About the Farm

(Conducted by Allan Campbell.)

The Choice

By Grace G. Bostwick

There's one who walks in the virgin fields
Mid white, white lilies that shine like rain.
A perfume rare
Fills all the air
With a poignant sweetness akin to pain.

Another plays in the valley low
With scarlet poppies on every hand
And laughter gay,
Shrills down the way,
With a cadence he scarce can understand.

And he who walks mid the lilies white,
Plucks one for joy of a blissful hour,
To turn with love
To the heavens above,
In thanks for the gift of his perfect flower.

But he who played mid the poppies' bloom,
Stays bored and restless from place to place,
With heart unfilled
And mind unstilled
And a yearning that shows in his weary face.

The Coming of the Silo

The consummation of the season's labors in the form of harvest is now approaching, and, governed by the extent and quality of the yield, it will be a case of "to be or not to be," in regard to the future plans of acquiring additional farm buildings. With the call from all quarters for the raising of more live stock, the corn crop will necessarily become an essential where the best results would be desired, and then to get the best out of the corn for the benefit of the cattle, proper storage by means of a silo is the direct answer.

There are several types of silos such as the stave silo, cement silo, cement block silo, etc. By storing the corn in a silo, a winter ration of great succulence may be given the cattle, which, at such a time of year when dry feeds are practically the rule, the relish with which the cattle eat the silage is reflected in the increased milk flow and general thrifty condition of the animals. Corn is found to make the most satisfactory ensilage.

In making preparations for the building of a silo, one should take into consideration the amount of ensilage that will be needed for the winter and make allowance for the subsequent increase in cattle that may occur on the farm within a reasonable period, as it is easier to build a silo a little larger than present requirements call for than to build an additional one owing to the fact that the cattle have "outgrown" the original one. As an ordinary ration for a dairy cow is about thirty-five pounds of ensilage per day, one can approximate his winter requirements in that direction on that basis. As a guide to the approximate capacity of silos, the following figures will be useful:

A silo 20 ft. deep with inside diameter of 15 ft.—60 tons.

A silo 30 ft. deep with inside diameter of 15 ft.—100 tons.

A silo 30 ft. deep with inside diameter of 18 ft.—150 tons.

The height of the silo is a very important point as more height means more pressure on the silage which packs it well and gives more storage per cubic foot than is obtainable in a broader and less deep silo. As the ensilage settles down after a few days, more may be added.

The question is often asked in regard to ensilage becoming frozen. In severe winter weather a certain quantity of the ensilage on the side of the silo will become frozen but this is not waste material by any means as it may be thrown into the warm barn, thawed out and mixed with the other ensilage.

The stave silo has been found very satisfactory, and is the cheapest to construct. It should have a cement foundation with drainage provided. The staves should be about two inches thick and from five to nine inches wide. Of course, the smaller the silo is in diameter, the narrower must be the stave in proportion. A bevel inside the staves gives a better fit. A small tongue and groove stave makes a good fit. The staves are kept in place by means of iron hoops made from rods with threaded ends, such hoops being held in place by staples. These hoops should have a clip where they meet that will allow the ends to pass each other, the threaded ends having convenient nuts so that the hoops may be tightened if necessary.

A round roof should be provided which should have an opening to admit the ensilage as it is cut up. In filling the silo it is advisable to have a man inside evening it up and tramping it down so that the leaves and stems are thoroughly mixed and that an even packing is assured, thus making it more airtight.

Silos are emptied from the top; an even layer being taken off at each feeding. If, after a feeding has been taken off, there is found to be a hole dug in the centre or at the side, this depression should be filled in by evening raking over the rest of the surface. In order to facilitate the emptying of the silo, a series of small trap doors opening inwards, is provided. These trap doors should be cut with a bevel so that they will offer the greatest resistance to outward pressure. They should be held in place by cross-bars on the outside of the silo, and as the silage gets lower the door nearest to the surface is used. It is not necessary to have hinges on these trap doors as they may be taken in the silo when the feed is being thrown out and pulled into position after that work is accomplished. By having the doors as above described, one is not troubled with rusty hinges.

The length that is advised for corn to be cut is three-quarters of an inch. Corn put in uncut may come out in good condition but the coarse stalks will make considerable twaste in feeding in addition to the fact that corn put in in that state is uncertain in ability to cure.

The cement silo which is made from a solid round wall of cement, and the cement block silo which is made of hollow blocks of cement, are more expensive to construct. Of course, they will last much longer than the stave type of silo but the cost is considerably greater.

When stave silos are built in any location where they are likely to be subject to strong winds it is advisable to brace them to the barn against which they are built.

Sheep

As one travels about the country these days, the sight of sheep in the fields or around the barnyards is becoming a more familiar one. With weeds the menace they are at the present time, the great demand for wool and the need of meat of all kinds, there are stronger inducements to keep sheep than ever. Sheep are especially valuable in the profitable use they make of material that would otherwise become waste. In the destruction of weeds alone, they render excellent service but one may count many additional advantages from the keeping of sheep.

Sheep will multiply quickly, and if given reasonable care will raise strong and healthy lambs. It is advisable to feed them not over liberally, or, just what they will clean up, as they are not partial to feed that they have formerly picked over. They should be kept supplied with salt and also have access to water. In feeding small roots and especially in administering medicine, it is well to bear in mind that sheep are easily choked so it is advisable to proceed with caution along these lines. Expert advice is against the forcible holding up of a sheep's head when drenching, that is to say, do not hold it up too high while the jaws should not be forcibly closed as it is far safer to give the animal a chance to swallow naturally.

Among the most popular breeds for the West are the Shropshire, Oxford Down, and Suffolk.

Breeding ewes have been very successfully wintered in an enclosed space with the only kind of shelter that could be obtained from a rough shed made of poles with the south side quite open, the roof being thatched with straw. Such a shelter is both cheap and quite sufficient for the purpose.

A Useful Farm Implement

The present age is an age of transportation and great strides have been made in modes of travelling, but in the face of this the ordinary push bicycle still finds a considerable amount of favor from people of various occupations, owing to the fact that it is of moderate cost and within reach of most people, and in addition is reliable, cheap in upkeep and takes up very little room when stored away. There are a multitude of tasks in which it is capable of helping the farmer such as carrying him to distant parts of his farm or to town, carrying small repairs to a breakdown, carrying meals to gangs at work, and this is accomplished at the cheapest rate of quick transportation. The bicycle, unlike its rival vehicles needs no special shed or garage for shelter as it may be stowed away in a very small space while its small size and lightness give it an advantage over other vehicles inasmuch as it may be lifted over fences and other obstacles that are to be found on the average farm, and in fact will go wherever its rider can climb.

For the general direction of labor it is an ideal means of quick transit as it can be taken to any corner of the farm where perhaps a horse or car would have to be left behind for some distance. It is ready for any trip at any time, and is not such a helpless affair should any break in its machinery stop it on the road, as is a stalled car, or wagon in difficulties. In the busy season such as harvest when all the horses may be required on the binders, a boy with a bicycle can take the place of the driving horse in quicker time and at considerably less cost than the same trip would incur when done by car. A trip to town requires at least one of the