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The Field.

Threshing and Selling Wheat.

These topics, as a little reflection will suffice to convince any one competent to form an opinion, are closely connected, and may therefore very properly be discussed together.

It is essential to the highest success in any line of business, that the party carrying it on shall not only do his work in the best manner, but at the best time. "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven." This is especially true in regard to farming. Certain operations must be performed in their season, or they cannot be performed at all. There are others that can be attended to at various times, and yet there is a best time for them, which it is well to ascertain and improve. Threshing and selling wheat are of this latter class of operations.

The prairie farmer, careless of small gains or losses, and contemptuous of all calculating economics, drives his "header" with attendant waggons through his extensive wheat fields, and threshes, as he cuts, the deadripe grain, disposing of the straw at his leisure, by either burning it where it stands or ploughing it under. It is needless to say that this method is prolific of waste. A costlier style of farming, with the highest value of grain imparted by a thousand miles of greater proximity to market, necessitates more economical and painstaking methods. We carefully cut our wheat, with all the straw we can secure, at the precise moment when the greatest gain and the least loss attend the operation, and either house or stack it to await the process of threshing. Whether to do this promptly, or defer the job until winter, is a question that demands all the wisdom that can be brought to bear upon it.

Of course, if wheat is to be rushed into market quickly, it must be threshed at once. The necessities of some farmers leave them no option in the matter. They have run store bills, or contracted other debts, promising to pay "after harvest," and though that is an indefinite date, it is implied and dictated by honor that the thing be done as promptly as possible. Self-interest urges this. A crop of wheat, whether housed or stacked, is exposed to risks. Lightning or fire may consume it, and if a farmer's independence of debt depends on its being turned into money, the sooner it is done the better. A thoroughly independent and "fore-handed" man, who owes nobody, can calculate chances and run risks, which are foolish if not criminal in the case of one who is pressed with matured or maturing obligations, which, uncancelled, leave him ruined or crippled. Besides this, creditors grow impatient when harvest is over, however lenient they may have been before. A trifle more or less per bushel

on a crop of wheat is nothing compared with the proud satisfaction of paying a debt in good time, and being one's own man and master.

We are inclined to think that in any and every case it is well to get threshing over and done with as soon as it can well be accomplished. There is a little period of comparative slackness just after the small grains are harvested, which can be improved for this purpose. The days are longer, the weather is less likely to be unsettled, the straw is improved by thorough aeration soon after harvest, and the grain can be kept with less waste in the bin than it can in the mow or stack. Granaries can be made mice and rat-proof, but mows and stacks cannot, and in view of the serious loss often occasioned by the depredations of vermin, it is well to guard against exposure, so far as it can be done. It is another argument for early threshing, even when pecuniary necessity does not compel it, that by taking this course the grain is always ready to market, and advantage can be taken at any time of a rise in price. There are occasions when, from various causes, the price of wheat suddenly advances, and it is well to be prepared to take the top figure when it is offered.

Farmers who are not pressed to sell, and who are naturally anxious to get "the best price going," are often perplexed as to when it is wisest to carry their wheat to market. As a guide in deciding this point, it may be well to state, that men of the largest experience and ripest judgment are pretty unanimous in advising an early sale as a general rule. There are enough disinterested channels of information through which pretty accurate crop reports can be had. Speculators have a habit of exaggerating the quantity of old wheat on hand, and getting up incredible stories of the magnitude of the new crop, no matter what the actual facts may be—just as too many farmers have a habit of grumbling every spring, and predicting the reverse, no matter what the season at the truth will out. There is very little chance for speculators now, except in "corners" which are on turned and cannot long affect the market. The electric telegraph has done much to check wheat prices, and to equalize things as respects the market price of grain. Most buyers are pretty well posted in regard to the stores of old wheat and flour, and a true condition of crops all over the world. Of course there will be liability to mistaken estimates always, inasmuch as "to err is human;" but there are so many calculators and such ample means of information, that any great mistake will be exceptional. Very few make money out of sudden rises in the wheat market. Such occurrences create a feverish state of things, in the midst of which men dream of higher and yet higher prices, and often miss the tide that leads to fortune, so as to be compelled to sail on the receding wave that leads to loss.

How many hold on for the top price and are compelled at last to take the bottom price. It is the average market that is healthful and safe both for

the individual farmer and for the community at large. When a figure can be got that will pay expenses and yield a fair margin of profit, it is ordinarily a good rule, both for the merchant and the farmer, to sell their wares. There is one piece of advice which is pertinent in this connection, and which we give most earnestly. It is this. Take a first class city daily paper, and study the commercial articles and market reports. What is the outlay of five dollars a year compared with the independence of opinion and judgment which may be secured by the information thus obtained? There is not only the wheat market to be watched and studied, but the wool, butter, live stock, grass and clover seed markets. We know an intelligent farmer who has taken such a daily as above recommended for a number of years, and now he would as soon think of carrying on his business without a reaping machine as he would without his daily newspaper. Besides keeping himself "posted" as to the markets, he is abreast of the times in general news and questions of the day.

To conclude in regard to the sale of the wheat crop, we commend to the thoughtful consideration of our readers the following extract from a recent article in the *American Rural Home*.—

"Perhaps we may lay it down as a general rule, that when the last year's crop has been generally a short one and the present one is abundant, the early market will be the best; but when the last one was abundant and the current one is short, the later markets will be higher. We have usually done quite as well to thresh and prepare our grain for market as soon as we conveniently could, and when prepared, to sell it, and we do not know that we can give any better advice to others."

The Management of Manure.

In no department of practical agriculture is there more need of constant wakefulness of attention and assiduous care than in that of manure-making. To keep the soil in a state of progressive improvement should be the untiring aim of the farmer. Wonderful as is the fertility of land in its virgin state, it may not only be maintained but augmented by skilful management. Yet how few farms can be found that are kept up to their natural condition. Still fewer show any advance upon it. This is all owing to failure in the manufacture and application of manure. On this subject, above all others, it is needful to give "line upon line and precept upon precept." We make no apology, therefore, for frequent recurrence to this matter. The condition of our agriculture demands it, and we are glad to observe in the rural press a growing conviction of the paramount importance of looking well to the manure pile. This topic is never out of season. Even during the growing period and in harvest time, it is well to guard against its being forgotten. We are glad, therefore, to meet with an article such as the following from the *New York Times*, which might fitly be denominated, "a midsummer homily