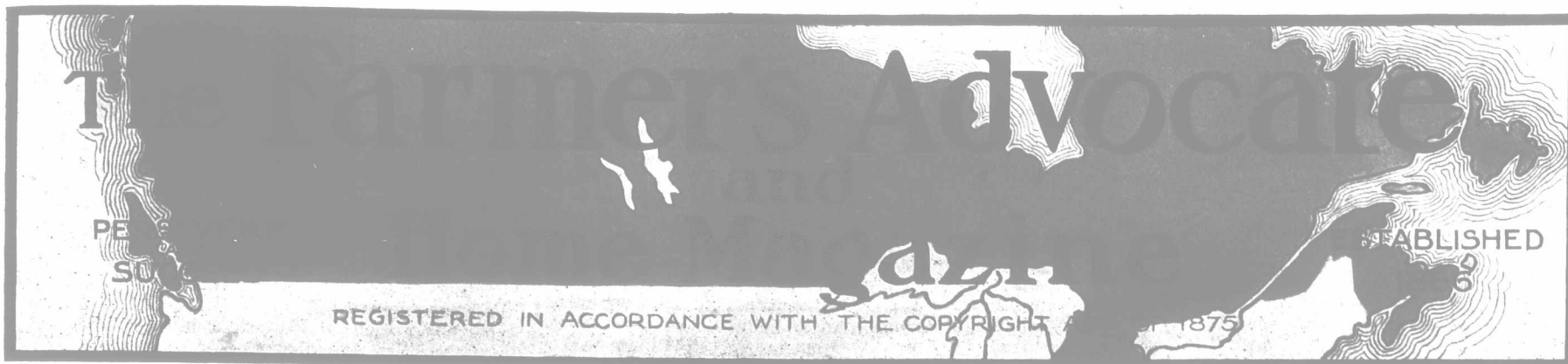




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EDITORIAL.

How are you preparing to return to the soil that fertility which has been taken from it by this season's crops?

We trust none of our readers will charge us with "offensive partisanship" if we remark that it would be a shame for reciprocity to be defeated, after all the extra barley threshing this year.

It is impossible to obtain something from nothing. By continuous cropping, we are skimming the cream from the fields, taking all that they will produce, and returning almost nothing to the soil. Such practice cannot endure. No matter how rich the soil may be, its fertility will wane in time.

Man's inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn. But that is nothing to man's inhumanity toward the dumb beasts that serve him and supply so many of his needs. Most men's interest in animals is principally commercial. Kindness for kindness' sake is still pretty rare. Even the Christian nations of the world are but partially civilized as yet.

All the modern improvements on threshing machines do not seem to shorten the dinner table very much. Indeed, but for a reduction of hands in the straw mow, it works the other way. Three men used to be sufficient to handle an outfit, but now that we have traction engines, self-feeders and blowers, some threshers carry a gang of four—one to look after the engine, another for the separator, one to take care of the blower, and a fourth to draw water, etc. It seems the more appliances we add, the more men are required to look after them.

An agriculturist, according to Horace Greely's definition, is a person who lives in the city, and who out of his city business can make money enough to enable him to own and operate a farm, and incidentally have time enough to advise the country farmers in general how to operate and manage farms; while a farmer is a man who lives in the country on his farm, runs and manages it successfully enough to enable him to support himself and family, and incidentally to produce surplus enough to support the city.

It is sometimes argued that a second chamber is necessary to hold radical legislation in check until the people are sure they want it, and that in the end their will prevails. In practical politics this imposes a tremendous handicap upon progressive measures. Even when the will of the people is unimpeded, it is difficult enough to get public opinion aroused to the reforming point on great moral issues where the individual voter is not selfishly concerned. How much more difficult to keep opinion roused and steadily supporting a party of progress through thick and thin, amid all the distractions of complex issues and warring candidates, with "red herrings" galore thrown across the trail! The will of the people should rule, and it is to the advantage of progress that it should rule promptly, with no irresponsible second chamber to oppose its measures and bulwark the privileges of corporate interests or selfish landed minorities.

Be Careful of the Straw.

In the rural grain-growing districts this is the season when the hum of the threshing machine can be heard on every hand. A few years ago, with the old-fashioned carriers, it was necessary to have several men on the stack or in the straw mow to get the straw far enough away to free the carriers; but now, with the machines fitted with wind-stackers, very few men, and very often an insufficient number, or none at all, are assigned to the caring for the straw, it being considered of little value. A few seasons of abundant moisture and heavy crops of straw have the effect of rendering the farmer somewhat indifferent with regard to the care of this by-product, as it were, of his field crops, but a year of short straw, such as many districts have experienced this season, makes it necessary that a little more care be taken to save the straw well, so that it is of most value to the stock and to the farm.

Why should straw be carefully handled to keep it? There are two or three very good reasons for this. Straw that has been cut at the proper stage is of some value as a feed, and since, as is the case this season, hay and some other roughages are a comparatively short crop, it may be necessary, and in many cases where not absolutely so, there may be quite an advantage to be gained from feeding a little straw. Straw has a low crude protein and fat content, and is high in fibre or cellulose material; consequently, it should be fed sparingly to animals at work or to fattening stock, but straw is often quite useful to carry idle or lightly-worked horses over winter, also cattle that are not being milked or fattened. In the feeding of a maintenance ration, heat is one of the main requirements of the animal, and the large amount of energy expended in masticating, digesting and passing the straw through the alimentary canal appears finally as heat, and helps to keep the body warm. Good straw contains nearly 1 pound of digestible crude protein, between 35 and 40 pounds of digestible carbohydrates, and about one-half pound of fat, to every 100 pounds.

While straw contains a certain amount of fertilizing constituents, it is of far greater value for this purpose when used to soak up and retain the liquid animal excrement from the stables and yards. If for no other reason than its use for this purpose, it should be carefully handled and not allowed to waste. The liquid manure contains a large proportion of the fertilizing constituents of the total amount of excreta, and, without some substance to soak it up and hold it, much of the most valuable manure is lost. Straw is the most effective sponge for the soaking up of this material, and should be handled so as to do this work most efficiently.

Again, there is nothing much more unsightly around the buildings than a pile of straw just blown into a promiscuous heap, with a number of peaks like a small mountain range, and the base surrounded with loose straw to the depth of several feet. For neatness alone it is profitable to carefully stack the straw.

There are two methods of keeping straw, viz., stacking, and keeping it in a mow or straw-shed. Undoubtedly, the latter is the better, for in this

case no rain can gain access to the straw, and it is preserved in as good a condition as when harvested. A little more dust will be held in it than where the straw is blown out on a stack, and the dust is carried away by the wind. However, many farmers are forced to stack some straw, and to those who are there can be no better advice than to do it as carefully as you would a hay stack. Build it, tramp it, and take every possible precaution to save it, for water-soaked straw is of much less feeding value than good dry straw, loses some of its fertilizing value, and is so water-logged that it will not incorporate the liquid excrement so valuable as a manure, and is thus of little value for anything. If straw is of comparatively little value as a feed, it is all the more reason why it should be carefully handled, and the most made out of it both for feed and to prevent loss of valuable fertilizer.

Take a Course in Agriculture.

The time for the opening of the schools and colleges is fast approaching, and many young men now on the farms are considering the advisability of taking a college course. The young student about to enter upon a college or university course is often undecided as to what special line of study it would be best for him to follow. Every year, scores—yes, hundreds—of boys leave the farm to get an education, and most of them go to the universities, where they receive a learning which does not tend to give them the best impressions of farming as a profession. To the boy or young man who has any liking for the farm, and who is desirous of obtaining a good education which will be of practical use to him in the advancement of things pertaining to agriculture, no better course can be recommended than that which is outlined by the agricultural colleges. The great variety of problems which are involved in scientific agriculture makes it necessary that the person who chooses this as his life occupation have a wide and varied experience and knowledge in order to make the most out of it financially. But, apart altogether from things financial, the knowledge obtained will be of great value, because it enables the person to understand and appreciate the different phenomena of nature, as well as giving an insight into why certain things are so. Many of us know that various practices have given certain results, but few stop to ask why. It is when the man develops an inquiring mind that he begins to be a student. The agricultural college is a good place to arouse the curiosity, and the course is one which prepares the industrious student for his work when he leaves to put into practice what he has learned. A college course is merely a commencement in education. Its aim is to start people in the right direction and prepare them for their life-work, throughout which the person should be always learning something new. It is a sad case where education ceases when the college is left behind. All agree that a college course is a good thing, and, before entering upon it weigh the matter thoroughly, and, where conditions warrant it, take a course in agriculture. It is one of the most inexhaustible phases of learning, and will give the brightest student ample opportunity to exercise all his available gray matter.