

### A Bean Farm in Minnesota.

Shearman, the farm king of Martin county, who has from 1,500 to 2,000 acres of beans under cultivation, has by untiring energy and perseverance succeeded in his little scheme of raising beans from the sod, much to the astonishment of Minnesota farmers. A little history of his proceedings would perhaps be of interest.

Mr. Shearman, says a correspondent of the *St. Paul Press*, is a resident of Liverpool, England. His first visit to Minnesota was in the year 1872, at which time he contracted for the land he now occupies, with the intention of forming an English colony. In the spring of 1873 he brought with him a few families, and after putting up some temporary houses on the plantation, they commenced operations, and early in June they had broken up and planted between 1,000 and 1,200 acres of beans, planting them on the sod with corn planters. They promised well until the grasshopper raid, when they were totally destroyed.

At a great expense he replanted them, and flattering prospects again crowned their efforts; but foreign influences were against him, and the early frosts cleaned them out entirely, and for about ten thousand dollars invested he had but little to show. Still with a light heart and firm resolve did he adhere to the old adage, and try, try again.

He returned to Liverpool, making arrangements to pay an early visit to the old plantation, and if possible recover what he had lost. It was rumored and generally believed that these intentions on his part would never be carried into execution; but promptly, as is characteristic of the man, he set foot on Minnesota soil in the spring of 1874, and taking up the bean plantation where he had left off, proceeded, and at last he is meeting his reward.

The perseverance of Mr. Shearman would be a good motto for many who emigrate to our western states to adopt; and Martin county may well feel proud of the farmer king who has done so much toward the advancement and settlement of the county.

### To Preserve Wheat and Corn from Weevils and Rats.

A correspondent of the *Farmers' Vindicator*, who claims to have "housed corn for forty years" without injury from the above named pests, gives his practice and its results in the following communication.

Several weeks before the new crop of corn is gathered, I remove all the old corn from the crib, some distance to a pen or out house; the floor is taken up, swept clean, and the sides of the crib, so that not any dust, shucks or silk is left; this sweeping and cleaning is done several times. The crib door is left open for the chickens, turkeys or birds to go in and scratch at their pleasure.

I never gather corn in wet weather. Every year there are more or less weevils in the corn in the field. When the shuck is dry and broken off, many weevils will beshaken off on the ground; the corn is then thrown in the wagon, this knocks off many more; when the corn is thrown in the crib, the remaining weevils, if any, will soon leave. We are told, in Egypt it never rains; it is a warm dry country, no humidity in the atmosphere, hence corn could be kept sound for a number of years, but in this climate it is different—dampness in the atmosphere is the cause of the weevil injuring corn, wheat and other cereals, for they must have water as well as every living thing, animate or inanimate. If there is a leak in the top of the crib, or the rain does not beat in from the sides, I guarantee no weevils in that crib of corn. Why is it that farmers are so particular to put up wheat, peas or other cereals dry? Is it not to keep out the weevils? Why not use the same precaution with corn?

Would he put up his fodder stack and hay rick wet, and expect it to keep good? Most farmers gather their corn in wet weather, to save time; and many prefer it; some open the roof, and let it rain on the corn; bad, bad policy. Such will always have weevils in the corn, and at the close of the year, the corn is greatly damaged. Where there is moisture, there's weevils.

To build a rat-proof crib. Let the blocks at the upper end be shaped sugar-loaf fashion—put on each block a tin pan inverted, then the sills on the pans. If there are no stables or sheds attached to the house for the rats to climb up, that crib is rat proof

### Best Time to Sow Winter Grain.

A "Mass. farmer" ventilates his notions and practical conclusions as to sowing winter grain in the *Vermont Farmer* as follows:—

Those who favor sowing early claim that the plants obtain a firmer hold, tiller out more, and that the grain will be a heavier and larger berry. They claim that less seed is required, because much that is sown very late does not germinate at all or else only sends up a single stalk, while that which is got into the ground early is surer to grow and more likely to throw up many stalks from a single root. Some who favor sowing in August or the first September say that winter grain will ripen at a certain time whether it is sown early or late, and consequently the earlier it is sown the more time it will have to grow, and the larger and nicer the crop will be.

Those who favor late sowing say that grain is not so liable to be smothered with snow late as it is if it is got in early; that in lots where cattle are allowed to feed that which is sown early is more likely to be injured by being pulled up, trod in, and eaten off, and that the berry will be as plump, and the yield as good on fields that are sown late as on any other.

So much for the theories. I think in practice early sowing is to be preferred, although I have sometimes sown late with good results. The theory that grain will ripen at a certain time without regard to when it is sown is certainly incorrect. I sowed a piece to winter rye last fall near other fields which were got in early. Except the time of sowing, the conditions were equally favorable for all the fields, but mine was several days later than the others. On an adjoining lot the owner had a field of corn. As soon as it was ripe enough he cut it, ploughed narrow strips on which to stock it, and sowed these strips to rye. The remainder of the piece was sown considerably later. The result was that the early sown strips ripened a week or ten days before the rest of the piece, and they also produced a heavier crop of grain. But while the quantity was in favor of the early sowing, there was no appreciable difference in the quality.

While I prefer early sowing I should not hesitate to sow late if for any reason I could not do it early. The quality of the seed and soil, and the way the latter is prepared, has more to do with making up the results than the time when the sowing is done. At least such is the lesson I have learned both from experience and observation.

### Straw Stacks.

As the building of straw stacks is now in order, a few remarks may be of value especially to new beginners. A very erroneous opinion prevails with many who profess to know all that is necessary about stack-building, namely, that it is not necessary to keep the stack more than level until you would commence the top. This is a great mistake, one which will partially or entirely destroy hundreds of stacks yearly.

My method of building is this, for a stack that will hold two or three days' threshing. After laying the first course for bottom and outside of the stack, fill and tramp the middle to the height of five feet, and so continue with every additional course from bottom to top of the walls. When topping keep the centre two-thirds as steep as the top of the stack will be when finished. A stack thus built will resist every and all rains we usually have. The rains in this vicinity last fall were very trying to straw stacks, and great loss was sustained. Several of my neighbors having stacks of four and five days' threshing were almost entirely destroyed, which had they been sound would have sold at from eight to twelve dollars per ton. Those stacks were built by men who were supposed to be reliable stackers.—*Cor. Germantown Telegraph.*

POTATO DISEASE.—The *North British Agriculturist* says. Notwithstanding the favorable character of the weather lately for the spread of disease in the potato fields, we are happy to say that in Scotland generally the scourge has as yet assumed no alarming proportions. In gardens diseased tubers are not uncommon; and it is reported to have appeared in the fields in the Vale of Clyde and in Caithness-shire. It is not spreading, however, to a serious extent, and there is now good reason to expect comparative exemption from disease in the great potato-growing districts this year. But the rains have sent up a second growth in the southern counties, which is likely to do more damage than disease.

## Grasses and Forage Plants.

### Variety of Grasses for Pastures.

The great variety of grasses, both perennial and annual, which abound throughout the northern states upon soils which are adapted to their growth, makes it almost needless to recommend to farmers to sow a variety of seed. But there are not a few localities, often tracts of vast extent, as in parts of New Jersey and Long Island, and increasing as we go southward, where but few grasses grow naturally and all the better kinds need encouragement. Besides, as soon as land begins to wear, that is, to grow poor in certain conditions of fertility, some natural grasses are sure to disappear. The remarks of the editor of the *Rural Sun*, published at Nashville, may well therefore be read and heeded by farmers all over the country. He writes:

Of the importance of grass in every wise system of farming we have spoken often, and shall do so again as occasion offers or the spirit moves us. Taking this point as established, we wish to call attention to the importance of the use of a variety of grasses in all lands to be laid down to permanent pasture. We are satisfied that this is a weak point in the practice of our very best grass farmers. They rely too exclusively on two or three grasses, in most cases on one alone. This practice is contrary to the dictates of reason and the teachings of experience. There are over two hundred known species of grass in the United States, and it is very strange indeed, if out of this great number only two, three or a half dozen should include all that are valuable for pasture or meadows. It may be quite true that in all this number there are no other two that are equal to blue grass and orchard grass, but we cannot believe that there are not others that are less valuable than these. In this opinion we are supported by all the best writers on grasses and grass culture, and, which is of more value in our estimation, by the uniform testimony of the most experienced grass farmers of this and other lands.

While it is the business of art to improve on nature, this improvement can only be secured by following the teachings of nature. And in no point is nature more positive than in teaching that a variety of grasses is essential to a close heavy sod. Where the land is barren and thin, it may be that only three or four species may be found, but wherever the soil is fit for a farmer's use, there nature is sure to sow a great variety of grasses. As a general rule, the richer the soil the greater the number of species.

But the teachings of experience are still more emphatic in favor of a mixture of grasses. It has been demonstrated by frequent experiments that, in pasture land, a mixture of several varieties will produce a larger amount of fresh and fat-forming food than the same land will yield when sown with only one or two varieties. Especially is this difference marked in the case where land is to be kept in pasture for a series of years. The main cause of this difference lies in the fact that if we sow but one kind of grass, it matters not how thickly we sow, there are sure to be vacant places, spots of greater or less breadth, on which, from some cause or other, no plants have grown. On the other hand, when several varieties are used the entire surface is occupied, and a better as well as a larger result is obtained.

Another important advantage in using a variety of grasses arises from the fact that different varieties ripen at different periods, possess different habits of growth, and yield nutriment of different qualities and kinds. These facts should be attended to in selecting the varieties to be sown. A succession is essential to permanence, while a variety adds much to the feeding value of pasture.—*Rural New Yorker.*

### Pasturing Meadows.

No mistake is more commonly made than that most injurious one of pasturing meadows in the fall. Not that meadows may not be pastured, but that so few are capable of withstanding this serious draft upon their vitality. Not only, as a rule, are our meadows weak in themselves, but our climate is such that there is no power of recuperation in the fall to enable the grass or clover to withstand even an otherwise legitimate draft upon it.

The drouth of our late summer and early fall in general keeps the meadows bare enough for safety without further impoverishment by pasturing. There are very few grass or clover fields which bear such an aftermath as to smother and kill the roots in winter. On the contrary, there are very few meadows that have sufficient natural covering to enable them to