

BARN YARDS.

Vegetables, like animals, cannot thrive or subsist without food; and upon the quantity and quality of this depends the health and vigor of the vegetable as well as of the animal. Both subsist upon animal and vegetable matter, both may be surfeited with excess—both may be injured by food not adapted to their habits, appetites, or their digestive powers. A hog will receive no injury, but great benefit from free access to a heap of corn or wheat, where a horse or cow will be apt to destroy themselves by excess.—The goat will thrive upon the boughs and bark of trees, while the hog would starve. The powerful, robust maize will repay, in the increase of its grain, for a heavy dressing of strong dung, for which the more delicate wheat will requite you with very little but straw. The potato feeds ravenously, and grows luxuriantly upon the coarsest litter, while many of the more tender exotics will thrive only on food upon which fermentation has exhausted its powers. But here the analogy stops: for while the food of the one is consumed in a sound, healthy, and generally solid state, the food of the other before it becomes aliment, must undergo the process of putrefaction or decomposition, and be reduced to a liquid or æri-form state. * * * * *

The urine of the stock, which constitutes a moiety of the manure of animals, is all lost. The slovenly and wasteful practice of feeding at stacks in the fields where the sole of the grass is broken, the fodder wasted, and the dung of little effect, is still pursued. And finally the little manure which does accumulate in the yards, is suffered to lie till it has lost full half of its fertilizing properties, or rotted the sills of the barn; when it is injudiciously applied, or the barn moved to get clear of the nuisance. Again: none but a slothful farmer will permit the flocks of his neighbors to rob his own of their food; yet he often sees, but with feeble efforts to prevent it, his plants smothered by pestiferous weeds and plundered of the food which is essential to their health and vigor. *A weed consumes as much food as a useful plant.* This to

be sure, is the dark side of the picture, yet the original may be found in every town, and in almost every neighborhood.

It is surprising that under such management our arable grounds should grow poor, and refuse to labor its accustomed reward? Can it be considered strange that those who thus neglect to feed their plants should feel the evil of light purses as well as of light crops? Constant draining or evaporation, without returning anything would in time exhaust the ocean of its waters. A constant cropping of the soil without returning anything to it, will in like manner exhaust it of its vegetable food and gradually induce sterility. Neither sand, clay, lime or magnesia, which are the elements of all soils, nor any combination of part or all of them, is alone capable of producing healthy plants. It is the animal and vegetable matter accumulated upon its bosom or which are deposited there, with the auxiliary aid of these materials diffused in the atmosphere, that enables the earth to teem with vegetable life and yield its tribute to man and beast.

I will now suggest a cheap and practicable mode of *providing food for vegetables*, commensurate to the means of every farmer of ordinary enterprise; and that my suggestions may not be deemed theoretical, I will add, that I “practice what I preach.”

The cattle yard should be located on the south side of, and adjoining the barn. Sheds, substantial stone walls, or close board fences should be erected at least on the east and west sides, to shelter the cattle from the cold winds and storms; the size proportioned to the stock to be kept in it. Excavate the centre in a concave form, placing the earth removed upon the edges or lowest sides, leaving the borders ten or twelve feet broad, of a horizontal level, to feed the stock upon, and from two to five feet higher than the centre. This may be done with a plow and scraper, or shovel and hand-barrow, after the ground is broken up with the plow. I used the former and was employed a day and a half, with two hands and a team, in fitting two to my mind. When the soil is not sufficiently compact