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The Farm.

Real Farm Improvement.

One fact stands very much against the improvement of farms in the hands of many owners; this is the expectation of so many to leave the farm some time, and have a home in the village or town. Much more interest would be taken in the improvement of farm homes if the farmer fully expected to spend his days on the farm. There is much difference between the improvements that look only to commercial value, when selling is the only object, and improvements made for the comfort and happiness of the owner. Many things considered as improvements in this direction by some have no commercial value whatever in the eyes of others. The improvement added to the farm by the owner, who must make his living from it, will often differ very much from that of the owner, who has an income from other sources. When the farmer earns the improvements as he goes along, they are usually noticeable for their utility and are fully appreciated. But if built for show, or because money is plentiful, they too often become a burden.

In the older sections of the country the first improvement should be in the land itself, the other improvements following in course of time, as the products of the soil prove able to support them. It is the part of wisdom to improve the soil first, rather than put on surface improvements not cumulative in value, but rather in expense. We pay taxes on soil improvement only as the volume of crops is increased; on buildings erected as soon as they can be placed on the tax duplicate. It is not unusual that these become a cumulative source of expense.

Farming will rest on a better basis when every man farms for the love of it, and aims truly to leave the farm better than he found it, when the farmer builds the home on the farm with the sole intention of occupying it while he lives. Most farmers strive to keep bank accounts to draw on when the infirmities of old age overtake them. This is commendable; but too often in this effort the farmer is robbed of fertility. Soil improvement is entirely forgotten in the effort to secure a bank account. Thus the poverty of the farm or the soil of the farm sometimes makes strong inroads on these expected accumulations, with a resulting failure of the expected bank account. We find the farmer with a poor farm that will not sustain him, and with no bank account. He has robbed the soil, with no effort or thought to add to or sustain its natural fertility, and when he most needs help from the soil it is a robber in turn, drawing from him the declining strength of old age in his efforts to make it yield him a sustenance.—John M. Jamieson in Country Gentleman.

Saving Crops in an Extreme Drouth.

In regard to the conserving of moisture by a dust mulch, I do not pretend to know just how my experience is in line with Mr. Hope's. On account of wet and cold weather, which set in a few days after planting, which was done on May 15 and 16, about one third of our corn failed to grow. The weather cleared up on June 1, and as soon as we could tell how much was missing—June 5 and 6—we planted it with a band planter.

From that time till July 17 we did not have more than two light showers, neither one of which soaked our dust mulch one half inch. We have ten acres of corn, two acres of potatoes and two acres of a truck garden. We went through the corn every week and through the garden and potatoes twice a week with an Iron Age one horse cultivator, stirring the ground very shallow. Our corn grew finely, and promises a good yield. We had peas in market on June 14 and potatoes and other vegetables on June 28.

We set out two thousand cabbage plants on June 4 and 5, which are beginning to form heads. Our potatoes, beans, celery, squashes, etc., are a rich green, and are growing nicely and are in good shape to profit by the forty-eight hours' rain we are having at the present writing—July 17. I prefer a dry season to an extensively wet season. But our hay was only about one half a crop. Our pastures are very dry. Oats are promising a good crop and wheat an average yield.—(Sigworth Farm, Franklin, Venango County, Penn.)

The Farmer's Bank.

There is nothing one can do which brings so comfortable a feeling as regards

provision for the future as to make deposits where there is a certainty of receiving full values when the time of need shall come.

Thirty-one years ago the farm connected with the Martin Box was bought, and each year since, trees, shrubs and vines have been set out, and each year there has been an abundance of fruit for family use, with sometimes a surplus to sell. But we are learning that, while a surplus may be peddled out, it takes much valuable time which might be used to a better purpose, and this year, in the way of orcharding, we have set one hundred Baldwin apple trees, as the few trees of that variety in this vicinity yield excellent fruit, and and red apples will sell better than those of other colors.

The trees in this orchard are set forty feet apart each way, for the Baldwin must have sunshine to have a good color. We have observed the apples grown on single rows of trees by fences or walls are fairer, better colored and more perfect in shape than those grown in close orchards, and also that when varieties are grown together there is sometimes an admixture.

A successful business man looks ahead to see the value of his investments; in like manner the orchardist should plan for his future income.—(A. S. Parker, South Coventry, Conn.)

Cow Peas in The Silo.

As I see so much in the papers about cow peas, I thought may be my experience with them as silage might be of some interest. I have been using a silo for eight years—do not believe a man can run a dairy of any size without one, and for the last four years I have used more or less peas in the filling of it; I believe it makes a better silage than corn.

The first year I drilled the peas in with the corn. The corn was tall and heavy, but in some places the peas grew almost to the top of it, making such a heavy, tangled mass that it was a difficult matter to handle it. I next drilled the peas in rows about twenty-two inches apart, and cut them with my mower and put them through the cutter separately, cutting a load of corn and then one of peas, and by the time it was fed out of the silo it was pretty well mixed.

One very great advantage in growing the pea is, I think, that it will enable you to use the same piece of land for growing your silage crop almost indefinitely, which is a very great advantage, as it is important to have the crop near at hand to make rapid work in filling. By growing one half of the land in corn and the other half in peas, and after cutting it off I run my disk harrow over it and sowed it in rye, which gave me a fine pasture in open weather in the winter for my calves, and several days earlier a bite for my cows, in fact the fourteen acres that I had in this spring in April grew so fast that fifty head of cattle could not keep it down. Then ploughing it under and planting back to corn and peas, reversing them, (planting one where the other one grew the year before). I found my last year's crop the best I had grown without using any manure and only about one hundred pounds of bone dust to the acre on the rye.

Of course, in planting equal parts of land there will be more bulk of corn, and it will take a few acres more of land to fill a large silo by using the peas, but I think the other advantages will outweigh this. I find the whippoorwill pea is the best, as it does not run to vine so much and will bear an immense crop of peas which makes very rich feed. They should be planted about ten days or two weeks later than the corn, unless it is a very large and late growing variety. It takes a large cutter and it is heavy work to handle them, but I think it pays.—(N. Frazier, Kentucky, in Jersey Bulletin.)

Birds That Travel.

It is not an unusual sight on Lake Michigan to see land birds taking a ride on the lake steamers. This is particularly noticeable on the steamers of the Goodrich Line which ply between Muskegon, which is a hundred miles from Chicago, at this season after dark. At sundown or thereabouts, masts, spars and rigging of these vessels lying at the dock in Muskegon, offer good roosting places for land birds. When darkness comes and the

boats move, it is too late for the birds to venture back on shore.

The other morning just between day-break and sunrise, passengers on the decks of the steamer Iowa, thirty-five miles out from Chicago, were entertained by a flock of land birds which circled round and round the boat, until they were compelled to rest on the rigging. There were two yellow-hammers or flickers; a silent little sap-sucker, which pecked away at ropes and spars as if he were breakfasting heartily on grub; a frightened brown thrasher with speckled breast; a pair of tiny wrens and several grass sparrows. There was also a little colony of bats.

The yellow hammers, with their long galloping flights, were restless and nervous. They seemed to be awake to their dangers and to feel safety only in the presence of the boat. The yellow-hammer naturally is a shy bird, and these would fly round and round, resting only for a few seconds at a time on the topmost reaches of the tall masts.

The sparrows were only a little nervous huddling together and twittering their fears. The wrens were tame beyond belief, even hopping under the chairs

in which passengers sat. Circumstances pointed to the fact that they were at home somewhere among the timbers of the lower decks. The bats evidently were, for they flew in and out through the boat as if perfectly at home. One of them, however, missed an open window and struck the side of the pilot-house, falling on deck. A passenger clapped his handkerchief over the little creature and made him a prisoner. He put bat and handkerchief into hand-bag, only to find an hour later that the bat had eaten out the center of the square of linen.

But it is a very easy way for country birds to visit a big city free of cost. They may go to bed in Michigan and awaken only a few miles west of Chicago. With a little exercise they land among the ships, freight cars and tall elevators at the mouth of the Chicago River with appetites whetted for breakfast. Grain-eating birds may get it easily enough, but the yellow-hammers, the thrashers and the sap-suckers must find pretty hard picking, even in the big parks. They do not find much sympathy, however. Tramp birds which will steal rides must take the consequences.—Ex.

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