

FARMERS' COLUMN.

A writer in the *Pravie Farmer* claims to have demonstrated by experiment, that soaking seed corn in copperas water will prevent the ravages of the wire worm.

Agriculture is an employment the most worthy the application of man; the most ancient and the most suitable to his nature. It is the common nurse of all persons in every age and condition of life; it is the source of health, strength, plenty of riches and of a thousand sober delights and honest pleasures. It is the mistress and school of sobriety, temperance, justice, religion, and, in short, of all virtues, civil and military.—*Socrates*.

There are many householders whose means will not enable them to buy a cow, or provide keeping for her were they in possession of one. But they may be equal to the purchase of a colony of bees and provide hives for the swarms resulting therefrom. Bees, like other stock, require pasture, but, unlike horses, cattle and sheep, they are free commensals, ranging at will in search of stores, nor can they be arrested and punished for their intrusion on premises, alias their owner. A single colony of bees, in good condition in the spring, may be counted upon to double or treble their numbers in a single season, securing ample stores for winter consumption, while supplying a gratifying surplus each autumn for household uses. This accumulation will prove most acceptable in families, especially while the price of butter rules so high as to place it beyond the reach of those not blessed with elongated and plethoric purses. Try a colony of bees as an experiment.—*Farmer's Union*.

Moulting Fowls.—We are accustomed to see the poultry left to its own unhappiness during the moulting season, and the "masterly inactivity" with which the fanciers permit the birds to look after themselves is almost epidemic. The moulting season is really the most trying to fowls, and if nature can be assisted in the process of changing the feathers a real benefit will be done. The blood is during the moulting period heavily drawn from for the materials which compose the feathers, and although birds may at the outset be strong and healthy, the drain upon their system is so great that they are weakened and debilitated, and their laying proclivities are entirely abandoned. If we are able to give as food elements which will quickly replace the exhausted constituents of the blood, we obviously assist in its transformation. We have found that fowls supplied with refuse, and powdered scorched oyster shells moult quickly and do not lose their strength and vivacity to any perceptible degree. If their drinking water is supplied with rusty iron, all the better, and one drink of milk each day is of great value.

Wheat Growing.—At a meeting of the Central New York Farmers' Club, held at Utica, Dec. 1st, Mr. John Osborn, of Paris Hall, told the Club how he had learned to secure absolute certainty against complete failure. His method is to plough good clover sod as soon after haying as possible—(between the first and fifteenth of August) subsoil-ploughing to a depth of six or eight inches; pulverize the soil as thoroughly as possible until the last week in August, and apply manure evenly, working it completely into the soil. He stated that he had never suffered entire failure when he pursued this plan, though of course the yield was better some years than others. A somewhat different plan should be employed to produce an extreme crop, all things being favourable. To do this, instead of ploughing the sward, he would plough lands which had been under cultivation the preceding year, or which had yielded crops of sowed corn. He recommended manure to be so much ammonia, and cautioned his hearers against applying an excess of manure, thus causing the wheat to lodge. He was in favor of sowing as deep as three inches to prevent upheaval, and he preferred broadcast sowing. He would never plough more than once, nor would he summer-fallow. He was especially strenuous in urging the protection of exposed surface during the winter. Some means should be employed to collect a covering of snow. Rust and blight are caused by partial winter killing more than any other thing. He had tried an experiment with a view of discovering a method of protection. He planted rows of corn north and south, four rods apart, across his wheat field. This was done because the prevailing winds are easterly or westerly. He gathered the corn and left the stalks to collect the snow and arrest the sweeping winds. He thus gained complete protection for his exposed field. He did not approve of ploughing in farm-yard manure, and believed that a mixture of hog dung and horse dung made in the pen by the swine is the most efficient fertilizer for wheat. A sprinkling of this compound should be spread over the field. He had found that turf ploughed in the spring and sowed to peas, is a valuable preparation for wheat sowing in the fall. To kill quack he would summer-fallow thoroughly.

Herbic Farming.—The mode of culture, and the liberal manuring practised by market gardeners, cannot of course be generally adopted by those who cultivate large areas of land. But I have always noticed that those farmers whose methods approach nearest to the standard of the garden are the ones who obtain, as a rule, the largest yields and the highest rate of profit. It is true enough that to invest yearly in manure at the rate of 40 to 80 tons per acre, requires more faith and courage, as well as more money, than the average farmer commands. Yet it is mainly in this extensive mode of culture that the market gardener finds his best remuneration. The man who cultivates half a dozen acres must get larger returns from each than those who cultivate from fifty to five hundred. To get seventy tons of cabbage from an acre, and other products in a similar ratio, the gardener can well afford to invest liberally in plant food and other expenses of culture. If he knows, or can nearly determine, the value of each intended crop he can generally calculate how much it will be safe to pay out in order to obtain it; and having made the calculation, he does not hesitate to make the investment. Now, there is clearly no reason why the same general rule is not equally sound for the farmer. His business is subject to the same natural laws, and his crops are augmented by the same process. The grand fact to be considered is this: In all cases where manure is abundantly supplied, and the tillage is thorough and deep, the soil responds in a corresponding degree, and becomes, in the hands of a skilful cultivator, simply a machine for converting chemical elements into food; and whether a man cultivates ten acres, or ten hundred, the more plant food he supplies of the right kind (other conditions being equal), the larger will be the result; the lower the cost, and the higher the rate of profit. The lost few dollars added to the cost of the crop is nearly always the secret of the extra profit, and sometimes makes the whole difference between profit and loss. All practical farmers profess to understand this, yet few of them have proved the courage of their opinions by reducing it to practice. And here is just the point where men of timid and conservative policy halt and hesitate, while the clear-headed farmer fearlessly meets the expense, and wins the prize. There is in fact scarcely a crop raised on the farm that might not be materially increased with but slight additional cost, provided the owner could determine in each case the additional outlay needed, and the right place to put it. As this question is often easily solved, and not always as difficult as it seems, it challenges the attention of farmers, and well deserves further discussion.—*Correspondent Country Gentleman*.

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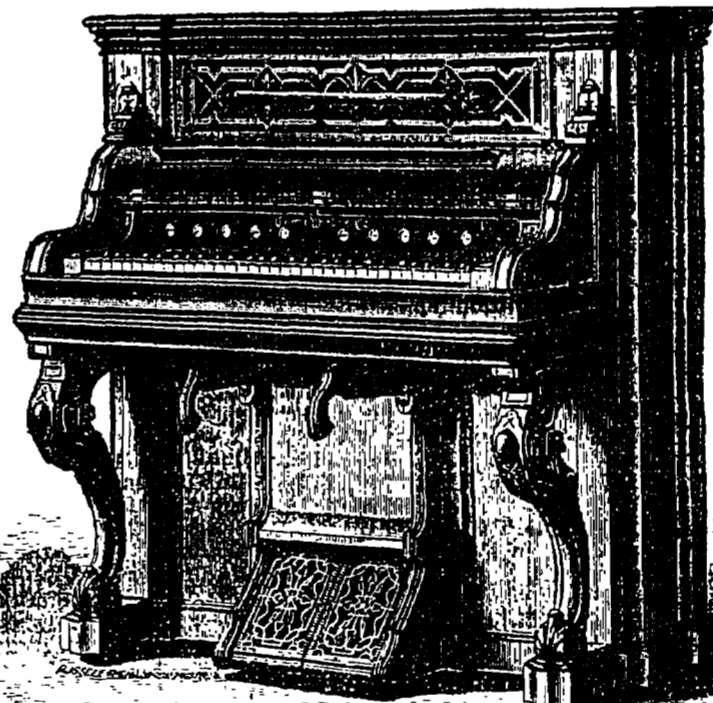
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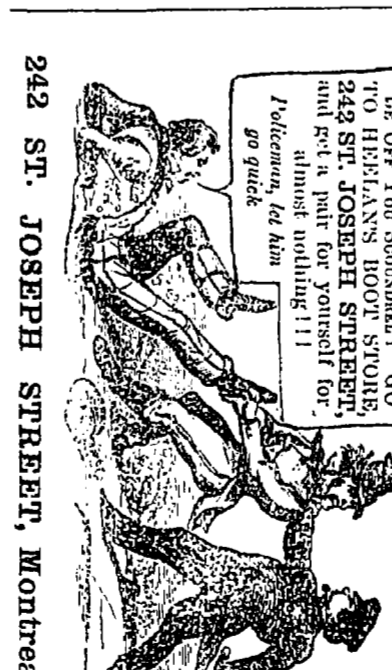
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