



Agricultural Department.

RURAL TOPICS.

RAISE YOUR OWN COWS.

A writer in the *Colonial Farmer* says: Many dairymen sell their calves, and buy cows when wanted, but this is not a good practice, as I claim that cows can be raised cheaper than they can be bought—that is, really good cows, which have a large flow of milk, and are a breed, or grade, valuable for beef. Dairymen should breed from stock that is extra valuable for milk. Such cows are obtained by degrees; they may be grades or pure bloods; but when obtained, it is very unwise to sell the calves of such cows to the butchers, because in a few years one runs out of such good stock, if he sells his calves, and then he is compelled to take cows of an inferior grade, as first-class cows are seldom offered for sale. It does not follow that when good cows are obtained their calves will always make equally good milkers; but like generally produces like, and farmers can keep up the good qualities of their dairy stock better by raising than by purchasing their cows. For milk, and also for beef, a Short Horn and Ayrshire grade, or a Short Horn grade crossed on Ayrshire cows make very valuable dairy stock. An old and feeble cow should never be bred, if her calves are to be raised, as disease is hereditary. In regard to the points of a good cow, in order to perpetuate a healthy constitution in her offspring, I annex the following from the Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England: "The head small; muzzle fine and tapering; nostrils large and open; the eyes full and lustrous; the ears small and not too thick; the head well set on the neck; the distance between the ears and the angle of the jaw short, but the width behind the ears considerable (no dairy cow should have a short, thick neck); the chest wide and deep; the girth, taken immediately behind the shoulders, should correspond with the length from behind the ears to the rise of the tail; the carcass of a barrel shape, for a thin, flat-ribbed animal eats largely, thrives badly, and is usually liable to diarrhoea; there should be but little space between the prominence of the hip and the last rib; the quarter large; the measurement from the prominence of the haunch backward to the rise of the tail and downward to the hock as great as possible; the lower part of the haunch thick and broad; the hide thick and pliant; smallness of bone is a sure indication of early maturity and aptitude for fattening."

DRYING OFF COWS.

Valuable cows are sometimes lost by improper drying off. If much milk is allowed to remain in the udder it becomes coagulated, and somewhat putrid; and if not removed the cow may be lost. Mr. Willard, the noted dairy writer, says:

"Cows cannot be dried of their milk at once, and some cows continue to secrete milk in small quantities for a long time. But in all cases where the animal has ceased to give milk, or is what is termed 'dry,' she should have her udder examined from time to time and the teats tried to see if any milk can be drawn. At first the trial should be made at intervals of two or three days, and if there is a particle of milk in the bag it should be all thoroughly drawn. Then the trial may be made at longer intervals. When they are supposed to be completely dry, the rule should be to go through the herd every week, making trial of the teats to see if any milk can be drawn. And this work cannot safely be entrusted to 'hired help,' but must be performed under the 'eye of the master.' Many persons are not aware of the importance of drying cows, and hired help often think it a piece of folly to try to draw milk from a dry cow. We have had such men, and they were good, honest men, too, and they would insist that certain cows were perfectly dry, but yet, when put to the test under our rule of trying the teats once a week during winter, we have found, in numerous instances, that small quantities of thick milk or a watery fluid could be drawn from the udder."

SOWING CLOVER ON GRASS.

Farmers may succeed in making clover grow on grass lands, without plowing the land, if the sod is not thickly covered with grass, but open in places between the tufts, so as to admit of harrowing in the seed. Sow the seed quite thick, as early in the spring as the ground will admit, and be dry. Then run a fine tooth harrow over the land till the seed is covered, or the most of it mixed with the loosened earth; then roll the land, and in due time a crop of clover will appear; but it will be in danger of being smothered by the grass,

perhaps; and if it be, when the grass has grown high enough to be cut by a mower it should be cut, and fed green to stock; and if plaster be sown on the land, as soon as the clover, appears, it will get such a growth in a few weeks that the grass cannot check it. Fields that are not well covered with grass, may be improved in this manner, or other grass seed may be sown instead of clover, and several kinds of grass seed would be better than one kind. Perhaps it would be better to pasture such lands till the new seeding gets a good growth, rather than cut the grass when it is but a few inches high. There is no good reason why farmers should not experiment in this way sometimes. Then let them seed down a plowed field to grass next spring, without the usual grain crop. I have known a good crop of hay to be cut the first season on fields thus seeded; and be sure that you seed with several kinds of grasses, which produce a firmer sward, and one that will stand the frosts of winter better than one kind will.

BITTER CREAM.

Cream becomes bitter by keeping it too long before it is churned. A butter-maker says: "In summer there is little bitter milk or cream, because the cream is churned sooner than in winter, seldom reaching the third day. Sometimes, where there is a single cow kept, I have known the bitter to show on account of the small quantity of cream accumulating. The summer practice is reversed in the winter. There being too little milk to require frequent churning than say one, and sometimes two churnings a week we account readily for the evils complained of. The fore part of the season, when milk is in greater quantity, necessitating more frequent churning, I hear of but little complaint. It matters not how good the feed is—if the tenderest hay and roots are added, making an approach to summer feed—nor how clean the milk is kept, the most perfect milk if set beyond three days will be hurt. The writer of this has filled the vessel, leaving barely space enough for a cloth to be stretched over without touching the milk, and a snug lid put on, keeping the air out, but all to no purpose. So, in the purest air, in all temperatures, it is the same."

VEGETABLES IN THE FARMERS' FAMILY.

Vegetables, to the thinker on domestic and political economy, suggest food for serious contemplation—serious as affecting our stomachs, the most susceptible part of our beings, and serious as affecting not only our domestic comfort, but our pockets. The methods and practices of our New England farming for the last ten years have developed many radical changes, which, in our view, must result most disastrously to the farming interests, unless some radical cure springs up as an offset. It is patent to all that we grow less beef, less mutton, less poultry, less pork every year. Why? The farmers say they cannot afford it. Can they afford to put all their earnings into the butcher's cart, to send West every year, and let their pastures lie idle? Is it better economy, in the long run, to get nothing for the use of their scant pastures to take three per cent. where they were used to gaining more? Is it better to buy Western corn at 70 cents, and earn the money to pay for it in some other direction or pursuit, letting their lands lie idle, than to raise it at 75 or 80 cents even? These are only small items compared with the whole? Step into one of our grocery stores, and look over one of the shelves, and what do you find? Canned fruit, canned vegetables, canned fish, canned meats—in fact, almost all varieties of food canned for the table. Look further, and you will find most of them are canned West or South. Temptingly put up, with handsome labels outside, toothsome food inside, the farmers buy, because it is cheaper than to raise them. That word "cheap" has a more potent effect on the times than any Presidential election. What is the remedy? If we cannot grow the meat, we must have more and better vegetables. At our late exhibition there was a noticeable absence of two very important vegetables—the pea and the tomato. In years past some English and Scotch gardeners have been experimenting in the growth of the pea, with marvellous success. Varieties have been produced that should never be absent from the daily board of the farmer's meals. The tomato is equally good, as a toothsome condiment. The onion, also, although in many farmers' families considered a luxury, is, according to eminent physicians, a great corrective and alterative of the human system when freely consumed, and a preventive, as well as a remedy, for some affections of the kidneys that are becoming so alarmingly frequent among our active men of middle life. The same influence upon the liver is attributed to the free use of the tomato. Equally effective is the celery plant upon the nervous system. But the great questions of food and economy are the ones which come nearest home. Is it of no use to talk of the heart and the moral senses until the stomach is right. To have that right it must be well filled. If the farmers of New England,

and particularly those within the limits of this Society, are short of money, short of beef and pork, and cannot see their way clear to grow more of these articles on their farms, they must eat more and better vegetables. The list is large, succulent, and healthy. Judging from the specimens we have examined, they can be grown successfully not only for summer, but for winter consumption. Let our wives and daughters wear one less plaited flounce, and devote a little time to preparing them for winter use in the family. We have so burdened ourselves with business and superfluities that a goodly portion of our vital forces is expended in taking care of things, instead of procuring food and raiment. But, as we must work or starve, why not accept the situation, and when spring opens begin at the garden, and let our tables groan, if need be, with the fulness thereof?—From a Committee Report by A. P. Peck to the Northampton (Mass.) Agricultural Society.

CATTLE FOOD.—Experience teaches us that cattle thrive best on a mixed diet. All hay or all grain will produce less beef than hay and grain. The animal structure of the ox also demands bulk in food, as well as richness; the feeding of concentrated food being only profitable so far as the animal assimilates it—beyond that simply increasing the manure heap, at a cost far beyond its value. The ox has approximately eleven and one-half pounds of stomach, with only two and one-half pounds of intestines, to each one hundred pounds of live weight; the sheep has less stomach and more intestines, giving a smaller percentage of digestive apparatus; while the pig for every one hundred pounds of his live weight has only one and one-third pounds of stomach to six pounds of intestines. A steer would thrive on a bulk of straw, with a little oil-meal, that would shrink a sheep and starve a pig. Pork can be produced from clear corn-meal, while mutton requires a greater variety of food and beef cattle would become cloyed and diseased with its exclusive use. A thoughtful attention to these broad facts will change much injudicious feeding into cheaper meat production.—*Cultivator.*

THE HIRED MEN OF THE FARM.—As a class, the hired men of the farm are rapidly becoming one of the greatest trials of farming, not only on account of their incompetency, but because of their immorality and profanity. There could not be a more demoralizing influence in the home-circle than they often produce. Seeds of sin and vice are quickly sown in youthful minds, and, if the mother does not keep her boys from mingling with the farm-laborers of the day, in a few months she will see cause to bitterly regret her neglect. And it is time that parents should understand the injury they are inflicting upon their children when they hire the ignorant laborers who yearly flock down from the Canadas to find work in the rural districts of New England. To be sure, there are happy exceptions to the general rule: for not all of that class are corrupt. Yet the generality of them will prove so, and one should guard against introducing them into the home. Besides, the extra work they make the housewife should be borne in mind; and a farmhouse should be erected, at an expense of a few hundred dollars, where the hands could live by themselves, and the housewife not be forced to cook and iron for them, when she has her hands more than occupied with her own family.—*N. Y. Independent.*

GREEN FOOD.—Green food is essential to the well-being of poultry at all seasons of the year. When fowls are limited to confined quarters, this must be supplied to them, artificially, to keep them in good health. In winter time we can give them cabbages or chopped turnips and onions from time to time; short, late dried hay (or rowen) is very good for a change; corn-stalk leaves, chopped fine, they will eat with a relish. In early spring time when the ground first softens from the frost pasture sods thrown into their pens will be ravenously eaten by them; and as soon as the new grass starts (unless they can have free access to the fields or lawn) they should be supplied with this excellent succulent daily. For young chickens, nothing is so beneficial and so grateful as a run upon the newly grown grass; and next to this indulgence they should have an ample supply of cut or pulled grass every day.

—How successfully art may come to the aid of nature is illustrated by the experience of a Mr. Sandford, of Nantucket, who writes to the *Boston Advertiser* concerning his crops on that heretofore barren island. He has used in the past year a thousand waggon loads of kelp or gulf weed, as a fertilizer, with excellent effects. The weed is secured in great quantities between the tides. With this weed thrown at his feet, Mr. Sandford has raised 100 tons of hay, 600 bushels of corn, 1,500 bushels of turnips, beets and carrots, fodder for thirty-five heads of cattle and horses, besides making 1,400 pounds of butter, killing beef, sheep, turkeys, and other fowls, and raising 3,000 pounds of pork. And all this on a barren sand bank.

DOMESTIC.

THE STUDY OF HEALTH.

A person who intended moving this spring was looking through a house that seemed promising. He inquired of the inmates whether they considered the house healthy, adding that his wife was an invalid. "We are all invalids here," was the reply, "and have never noticed anything wrong with the house." He did not take the house, and went away discouraged. It is sad to consider the pass to which we are come with regard to health. So many women are hindered by their infirmities from taking pleasure out of the life that lies so fair before their stronger sisters; yet many a weak and listless one can look back to a time of perfect physical comfort, when long days spent in the sweet-breathed fields left no headache behind, when a whole winter day of sliding down a long hill and trotting up again was a perfect delight. That same hill is a great trouble now, and such a one sighs as she remembers bygone days and feels herself a failure. Although not a hopeless case really, she is one in effect, for only one out of many will break through the mistaken living of years with any determination that she may taste again the vigor to which she was born. That some mistake has hindered the hardy child from increasing in strength and perfecting as she grew, must be plain to every mind.

With all that has been said with regard to healthful living, more knowledge on this subject is required, not so much in general as in particular. We all understand that cleanliness, fresh air, good rest, exercise, regular hours, and good food are the six considerations for those who wish to be strong. The great difficulty arises in the application of these. Take a simple instance: A is a man, B is his wife. A, who is strong and hearty, thinks fried ham and eggs, fried potatoes, hot biscuit and green tea a befitting supper. B is delicate, and has been reading health magazines; she calls green tea a mild poison, says that the fried food is food almost ruined, and knows that hot bread is injurious. What then? She has learned to have these kind of dishes on the table, A is satisfied, so with a dejected feeling that she is doing wrong she joins A in eating all she wants of this sort of food and suffers accordingly. What B absolutely needs is the knowledge of how to make dishes that will delight A and at the same be wholesome. She probably wastes half her daily strength digesting food that is unsuited to her. Nor will she mend matters by trying to live on bread and milk to save the trouble of getting up the new bill of fare.

It is the duty of every woman to learn all she can by reading and much thought on the subject of health, not only for her own sake but for the sake of those whom she may influence.—*N. Y. Witness.*

BREAD HASH.—Chop any kind of cold meat quite fine. Scald twice as much dry bread as there is meat. When soft, drain dry, and mix with meat; add pepper, salt, a little butter, and sufficient good cream to make it sufficiently soft. Mix all thoroughly and warm. Send to table hot.

PERMANENT WHITEWASH.—Take half a bushel of freshly burned lime, slake it with boiling water; cover it during the process to keep in the steam. Strain the liquid through a fine sieve, and add to it seven pounds of salt, previously well dissolved in warm water; three pounds of boiled rice ground to a thin paste and stirred in boiling hot; one-half a pound of powdered Spanish whiting, and one pound of clean glue, which has been previously dissolved by soaking it well and then hanging it over a slow fire in a small kettle within a larger one filled with water. Add five gallons of hot water to the mixture, stir it well and let it stand a few days covered from dust. It must be put on quite hot. About a pint of this mixture will cover a square yard.—*Tribune.*

BROILED STEAK.—First be sure that the fire is good, but not too hot. The gridiron should be kept always smooth and perfectly clean; but to make assurance doubly sure, wash and rub dry and smooth just before using. Rub briskly with chalk to remove all roughness, then wipe with a dry cloth. Have it hot when the steak is put on: open all the drafts to carry off smoke, while broiling. Throw a little salt on the fire to prevent scorching, and then put on the steak, and set the gridiron down close over the fire for a few minutes to heat the surface quickly—turn and do the same with the other side. Now expose it to a less intense heat, by raising the gridiron from the range, by means of two bricks. Turn the steak often and with care. When done, lay it on a hot platter, in which an ounce and a half of butter has been melting with a small teaspoonful of salt, a little pepper, and a few bits of chopped parsley well mixed. Turn the steak over two or three times in this dressing and send to table hot.