

## MARK TWAIN ON MR. BEECHER.

The Rev. Henry Ward Beecher's private habits are the subject of Mark Twain's latest contribution to the Buffalo Express. The whole article is extremely funny, but that portion which relates to Mr. Beecher's farming experience, is in the humorist's most extravagant vein, and quite equal to his best efforts. It is as follows:

"Mr. Beecher's farm consists of thirty-six acres, and is carried on strict scientific principles. He never puts in any part of a crop without consulting his book. He plows and reaps and digs and sows according to the best authorities—and the authorities cost more than the other farming implements do. As soon as the library is complete, the farm will begin to be a profitable investment. But book farming has its drawbacks. Upon one occasion, when it seemed morally certain that the hay ought to be cut, the hay book could not be found—and before it was found it was too late and the hay was all spoiled.

"Mr. Beecher raises some of the finest crops of wheat in the country, but the unfavorable difference between the cost of producing it and its market value after it is produced has interfered considerably with its success as a commercial enterprise. His special weakness is hogs, however. He considers hogs the best game a farm produces. He buys the original pig for a dollar and a half, and feeds him forty dollars worth of corn, and then sells him for about nine dollars. This is the only crop he ever makes any money on. He loses on the corn, but he makes seven dollars and a half on the hog. He does not mind this, because he never expects to make anything on corn, anyway. And any way it turns out, he has the excitement of raising the hog, anyhow, whether he gets the worth of him or not. His strawberries would be a comfortable success if the robbers would eat turnips, but they won't, and hence the difficulty.

"One of Mr. Beecher's most harassing difficulties in his farming operations comes of the close resemblance of different sorts of seeds and plants to each other. Two years ago, his farsightedness warned him that there was going to be a great scarcity of water melons, and therefore he put in a crop of twenty-seven acres of that fruit. But when they came up they turned out to be pumpkins, and a dead loss was the consequence. Sometimes a portion of his crop goes into the ground the most promising sweet potatoes, and comes up the infernalists carrots, though I have never heard him express it just in that way. When he bought his farm, he found one egg in every hen's nest on the place. He said that there was just the reason why so many farmers failed—they scatter their forces too much—concentration was the idea. So he gathered those eggs together and put them all under one experienced old hen. The hen roosted over that contract night and day for eleven weeks, under the anxious personal supervision of Mr. Beecher himself, but she could not "phase" those eggs. Why? Because they were those infamous porcelain things which are used by ingenious and fraudulent farmers as 'nest eggs.' But perhaps Mr. Beecher's most disastrous experience was the time he tried to raise an immense crop of dried apples. He planted fifteen hundred dollars' worth, but never one of them sprouted. He has never been able to understand to this day, what was the matter with those apples."

Mark Twain concludes his sketch with a glowing eulogy, in which humor gives place to genuine admiration. "He has set his mark upon his epoch," says Mr. Clemens, "and years hence, when the people turn over the bales and bundles of this generation's ideas, they will find H. W. B. stencilled on a good many of them."

## DRAINAGE FOR ORCHARDS.

Every season may be said to teach a new lesson to the cultivator of the soil, fruit grower as well as farmer.

Let us consider what is the lesson taught by the season of 1869, and first, in what way has it been remarkable? It has been one of the wettest ever known. Rain, rain, from early spring to mid summer, with a very short intermission, has been the rule; until the soil has been soaked full and surface washed to a degree seldom known before.

It is needless to say that cultivation and a proper care of crops, have been simply impossible. If crops have grown at all, in many cases it has been in conflict with weeds which could not be destroyed.

Then what is the lesson taught us by this experience? It is written so that those who run may read DRAINAGE!

I think no one will differ with me in this statement. It is a thing which we partially realized before; but which the year 1869 has doubly demonstrated. I will briefly allude to a few of the reasons for drainage.

1. It renders the subsoil porous, and allows the water to pass through it, leaving it in a tillable condition, long before lands undrained can be tilled at all.
2. It presents to a large degree all surface washings.
3. It prevents baking and hardening on exposure to suns after rains.

Other valid reasons might be given, but these will suffice. To the question—what lands need under-draining, I would reply, all—or nearly so. Boggy soils need it to be rendered tillable at all. Flat lands need it, in order that the superabundant water may pass off. Nearly all land need it to give mellowness and moisture, and to prevent wasting. I conceive of no soil that would not be benefitted by draining except those sandy or gravelly subsoils sometimes found in our river bottoms.

What would be called good drainage may vary as to the character of the soil. Some require more, some less. Clay soils can scarcely be drained too much. Farms will not, soon, be drained half enough.

I have thus briefly hinted at what I conceive to be the lesson of 1869: I will add, that I believe a dry season, will teach the same lesson. Drainage is a panacea for excessive moisture, draining is a panacea for drought. Complete and sufficient drainage will doubtless double the crops of many farmers.

But the cost, aye, there's the rub! It is a formidable item—whether we contemplate using tile and doing the work in the most thorough manner; or whether we only design to cut ditches. One thing is certain, it is in the power of every one to begin. The owner of a flat farm can this year open a ditch through it—next year he can do more. The owner of a village acre can lay one drain through it—next year add another,—and so on.

I shall inform myself more fully about cost, and give results in future.

We hope to see Carter's Improved Ditching Machine in every section we may visit. By what we have already seen, we believe it will be a profitable investment. Farmers can join together, if not needed by one alone, and order one.—[Ed.]

## THE LARGEST VINEYARD IN THE WORLD.

California claims to have, in the Buena Vista estate, near Sonoma, the largest vineyard in the world. Some of the most noted vineyards in Europe do not exceed twenty or thirty, or sixty or seventy acres. The Buena

Vista has eight hundred acres suitable to the vine, and four hundred and fifty acres actually covered now. There are on the estate some vines planted thirty years, but the bulk of them were set out from 1854 to 1858, and additions have been made every year since. This year the grape crop is light. The vintage season will begin in Mid October and continue nearly to the end of November, during which time this estate will employ about 100 men; Chinamen of course. California champagne is the principal manufacture of this vineyard, and the inventory of last November showed a stock of 126,000 gallons of sparkling wines, with 40,000 bottles of champagne, on hand at that time.

WHEN TO REAP.—M. Isadore Pierre, Professor of Chemistry, at Caen, in France, has recently subjected the question of early reaping to a practical test. From the same field he cut a certain quantity of ears of grain on the 6th, 11th, 15th, 20th, and 25th of July extending his operations on each occasion over an equal space of ground. On the 6th the grain was rapidly increasing; on the 25th it was fully ripe, and was in the regular course of being reaped. M. Pierre carefully dried each sample of grain, and then compared them together as to weight. That reaped on the 6th was but little more than half the weight of that reaped on the 25th, the exact ratio being as 25 to 27. Another important advantage of the later reaping was in the greater nutritive power of the grain, which was much richer in nitrogenous substances and phosphoric acid, the early reaping suspending those important chemical changes in seed which are so necessary to fit it for the proper nourishment of man.

NEW VEGETABLE.—The Cheyenne correspondent of the Chicago Tribune mentions a new vegetable as follows: We have been enjoying the luxury of a new vegetable that has lately been discovered in great abundance on the plains. Mushrooms, of gigantic size and extraordinary flavor, have been found growing by hundreds of thousands all around Cheyenne. The writer saw one that weighed one pound, was twenty-one inches in circumference, and seven inches in diameter; stem two inches thick and five inches long. When prepared for cooking, the meat was thirteen inches from one rim to the other, and from one to two and one-half inches thick. I ate some of this monster fried in butter—and it would be safe to say, if the mushroom beds around Cheyenne were near your city, they would be worth \$100,000. Thus, every day, some valuable discovery is made in this new country.

## Plaster of Paris or Gypsum on Wheat.

Plaster, chemically Sulphate of Lime, though one of the best fertilizers on grass, especially clover, does not answer for wheat. It encourages the growth of the straw at the expense of the grain, and causes it to remain green and succulent days after it should be ripe.

This exposes wheat to attacks of rust, and to the wheat midge. Fertilizers containing phosphates and potash should be applied to wheat soils to insure heavy crops. Their effect is always beneficial, and the chances for a good crop are greatly increased by ploughing down a crop of green clover a few months before the time for putting in the seed.—FARM JOURNAL.