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RURAL NOTES.

It is one of the peculiarities of oats that it delights in a cool soil, and the longer the season of growth the heavier is the grain. A period of comparatively low temperature, if accompanied with frequent rains, may be depended on to ensure a good yield of oats.

MANY farmers commit the folly of pasturing their meadows in spring. It is much better for the farmer who sees the need of providing such pasturage to buy fodder for his stock; he will save by it in a larger crop of hay, and he should learn from it the lesson of keeping fewer animals next year.

In pruning trees it is advisable to cut the branches off close to the base, as otherwise new shoots will grow, and further trimming will be required next year. Every cut should be made smoothly with a sharp saw, and in selecting the branches to be lopped off an eye should be had to the form of the tree when the work is done.

PROFESSOR ARNOLD states that it costs more to make milk from old cows than it does from young ones having the same milk producing capacity. The period of profitable milking does not terminate at the same age with all cows alike. Some hold out longer than others, but, as a rule, the best effects do not reach beyond the eighth year of the cow's age.

In a recent article in the *London Times*, English farmers are charged with being, as a whole class, cruel to their labourers, hard-hearted to the poor, and neglectful of charitable institutions. The *Agricultural Gazette* challenges the truth of these accusations, and charges the *Times* with making them for a political purpose—to stir up the farm labourer against his employer, and win him over to the side of the parson and the land lord.

ALTHOUGH there is a considerable fall in the prices of fat stock now as compared with two years ago, the situation is not discouraging. Even at present prices there is a fair margin of profit for feeders, and especially if account be taken of the means cattle-feeding affords for enriching the land. One good result of the attention given to this industry is the very general grading-up of cattle, our farmers having been taught that for the export trade success was only possible with the larger and better breeds, and a great mistake will be made if the cattle are allowed to degenerate.

No other fruit is more dependent on good culture for quality and quantity of product than the black currant. The young plants grow fast, they bear a crop the second year after planting, and they continue productive for many years. They should be placed in the ground not nearer than six feet apart, and the ground between should be cultivated and kept free from weeds. If, in addition to this, all canes of over two years old are cut out, leaving six or seven of the two-year-old ones, a good crop may be reasonably looked for. The bush should be pruned so as to give it a cup-shape form—open centre.

THE chief value of fall rye is for soiling. It is ready for cutting in May, and will last on into June. As the crop is taken off, strip by strip, the ground may be sown with some other—with sweet corn, mangolds, etc. Or it may be sown with a mixture of oats and peas, and in five or six weeks this will be ready for use, to be followed with say a crop of millet. By this plan a farmer may double his stock, make a large quantity of manure, and greatly enrich his land. If the soil be suitable, there is perhaps no other crop from which so large return may be received as from mangolds, and they are valuable for winter feeding, especially for milk cows.

IN Denmark there is hardly a farmer who is not a member of an agricultural society, and agricultural societies in that and other northern countries of Europe are almost fatherly in their care of the farmers. Especially is great attention paid to butter making, and the efforts of the societies are being constantly directed towards educating every farmer and every farmer's wife and son and daughter in the best methods. The result is that their butter is of extra good quality and commands the highest prices in the market. Holland at one time had the name of producing the best butter in the world, but owing to the neglect of education its butter is now one of the worst.

THE Honorary Entomologist of the Royal Agricultural Society of England feels, no doubt, that measures should be taken to check the enormous increase of sparrows. From careful observations in different places, extending over a period of one to fifteen years, he does not find any diminution of insects round the farm buildings where the sparrows generally resort, but he finds they have been observed in many cases to drive away true insect feeding birds. Sparrows can and do eat some amount of insects, if other food is short, but he considers it to be proved that by choice they are almost wholly grain and vegetable feeders. That, also, is the general opinion among the students of natural history here.

AN experiment in feeding whole corn ears ground into fine meal and clear cornmeal is reported by Prof. Shelton, of the Missouri Agricultural College. He took ten Texan steers and fed five of them on one kind of fodder and five on the other. The total quantity of corn and cornmeal fed was 11,565 pounds, and of cornmeal 11,612 pounds; and in the case of the former the total gain was 1,580 pounds, and of the latter 1,460 pounds. That is to say, the average gain from feeding corn and cornmeal was twenty-four pounds per annum more than from feeding cornmeal during the period of the experiment. It is not, however, to be inferred that the feeding property of corn-cobs is to be measured by this result, but rather that the mixture is more favourable to digestion.

WITH the increased attention that is being given to dairy farming in Ontario, it is desirable that larger areas of land be put under permanent pasture. It is not possible to have good grazing for cattle on land that is broken up every two or three years for grain crops, nor, indeed, is it

hardly possible to get first-class grazing except off natural pastures. But with proper treatment art may very nearly approach the perfection of nature, and the way to secure good, permanent pasture is to get the land clean and in good heart, sow the right seeds and enough of them at the right time, and treat the land liberally ever after. The land should be prepared for seeding with repeated rolling and harrowing, pastured lightly for the first year, and top dressed from time to time with good barnyard or artificial manures. If this course be followed the return cannot fail to prove satisfactory.

A VALUABLE paper on riding and driving horses was read at a recent meeting of the London (Eng.) Farmers' Club, by Walter Gilbey, of Elsenham. The lack of success in breeding, Mr Gilbey attributes to the want of care in the selection of young mares of sufficient size, and sacrificing too much to speed, so that in the craze for pace, size and substance have been disregarded. To remedy this state of things and breed horses that will repay their owners he advises: (1) The judicious blending of the qualities of the thoroughbred stallion with those of the well-formed draught mare possessing size, frame, constitution, flat legs and high courage, and (2) From these half-breed mares, so obtained, cross breeding can be resorted to by the selection of the thoroughbred or hackney, and thus a stock of riding and driving horses available for general use will be secured, possessing improved size, strength and constitution. Mr. Gilbey's advice deserves attention in this country as well as in England. There is a growing demand here for horses of this class, especially in the large cities, and they will always bring good prices.

IN a paper on butter and its adulterations, the chemist of the Agricultural Department at Washington states that in respect to chemical and physical composition good butter should present the following characteristics: (1) The water contained in it should not exceed 12 per cent., (2) Salt should be about 3 per cent., but this varies from 1½ to 8 per cent., and its chief use is one of taste; (3) The curd or caseine should not exceed 1 per cent., and the best butter contains less than this amount; (4) The specific gravity of butter-fat is about 912, water being taken at 1,000, whereas tallow and lard have a relative weight of 900 or less. A butter affording a fat whose specific gravity is below 910 is of doubtful genuineness; (5) The quantity of alkali required to saponify the fat of butter (that is, to convert it into soap) is markedly different from the quantity required to affect the common butter adulterants. The saponation equivalent in pure butter ranges from 249.5 to 239.8, while in oleomargarine it rises to 284.7. If the number should fall under 250 it would be safe to call the sample genuine butter. (6) Pure butter contains acids soluble in water to the amount of 5 per cent., while in butter substitutes they rarely go above one-twentieth of one per cent., (7) Pure unmelted butter when viewed through a selenite plate by polarized light presents a uniform tint over the whole field of vision, but butter substitutes, on the other hand, give a field of vision of mottled appearance.