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EDITORIAL.

Don't Let the Crust Form in the Corn-field.

In this issue we publish additional letters on corn cultivation, presenting the subject as viewed under a variety of circumstances, in order to suit everybody. It is noteworthy that practically all our correspondents prefer planting in hills (though many corn-growers use the two-horse drill to save time), and that with many of them hoeing has fallen into disfavor. With modern harrows, weeders and cultivators it is possible to stir the soil right up close to the plants, and nothing remains for the hoe but an occasional weed that has been missed. Hilling-up has so far gone out of date that nobody mentions it at all. The hoe has seen its day in the cornfield, and the corn-grower should plan to cultivate so thoroughly that hand work will not be necessary. At the same time, where weeds have escaped, it should be employed to complete the job and leave the field absolutely clean for the succeeding crop. The hoe is being followed, though none too soon, by the scuffler, which should be relegated to the purpose of going through once or twice after the corn is too tall to straddle with the two-horse machine. Life is too short to waste time doing with one horse what can be done twice as fast with two. With a good team a man can cover six or seven acres a day better and more easily than three with the walking outfit. The pottering done in many cornfields would be amusing were it not so costly. To grow corn commercially, we must have longer rounds and more economical methods of tillage. We must adopt better business principles and figure expense down fine. With this in mind, we have asked our readers to estimate the earning value of the time spent in cultivating. The figures, it will be noticed, vary widely, but all agree that it pays well. Just how much work can be profitably bestowed upon the corn, will depend upon soil, season, and methods employed. As in all intensive production, the more one cultivates, the less the proportionate returns from additional work, so that while everyone finds it necessary to do some cultivating, the man who adopts the most economical and effective methods can earn bigger wages and for a longer time than the man who follows old-fashioned expensive methods. Right here we would like to remark that, if farmers, while working in their fields, would think over questions of this nature, it would add wonderfully to the interest of their occupation, and prove far more wholesome and profitable than speculating upon murder trials, the election or the war.

It is astonishing what cultivation will do, especially in a dry summer. Two seasons, some years ago, we remember having corn drilled on late spring-plowed sod, that turned out to be so dry that only a couple of grains to the yard came up, and what did appear was belated and sickly. But the neighbors who pitied us in early June reckoned without the cultivator, frequent use of which kept down the grass, and by conserving moisture rotted the sod, and provided such a good supply for the corn, that the field where it had seemed scarcely anything would grow, turned into the silo twelve to fifteen tons of strong, well-eared corn per acre, while the following year an extra good crop of oats was raised without plowing. That result may be duplicated by anyone who has sufficient faith in the soil mulch.

While the subject is too broad to permit dis-

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cussion of all the pros and cons, we may give a brief outline of what may be considered an up-to-date system. After planting in hills 40 or 42 inches apart, use the harrow or weeder to cover any exposed kernels, and leave the ground nice and loose on top. Then, until the plants are two or three inches high, follow each rain with a stroke of the weeder, which, if used thus frequently, will suffice to keep the surface mellow and the weeds subdued. The effectiveness of the weeder depends upon its frequent use, as it is of no avail to break up a hard crust. When the plants are about three or four inches high go through with the two-horse cultivator, setting it down about four inches deep, to open up the soil to the air, induce deep-rooting of plants and prepare a deep, effective mulch. After this, alternate use of weeder and two-horse machine, followed at tasselling time with a light scuffing, will leave the field in friable condition and insure a heavy, profitable crop. Do not work deeply after the brace roots begin to be thrown out, else you will cut them off, and to a great extent prevent the plant from feeding in the rich surface soil.

Stir the soil often, and use judgment in the work. The man who cultivates by the calendar, once a week or once in ten days, makes a mistake. In an ordinary season, to produce a maximum crop, we require all the moisture possible, and to preserve the precious supply from evaporation, try to cultivate promptly after every rain. If obliged to use a one-horse scuffler, it will often pay to follow one side of the space one time and the other side after the next shower, thus stirring most of the surface twice. Send the cultivator through and through, and insist on a three-mile gait. Poking through the rows is unnecessary if the work is done often.

In cultivating corn or roots, one will not go far astray if he simply observes the rule not to let the crust form, especially about young plants.

A Daily Mail Service Needed.

As intimated in these columns, issue April 27, we consider that one of the urgent questions which should engage the attention of the Postmaster-General is an improvement of the rural mail service, among other respects, in the frequency of delivery to outlying offices. In many parts of older Canada, not the least of the factors depopulating the communities and militating against their progress, is the infrequency of the mail, which renders unnecessarily inconvenient the isolation of the farm, while in the West the loneliness of the settlers' lives is aggravated by the same cause. Meanwhile, Federal expenditures are piling up to the tune of millions a year for such questionable purposes that the Government's leading organ deems it necessary to direct attention to the disquieting fact. In these circumstances, while commending Sir William Mulock's laudable desire to square the accounts of his department, it does seem that a little more consideration for the public interest in the Post Office Department, and a little more economy in other quarters, would be a change in the right direction. No one approves more than we the importance of thrift in the disposition of public revenues, but there are greater achievements for statesmen than cutting down expenses. The rural mail service, above all things, should not be stinted, and one of our immediate needs is a daily delivery to every accessible office. So long as there are old-settled country districts obliged to put up with a semi-weekly or thrice-a-week mail, the annual surplus in the Post Office

Department must stand as an evidence of administrative parsimony.

Though not informed as to the Government's intentions in this matter, we are inclined to think some pressure will have to be exerted, and would suggest that constituents take the matter up, by demanding to know their representative's stand on the matter. Now is a good time to drop a line to the member. A few Parliamentary bees buzzing about the Minister's head would soon have the desired effect.

Race-track Gambling.

The members of the Canadian House of Commons who have been lending their aid to facilitate the operations of the horse-racing fraternity in Canada, by exempting incorporated race-tracks from the provisions of the Criminal Code against common betting-houses, should study the results of the race-track trust in the United States. A writer in the *Cosmopolitan Magazine*, and another in "Success," turn on the light of naked reality in articles on "The Delusions of the Race-track," and "The Race-track Trust," the latter being described as a "giant combination that has let loose an avalanche of misery, despair and suicide upon the country, sending thousands of men and women, old and young, to ruin." Under the fiction of "Improving the Horse," the "Ives Bill," a license to gamble, was enacted some years ago, and subsequently under the "Percy Gray Law," a N. Y. State racing commission was created, making a monopoly of race gambling. In order to get the measure through the Legislature, money flowed lavishly, and a five-per-cent. rake-off was thrown as a sop to agricultural societies. A number of agricultural members disgraced themselves by accepting the bribe. The story of the Race-track Trust is thus tabulated by the writer in "Success":

Gate	\$3,805,126
Bar and restaurant privileges	1,260,000
Gambling privileges	1,500,000
Programmes	200,000
Touts, etc.	25,000
Total	\$6,780,126
Expenses	1,880,000
Profit	\$4,850,126

Taking a wider view, the writer in the *Cosmopolitan* points out that in the United States there are fewer than thirty running tracks, and that the real object is not to improve even the ten thousand horses kept for racing, is seen in the fact that the contests are mostly for short distances, rarely more than a mile and a quarter, and oftenest about seven-eighths of a mile. It is simply a gambling machine, and as one eminent judge recently put it: "The race-track is directly the largest agent in recruiting for the criminal class." All the lowest elements in the community are to be found in the wake of the races. Here is how the *Cosmopolitan* writer sums it all up:

"There is not a horse that is the better for any purpose but short-speed spurts, because of race-tracks; there is not a penitentiary anywhere that is not the fuller by from thirty to seventy per cent. because of race-tracks and pool-rooms. There is not a man anywhere who owes or attributes any part of that in him which is honorable or reputable to racing. Racing does not improve the breed of the 'Thoroughbred.' Its whole root is gambling; its whole flower and fruit, crime. From the 'gentlemen' perjurers and violators of their oaths of office and of the laws that promote and protect it, down to the