AGRICULTURAL.

ON THE ADVANTAGE OF LAYING DOWN LAND IN GRASS.

The disposition which nature shows, wherever cultivation is carried on, to restore land to its original state of *grass*, ought to teach the farmer that it should be admitted into every system of cropping which has the least pretension to be correct. Let us clear our fields as we may, use harrows and exterminators of the most approved and improved descriptions, apply hand-hoeing and horse-hoeing, and every other method of cutting *the springing* blade, and extirpating the last fragment of the seeming dormant root, it takes but a short interval, when Nature asserts her rights, and hastens to reclothe every little vacancy with her favorites—the grasses—they evidently being "her most peculiar care." Why is this? Is it because HE was justly displeased with the first man, and "cursed the ground for his sake," has thus entailed upon his hapless posterity an heirship of endless toil? Or is it an evidence of His continued care for the human family, in thus plainly revealing to the farmer that the way to restore to *his fields* their decreasing fertility, is to let them alone, and leave them for a time in a condition similar to that in which he found them? or rather, to allow them to take advantage, under *Nature's* charge, of the improved condition and altered circumstances in which, by his art and industry, he has succeeded in placing them?

I am no theologian, in the usual acceptation of the word, and therefore beg to be excused from answering yea, or nay, to the first proposition. As regards the second, I have faith in Nature as the handmaid of a GREATER POWER. I believe that, so far as she is concerned,

"In spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,
One truth is clear, whatever is—is right."

I would therefore advise my young friends to comply to a certain extent with these urgent demands of Nature, and occasionally let their fields "go to grass."

It might perhaps be impossible for philosophy to point out any course, where it is admissible, more [illegible] than one where turnips, grain, and grasses follow each other in regular succession. When the field is preparing for turnips, the mineral constituents of the soil are disintegrated. When it is in grass, carbon is accumulating. Thus, at one time it may have a small preponderance one way, and in a year or two the preponderance may be the other way, but the natural consequence of the system is to preserve it in a well-balanced condition.

That carbon must accumulate when the fields are in grass, will appear evident, when we reflect that it forms a close sward, as impervious to heat or cold as the coat of wool on the back of a sheep, and that consequently such land is much cooler in summer and warmer in winter, than it would otherwise be. Another circumstance aids in producing a similar effect in such land. *Plants* perspire. By which means a moist atmosphere, partaking as much of the natural heat of water as of the general atmosphere, is maintained around them. Now carbonic acid gas, being considerably heavier than common air, has a natural tendency to descend, and finding a water vapor of the same specific gravity as itself emanating from the grass plants, which also are in a suitable temperature for not again expelling it, both gas and vapor continue to linger near the ground, and are partially deposited among their leaves.

The advantage of having our arable land occasionally laid down in grass, more particularly as our soils have such a tendency to get exhausted of carbon, must be apparent to every one. But how are we to do it? As I have already remarked, those grasses which are usually cultivated are inadmissible. We must therefore adopt a *middle* course. We must not exactly leave the land uncultivated, and allow the weeds and coarse grasses which are natural to it to usurp sorts which have been, and may again be turned to so much better advantage. Neither must we attempt to sow it in timothy, and broad-leaved clover, and orchard grass. But there are other grasses which may be tried with greater *hopes* of success, in consequence of their being more patient of drought, such as rye-grass, downy oat-grass, hard and sheep's fescue grass, crested dog's-tail, and white clover. Where the ground is not too dry for ordinary crops, especially where it has been properly subsoiled, these may be sown without any great risk of failure. Besides this, there is another infallible way, recommended by Mr. G. Sinclair, which, situated as we are, we ought by no means to despise, namely, to fence in a piece of good natural grass, and mow it at different times during the summer. Thus the seeds of the earlier and generally better varieties would be procured at the first mowing, and the latter sorts afterwards. By mixing such seeds with *with those which I have recommended*, and sowing them at the proper season, in good land properly cultivated, there would not be any greater difficulty of growing artificial *hay, or laying down land* for pasture here, than in any other State.—*Porter's Spirit.*

A WORD TO FARMERS.—Here we want to say a kind word to farmers, whether it fairly belongs to the subject or not. The peculiarities of our climate, our sudden transitions from winter to summer, the rapid strides of vegetation when growing time comes, all tend to make the farmer indolent a portion of the year, and to work him beyond all reason another portion; both of which are unfavorable to his rising to the possession of a sound judgment, a clear, well-trained intellect, and a cheerful, [illegible] enterprise. The tendency of an indolent winter and an over worked summer, is to make the farmer inferior to the other man and the manufacturer, as a man—less wide awake, less thinking, less enterprising. The temptation should not be yielded to. More important advice than the following we do not believe can be given. Lay out the work of the farm, as far as possible, so as to always have something to do, in spite of wind and weather; and never do more at one time than is reasonable, for love or money.—Some Northern farmers work themselves harder in summer than they would find it in their conscience to work another. To work excessively six months, and then to suck the fingers as long before waking up, will not make much of a man, and in the long run will not produce thrift. The farmer's rule is to be always doing something, but not to work himself to death, even in harvest. We include reading, of course, among the things to be done. It should have its times. The farmer who does not read his agricultural papers and some others must expect to fall behind his age.—*Plough, Loom and Anvil.*

CURRANT TREES.—Having noticed that *currant* bushes may as well be made trees as shrubs, I conclude to tell you how I have seen it done. In the spring of 1831, my father commenced a garden, and among other things, set cuttings for currant bushes. I determined to experiment on one of those cuttings; and as soon as it grew, I pinched off all the leaves, except the top tuft, which I let grow. The cutting was about fourteen inches long, and during the summer, the *sprout from this grew ten inches.*

The next spring I pinched off all the leaves to about half way up the first year's growth, so as to leave the lowest limbs two feet from the ground. It branched well, and became a handsome little dwarf tree.—When it came to bear fruit it was more productive than any other bush in the garden, and the fruit larger.

It was less infested with spiders and other insects; hens could not pick off the fruit, and grass and weeds were more easily kept from the roots, and it was an ornament instead of a blemish. Now I would propose that currant cuttings be set in rows about four or five feet apart each way (let them be long and straight ones,) and trained into trees.—*Michigan Farmer.*

VALUE OF SHEEP TO THE FARMER.—It is of more importance to the farmer than is generally supposed, that a certain proportion of his farm stock should consist of sheep. Speaking on this point, *R. S. Fay*, of *Lynn*, recently remarked at an Agricultural meeting in Boston, (as reported in the N. E. Farmer,) "sheep are gleaners after other *stock, and will help to keep the cattle pas*tures in good condition by being turned into them occasionally, to eat the coarser plants which have been left. They will enrich the land. There is no manure so fertilizing as that of sheep, and it does not so readily waste by exposure as that of other animals. Sheep may be made exceedingly useful in helping to prepare land for a crop. A German agriculturalist has calculated that the droppings from one thousand sheep during a single night, would manure an acre sufficiently. By that rule a farmer may determine how long to keep any given number of sheep on a particular piece of land. Mr. Fay said he was accustomed to fold his sheep upon land which he designed for corn and other crops; and in doing so he shut them upon *half an acre at a time*, keeping them there by a wire fence, which was easily moved from place to place. In this way his land was well manured without the labor of shoveling and carting."—These ideas are worth reading by the farmer. We believe any farm will bear a certain number of sheep, in proportion to the other stock, not only without loss to the *amount of grazing which it will yield to the* cattle and horses, but to the increase of the same. Mr. Fay, by his management, makes the lambs and manure pay for keeping the sheep, and the wool is clear profit.

GAME AT THE NORTHWEST.—The newspapers and sportsmen of the northwest are felicitating themselves on the abundance of wild game, and particularly of deer, that is daily taken in those neighborhoods. The Galena *Gazette* accounts for the facility with which the deer are taken, by the fatigue they suffer in traveling over the ice-crusted snow. The crust is just thick enough to be broken through by their sharp hoofs, and they soon become so crippled and leg weary, that they are easily overtaken and despatched. A few such winters as the present, adds the *Gazette*, will nearly exterminate the deer from the neighborhood of the white settlements.—*Porter's Spirit.*

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