Handy, but Made Three Men Miserable.

"Talking about stealing umbrellas," said a New Orleans business man. "I had a whimsical experience last week. One afternoon, when it was raining, I happened to see a very good umbrella in the hall, and—well, I annexed it, or rather I established a protectorate, intending to return it before night to the gentleman in the adjoining office, who, I supposed of course, was the owner. "But somehow or other I didn't, and for several days I dodged him in and out of the building, feeling particularly uncomfortable and guilty. Finally he dropped in and, seeing the umbrella in the front office, walked off with it. I witnessed the incident unobserved from the rear room and naturally said nothing. Next day we encountered in the elevator, and he handed me the umbrella. "Here's your parachute," he said. "I'll have to own up that I appropriated it yesterday, but it was raining, and the temptation was too strong for my morals. "I took it rather gingerly and refrained from offering any explanation. That afternoon I set it just outside my door and had the satisfaction of seeing it disappear under the arm of an architect who is a prominent member of my church and generally regarded as a very moral man. Since then he has had pressing business whenever I have to sight, and I infer that he is suffering a duplicate of the pang recently experienced by myself and my neighbor. The fellow who originally left it hasn't turned up, so I suppose that he, too, is a member of the robber band." —New Orleans Times-Democrat.

Saw How It Worked.

A scientific demonstration which caused some amusement is described in a recent number of The Criterion: "A certain physician had a large Toesler-Holts machine which gave a spark like a young streak of lightning. His wife was much interested in it and watched the doctor manipulate it until she fancied herself master of the apparatus. One day a party of friends called when the doctor was out, and the good wife seized the opportunity of paralyzing them with her knowledge of science. "She was a very dignified woman of portly presence, and, after leading them into the office, she began her explanation with all the impressiveness of a lecturer. She spoke briefly of the preliminary manipulation of the machine. "And then," she said, laying her hand upon one connection, "the electricity goes from here to here; whereupon an angry white spark leaped out from the brass ball indicated with a report like a horse pistol and smote her upon the extended finger, causing her to sit upon the floor with violence that shook the window panes. "The guests stood around in expectant attitudes, looking at their fallen hostess in pardonable surprise. Only for a moment did that capable woman leave them in doubt. "There! said she, in the most matter of fact manner, as though events had simply followed the natural course. "You see how it works. Now let's go into the garden and look at the chrysanthemums."

Famous Laughing Plant of Arabia.

The seeds of the laughing plant of Arabia produce the same effect upon persons as laughing gas. The plant attains a height of from two to four feet, with woody stems, widespread branches and bright green foliage. Its fruits are produced in clusters and are of a yellow color. The seed pods are soft and woolly in texture and contain two or three black seeds of the size of a Brazilian bean. Their flavor is a little like opium, and their taste is sweet; the odor from them produces a sickening sensation and is slightly offensive. The seeds, when pulverized and taken in water and sugar, have a peculiar effect upon man. He begins to laugh loudly, boisterously; then he sings, dances and cuts all manner of fantastic capers. Such extravagance of gait and manner was never produced by any other kind of dosing.—Ladies' Home Journal.

This Man Is in Trouble.

Some queer letters find their way to an editor's desk. And here is one of them, which is warm with life and feeling and means business. To the Editor: Sir—I sent you three weeks ago some Sunday sketches of poetry which was wrote by my wife on her birthday. I told you to print it on Sunday and send the bill to me; but I have a sketch of it or bill has I seen. You have placed it in a damnable predicament for my wife thinks I either didn't mail it or got "fired" and lost it. Will you please drop me a line and let me know if it is in the postoffice, but I ain't got to witness. If you will set me right in the matter, I will write a piece for you myself! —Atlanta Constitution.

A Disagreeable Neighbor.

"I notice a coolness between you and Mrs. Neddore. What is the trouble?" "She sent her little boy over yesterday for a step ladder we borrowed of her two years ago. The stupid woman let it stay here all that time so she could see it some day and make me feel cheap."

In London no fewer than 185,000 people live four and more to the room, and of these 8,000 are packed to the extent of eight or more to the room.

Previous to the sixteenth century every physician in Europe wore a ring on his finger as an indication of his profession.



A JERSEY-AYRSHIRE COW AND HER DAUGHTER.



THE BISMARK APPLE.



CHEAP BAGHOLDER.



CUT BISMARK APPLE.