

taming, rearing and training of animals being that department of husbandry to which barbarians are most easily attracted; hence we cling to pasturing long after the reason for it has vanished. The radical, incurable vice of pasturing—that of devouring the better plants and leaving the worse to form and diffuse seed—can never be wholly obviated; and I deem it safe to estimate that almost any farm will carry twice as much stock if their food be mainly cut and fed to them, as it will if they are required to pick it up where and as it grows or grew. I am sure that the general adoption of soiling instead of pasturing will add immensely to the annual product, to the wealth, and to the population of our older States. And yet, I know right well that many farms are now so rough and otherwise unsuited to soiling as to preclude its adoption thereon for many years to come.

Let me indicate what I mean by Good Farming through an illustration drawn from the Great West:—

All over the settled portions of the Valley of the Upper Mississippi and the Missouri there are large and small herds of cattle that are provided with little or no shelter. The lee of a fence or stack, the partial protection of a young and leafless wood, they may chance to enjoy; but that it is a ruinous waste to leave them a prey to biting frosts and piercing north-westers, their owners seem not to comprehend. Many farmers far above want will this winter feed out fields of corn and stacks of hay to herds of cattle that will not be one pound heavier on the 1st of next May than they were on the 1st of last December—who will have required that fodder merely to preserve their vitality and escape freezing to death. It has mainly been employed as fuel rather than as nourishment, and has served not to put on flesh, but to keep out frost.

Now I am familiar with the excuses for this waste, but they do not satisfy me. The poorest pioneer might have built for his one cow a rude shelter of stakes and poles, and straw or prairie-grass, if he had realized its importance, simply in the light of economy. He who has many cattle is rarely without straw and timber, and might shelter his stock abundantly if he only would. Nay; he could not have neglected or omitted it if he had clearly understood that his cattle must somehow be supplied with heat, and that he can far cheaper warm them from without than from within.

The broad, general, unquestionable truths on which I insist in behalf of food farming are these; and I do not admit that they are subject to exception:

1. It is very rarely impracticable to grow good crops, if you are willing to work for them. If your land is too poor to grow wheat or corn, and you are not yet able to enrich it sow rye or buckwheat, if you cannot coax it to grow a good crop of anything, let it alone; and, if you cannot run away from it, work out by the day or month for your more fortunate neighbours. The time and means squandered in trying to grow crops where only half or quarter crops can be made, constitute the heaviest item on the wrong side of the farmers' balance-sheet; taxing them more than their National, State, and Local Governments together do.

2. Good crops rarely fail to yield a profit to the grower. I know there are exceptions, but they are very few. Keep your eye on the farmer who almost uniformly has great grass, good wheat, heavy corn, &c., and unless he drinks, or has some other bad habit, you will find him growing rich. I am confident that white blackbirds are nearly as abundant as farmers who have become poor while usually growing good crops.

3. The fairest and single test of good farming is the increased productiveness of the soil. That farm which averaged twenty bushels of grain to the acre twenty years ago, twenty-five bushels ten years ago, and will measure up thirty bushels to the acre from this year's crop, has been and is in good hands. I know no other touchstone of farming so unerring as that of the increase or decrease from year to year of its aggregate product. If you would convince me that X. is a good farmer, do not tell me of some great crop he has just grown, but show me that his crop has regularly increased from year to year, and I am satisfied.

I shall have more to say on these points as I proceed. It suffices for the present if I have clearly indicated what I mean by good and what by bad farming.

3. STICK TO YOUR BUSH.

A rich man, in answer to the question how he was so successful, gave the following story:—

"I will tell you how it was. One day, when I was a lad, a party of boys and girls were going to a distant pasture to pick whortleberries. I wanted to go with them, but was fearful that my father would not let me. When I told him what was going on, he at once gave me permission to go with them, I could hardly contain myself

with joy, and rushed into the kitchen, and got a big basket, and asked mother for a luncheon. I had the basket on my arm, and was just going out the gate, when my father called me back. He took hold of my hand and said, in a very gentle voice: 'Joseph, what are you going for, to pick berries or to play?' 'To pick berries,' I replied. 'Then, Joseph, I want to tell you one thing. It is this: when you find a pretty good bush, do not leave it to find a better one. The other boys and girls will run about, picking a little here and there, wasting a great deal of time, and not getting many berries. If you do as they do, you will come home with an empty basket. If you want berries, stick to your bush.'

'I went with the party, and we had a capital time. But it was just as my father said. No sooner had one found a good bush than he called all the rest and they left their several places and ran off to the new found treasure. Not content more than a minute or two in one place, they rambled over the whole pasture, got very tired, and at night had very few berries. My father's words kept running in my ears, and I 'stuck to the bush.' When I had done with one I found another, and finished that; then I took another. When night came I had a large basketful of nice berries, more than all the others put together and was not half so tired as they were. I went home happy. But when I entered I found my father had been taken ill. He looked at my basketful of ripe, black berries, and said: 'Well done, Joseph. Was it not exactly as I told you? Always stick to your bush.'

"He died a few days after, and I had to make my way in the world as best I could. But my father's words sunk deep into my mind, and I never forgot the experience of the whortleberry party; I 'stuck to my bush.' When I had a fair place, and was doing tolerably well, I did not leave it and spend weeks and months in finding one a little better. When other young men said, 'come with us and we will make a fortune in a few weeks,' I shook my head and 'stuck to my bush.' Presently my employers offered to take me into business with them. I stayed with the old house until the principals died, and then I had everything I wanted. The habit of sticking to my business led people to trust me, and gave me a character. I owe all I have and am to this motto—'Stick to your bush.'"

4. BRAINS AS AN IMPLEMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

If the best farm in Canada, with its fences, gates, roadways, barns, ploughs, horses, cattle, sheep and swine were left to the unguided course of nature, a very few years would suffice to reduce it to a wilderness occupied by wild animals. No matter how great the capital invested, how great the fertility, nor how excellent all the appliances, the simple withdrawal of judicious control would result in the practical destruction of the whole concern.

To set this machine in motion, and to keep it working profitably and in order, it is necessary that an intelligent man guide all of its operations; and the proposition will not be disputed that the more intelligent the man be, the more profitable will be the result. If the man were himself merely an animal, nothing would be gained by his presence, something perhaps might be lost, for as an animal his instincts are inferior to those of creatures of a lower grade.

Brains, then, the ability to think and the determination to enforce the results of thought, are what elevate the farmer above the level of his cattle, and enable him to control the manner in which they and his land together shall bring about the result that he desires; and, setting aside all æsthetical and philosophical questions connected with the human intellect, we may, for practical purposes, consider the farmer's brains purely in the light of an agricultural implement, since it is their operation, more than that of his ploughs and teams, and more, even, than the fertility of soil, which brings about the result that he seeks.

In the olden time, the land was ploughed with a forked stick, drawn sometimes by a cow and a woman yoked together. But in the best modern practice, gangs of half a dozen ploughs drawn across the field by the power of steam are found necessary to the most successful cultivation. In the various other combinations of wood and iron which are employed in Agricultural operations, an almost equal improvement has taken place; and far be it from us to say that the chief machine of all, that which invents and guides the action of these improvements, has stood still; but we submit, with due deference, that in many, if not even in a majority of instances, the last tool which the farmer has thought it worth while to improve is one in which the first and greatest improvement should have been made.

The intellectual condition of farmers is a result of the operation of natural causes, with which we do not propose to quarrel.