

DEEP PLOUGHING.

Messrs Editors,—Though not a practical farmer, I read your paper with deep attention. For years I have read much and thought more upon agricultural subjects. But the practical application of my reading and thought, has been confined to the narrow space of about one acre of garden. In this I delight to steal away from my other avocations, and watch the operation of the principles of the "science of agriculture." My practical acquaintance with the subject, however, has been a little more extensive. My boyhood, till well along into my teens, was spent upon a farm, and it has been a source of frequent regret with me, that I was tempted to leave that delightful pursuit. But enough of this.

My attention was attracted to a communication in a late number of your paper from Mr. John Dixon, which, it seems to me, is calculated to do a great amount of injury to the farming interests. There is one grand mistake which farmers, more than any other classes, fall into; and that is, in deducing general principles from the operation of a single experiment; and the author of the communication referred to, has fallen into the same error, at least so far as appears. Why is it that there is so great a diversity of opinion among farmers upon the same subject? Obviously, for the reason that they try but a single experiment, and that, without regard to numberless circumstances, which are indispensable to its success. Thus, a farmer hears his neighbor strongly recommend deep ploughing, and he sinks his plough to double the depth to which he has been accustomed, buries entirely his rich soil, and brings to the top the subsoil, which has never been exposed to atmospheric influence, or received the benefit of other causes which contribute to the formation of the productive soil. His crops are spoiled, he ascribes it to his deep ploughing, and at once, without farther inquiry or experiment, condemns the whole system. Any person acquainted with the principles of tillage with "book-farming," would have told him beforehand what he had to learn by bitter experience, and at much cost. It is precisely so in multitudes of other cases. In no other pursuit are opinions so flatly contradictory, in no other business are practices so diametrically opposite. One plants the largest potatoes he can get; another will tell you that the smallest will do just as well. One plants a whole potato, and cannot be induced to change his practice; his next neighbor says it is all folly and a useless waste of seed, and cuts his potatoes into small bits; while a third says, that the eye is sufficient, and all the rest of the potatoes may be saved. No doubt experiments in all these cases have succeeded well, and most signally failed. But why is this? For the obvious reason, that due attention has not been paid to the circumstances under which they have been tried, and for the want of that indomitable patience and perseverance, which old dame Nature requires in all cases as a condition precedent to a successful termination of our efforts. There is no want of hard labour among the tillers of the soil.—No class of our citizens probably work harder. But there is a want of *skilful application* of hard labour; of *discriminating judgement*, a want of an acquaintance with a thousand *apparently trifling* circumstances which defeats the successful termination of experiments. One instance will illustrate this. In the interior of New York a few years ago, gypsum produced wonderful effects, especially upon crops of clover. Gypsum then became the rage the land over, was used for all sorts of crops on all

kinds of lands; and every variety of the article, good, bad and indifferent was in requisition, and if none was to be bought, a little must be borrowed *just to carry across the field* and returned without diminution of quantity. And what was the consequence? With the great body of those who used this "*matchless sanative*," it lost caste and was abandoned. Gypsum has all the virtues which it ever possessed, and in certain circumstances, is capable of producing great results; but if they are not known and regarded, disappointment must be the inevitable consequence.—*Boston Cultivator*.

CRADLE.—The cradle is an implement of agriculture of comparatively modern invention and is intended to aid in cutting and gathering grain, which, when well constructed and skilfully used, it does most materially. Formerly the sickle was relied on in gathering the grain crops, now, unless on new lands, its use is mostly abandoned. The cradle consists of a broad scythe connected with a snath and light frame work, the fingers of which, projecting in a line with the scythe, gather and retain the straw as it is cut in the semicircular sweep of the implement, until it is deposited on the earth in a position for binding into sheaves. Serious objections formerly existed to the use of the cradle in the wheat field, as with the clumsy implement as first used, much grain was lost that might have been saved by the sickle: but now a skilful cradler with a good cradle, followed by a competent raker, will in the wheat field lose little if any more than the sickle, and a saving of at least one half the time will be made. When we compare the ancient cradle, as delineated in the books of agriculture, and even those now used in England, with those constructed at this time in the United States, we shall cease to wonder at the objections made to their use, and be convinced of the great improvements effected in their making. The best implement of the kind, is the one termed the Mooly cradle, in which a very curved snath is used, and the weight of the grain when on the implement, brought so much nearer the operator, as materially to lessen the labor and fatigue of carrying it, while it cuts the grain with great evenness, and of the desired width.

GRAIN CRADLES.—Every farmer should have at last one cradle, and a great many need two. He should no more think of doing without one, than a married lady does of getting along without a little different article of the same name. One man, who understands the business (and it is by no means a hard task to learn,) can cradle as much grain as six can reap, and the labor is not half so tiresome. We admire men of a humble spirit, but it pains us to see their bodies bowed down and crooked over in the shape of a half moon, in the grain field, slashing away at the waving grain with a sickle. It's altogether too severe—and no man could allow himself to do it, when he can harvest his grain so much easier and expeditious by the use of the cradle. We think it will pay well to cradle oats when not lodged down, and you have plenty of time. The extra labor over that of mowing will not amount to more than the loss of grain in raking, pitching, &c. The process of reaping makes altogether too many old men—it breaks down our young men and renders them aged in their appearance and *locomotion*, while they are yet young in years. Let every farmer obtain a grain cradle, and if he and his boys are not perfectly well satisfied, if not delighted, with it, we'll give it up that we are no prophet.