

From the New York Mechanic and Farmer.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM ALEXANDER WALSH, Esq.

Of all civil occupations, that of agriculture should be regarded as foremost; it is the most indispensable, the best preserver of health, of morality, of virtue, and of religion: It was the occupation of our first parent, and has been that of a majority of his descendants in all past ages, and must necessarily so continue to time's end. How largely are we interested in its improvement and success! It is, however, a painful truth, that its progress in our country is far from being exhilarating. Habits, venerated only for antiquity, are obstinately adhered to, to the exclusion of "book-farming," and this without any investigation into relative merits; numerous are the deformities growing out of this error; slovenly managed farms not arising from idleness, for idleness is not the besetting sin of the tillers of our soil; taries disproportionate to the means of proper cultivation; fields rendered unproductive by a succession of wasting crops, and then left to be reconstituted by the slow operation of nature. To these might be added many other equally obvious defects, too numerous for present detail.

It is passing strange, that while the aid of the press is consulted in support of every design, even those of minor importance, or of doubtful policy, agriculture, the most important of all, seems alone to reject its influence; this unhappy prejudice is gradually yielding to better judgment, and we may hope the day is not distant when the farmer will be no more without his agricultural magazine, than he would be without his almanac.

There are certain primary principles so evident as to be within the unaided observation of every tiller of the soil, yet even these often require a friendly monitor to keep them present to the mind; others there are dependent on scientific research, and seldom to be discovered except by the studious reader. The press, in these cases, is the best monitor, and the truest instructor. In truth, the few shillings annually charged for an agricultural journal, if properly attended to, are the most productive outlay of the farmer.

The proper selection of seed grain is an important consideration. The best if possible should alone be used. Grain is liable to degenerate by long succession of unchanged seed. An occasional change of seed for that of other farmers, will often be found beneficial, inasmuch that even that received in exchange, will, although of an inferior quality, frequently yield a produce superior to that given in exchange, especially if the latter has exhibited any symptom of degeneracy. The potatoe is a very necessary and valuable element; there is perhaps no vegetable more liable to degenerate by a continued succession of the same stock in the same soil: were it not for the friendly agency of nature, which annually settles its seed on the ground, and thus gives birth to a new generation, this necessary article of food might be entirely lost. This effort of nature never fails in mild climates, but should not be relied on where the rigorous cold of our northern winter seldom fails to destroy delicate seeds when exposed to its action. An exchange of seed potatoes with a neighbouring farmer, will generally check the menced evil, but the true mode is to imitate nature; the farmer should every two or three years preserve a small quantity of the seed, which is contained in the bolls growing on the green tops or stalks of the potatoes, and sow the same in a bed in his garden, the plants when they appear over ground, should be transplanted, and placed at the usual proper distance. The produce of the first year's growth, generally of a size too small for use, may be reserved for the next year's planting. This is deemed an infallible remedy against degeneracy, and gives the best security for good and wholesome crops in regard to abundance and quantity.

The improvement of his breed of cattle, is an object of the greatest solicitude to every farmer. He does not always know how much is directly in his power, in regard to this object. This secret, if it be one, consists, in no small degree, in

a plentiful supply of food to the young animal; the full grown beast will eat less and fatten sooner, than were he neglected while young. An early attention to abundant feeding, will improve the humblest stock of cattle, while the best breed, if neglected, or not sufficiently fed while young, will degenerate and become in their maturity unsightly and profitless.

Irrigation of land is a practice of great antiquity. History does not, I believe, anywhere notice it as a modern invention. Virgil, the son of an Italian farmer, who wrote before the Christian era, states that it was practised in his country. Irrigation, when not attended with too much expense, is a valuable fertilizer of the soil. All kinds of vegetation are benefited by a skilful application of it. Meadows subjected to its action, will yield double the usual quantity of grass, and may be mowed twice in a year. Grass thus nurtured will not, although artificial, wear out, but may, by this treatment, be preserved permanently.

The overflow of the river Nile is a display of irrigation on a magnificent scale; on the subsiding of its waters, the agriculturist almost without an effort, raises an abundant crop. Egyptian grain has, by reason of its quality and abundance, become proverbial. Land-adjointing rivers, or streams of water, where the overflows are periodical or occasional and not too frequent, produce results proportionally similar to those of the Nile. I have seen no calculation made with a view to ascertain the utmost amount of money, or of labor as the equivalent of money, which a farmer may safely expend in the irrigation of his lands. I incline to the opinion that the outlay may probably exceed the general apprehension. The watering of the kitchen garden is deemed by the horticulturists indispensable; the labor is generally performed by hand and watering pot, the most expensive of all modes in use; yet, I believe that, on a minute calculation, it would appear that no equal extent of the farm yields so large, or, all matters considered, returns so large, a per centage on the capital employed. It is, if true goes far to prove, that small farms, well cultivated, and irrigated, even at considerable expense, are more productive of profit, than large farms without the means of a through cultivation, and depending on casual falls of rain for the necessary moisture.

All lands at all worthy of cultivation, contain the means of retaining them perpetually in a state of continual productiveness. Ignorance or prejudice alone would permit any part of the farm to be fallow. Compost is the common produce of every farm, and is not the least valuable resuscitator of exhausted soils; it is usually applicable to every soil, increasing in every instance the quantity of the crop. How strange that this valuable auxiliary to agriculture should be derided and left scattered about the farm yard to be trodden by man and beast, and thus rendered almost useless.

FOR MOTHERS.

Draw your children to you by *real* kindness: let them see that you study their best interest and happiness, rather than your own comfort or convenience. Take especial pains to make home the most pleasant place on earth to them. It may, perhaps, sometimes be a tax upon your ingenuity to do so, but you will reap a blessing from it which will more than repay you. This will effectually keep them from bad company. The memory of *home sweet home*, happy early associations, and a mother's love, watchfulness and prayers, have been the talisman which has enabled many a soul to bear up and buffet in after years against the winds of adversity and the temptations which have assailed them through a long life, and who shall limit the extent of a mother's influence?

Cucumbers.—A writer in the London Gardener's Chronicle, says he has entirely discarded the old mode of allowing cucumbers to run on the surface of the ground. He trains them to trellises, and finds that he has not half the trouble with them that is required by the old plan, and that the plants continue much longer in bearing, when so treated.

JAUFFRET'S MODE OF MANUFACTURING MANURE.

We promised, a week or two ago, to give Jauffret's mode of manufacturing manure from straw, weeds, and other vegetable matters. He is a Frenchman, and has taken out a patent for his mode in France and England, but that cannot hinder the possessing his mode in this country, provided he has not also obtained a patent from the U. States. The following is a condensed statement of his mode:—

The first thing to be done, is to prepare a quantity of what he calls saturated water, which is done by having a vat made of any convenient size, which is half filled with water, and into which is thrown weeds, and almost any kind of vegetable matter that will ferment readily, so as to fill it, with the water, three fourths full. He then adds, to a vat 12 feet long, six feet wide, and six feet deep, ten pounds of quick lime, and five ounces of sal ammoniac. Then you may add sink water, refuse from the kitchen, dead animals and such like matters. Stir it up occasionally, and if it becomes too offensive in odor, add more unsalted lime occasionally.

The next step is to have another vat, smaller than the other, into which sufficient of the above made liquor is to be put to dissolve, or mix with the following materials, which last prepared water he calls *lessive*:—

Take 200 lbs. of fecal matter and urine (from vaults or privies)
50 lbs. chimney soot,
400 lbs. gypsum, (plaster of Paris,)
60 lbs. unsalted lime,
20 lbs. unbleached wood ashes,
1 lb. sea salt,
10 ounces of saltpetre,
50 lbs. of what he calls *Leaven of manure*.

Mix all these with the saturating water till it makes a thick *porridge*. The leaven of manure is the drainings of a former operation, if there has been one. The above ingredients should be mixed as follows. Stir the first vat up till it is thick, and then pour a portion of it into the leavie vat, in a thin stream, then the soot, then the ashes, then the fecal matters, the salt, and saltpetre. The plaster of Paris is to be thrown in little by little, stirring the mixture to prevent caking. When the whole is well mixed, stir in the leaven.

When the above substances cannot be obtained but at too great expense, Jauffret substitutes other things, for instance, instead of fecal matter and urine, take 25 lbs. of horse, cow, or pig dung. For the gypsum, 100 lbs. of baked or burnt earth or clayey loam, for the soot, 100 lbs. sheep manure and the same weight of rich mud: for the unbleached ashes, 50 lbs. of bleached ashes or 2 lbs. of potash, 1 lb. sea salt, 100 lbs. of a water. If you come short of *lessive*, make it up with the saturating water, always using the most impure and putrid that you can obtain.

Having got the above materials ready, clear away a spot of ground and beat it hard so that water will not soak in readily, and make little pits around the plant into which the liquor which drains from the heap may run. Then take your straw, weeds &c., or whatever you wish to convert into manure, and put them into the vat of lessive, wet and pack them into a heap, treading them down so as to make them compact. At every layer, of a foot, pour on a quantity of the leavie and tread it in so that the whole shall be well mixed together. The heap may be six or seven feet high, and when all is packed spread the bottom of the leavie vat on the top so as to stifle it all over, beating and pressing all about so as to make it as snug and compact as possible. At the end of 48 hours a fermentation commences. On the third day the top of the heap is to be opened six inches, and the sediment which was thrown on the top is turned over, and another drenching is given with the *lessive*, and again covered up as before. On the seventh day make holes near each other with a fork, say three feet deep, and another drenching given and again covered up. About the ninth day give it another drenching through holes somewhat deeper. In 12 or 15 days the manure will be fit to spread.