

FARMERS' COLUMN.

OVER-DRAINED LAND.—From general farming experience of not less than twenty-five years, I prefer land over-drained (if possible) to land not done, or inefficiently done, although I have been told more than once that land has been spoiled by draining, for cheese-making purposes, which is the complaint of incompetent farmers. Supposing they are right it can only apply to a few isolated places. Where land has been properly drained to a depth of three or four feet, every day facts go to prove the benefit especially after an application of top-dressing—bones, compost or sewage. The latter, in some cases, might not be suitable for cheese. Grass land after draining, has sometimes an impoverished aspect, because the coarser grasses are deprived of their element (the stagnant water), and will ere long die out and disappear, and will give place to other grasses of better quality, produced by underdraining and surface appliances. The result of top-dressing is far better on land that is drained.—Agric. Journ. of the Gazette.

TRAINING PLANTS.—The good old proverb of "Train up a child," etc., is remarkably applicable to the case of plants. Begin at the beginning, in the very earliest stages of growth in either case, as it is often a difficult matter to remedy bad habits. Take, for instance, a fuchsia, give it ample room to grow, place a strong stake in the middle of the pot and fasten the leading shoot to it, encourage the side branches to push, and fasten them into proper position, each equi-distant from the other. A plant that is frequently a mass of strings in its youth and growing state will generally prove to be unexceptionable in form at the end of the season. A chrysanthemum that has had its young growth pinched as often as it will bear it, forms a specimen in the blooming season round as a ball in outline, whereas if it had been neglected a straggling shoot would have been the consequence. Frequent pinching back of the young and tender shoots of all our bedding plants is of great consequence to their form, and shows its effect when they have arrived at maturity.—Science of Health.

PREPARING MEAL FOR FOWLS.—Dough for poultry is commonly made too thin. Many young chickens that might live if fed rationally, die because obliged to swallow more water with their grain than they need. In cases of grown fowls, giving meal too wet will not, of course, prove fatal, but they will thrive better if mixed so stiff as to crumble. The food is moistened and partly macerated while in the crop by secretions from glands. It passes next, a little at a time, into the proventriculus, a pouch formed by the expansion of the passage between the crop and gizzard. In this organ additional digestive juices are secreted, as well as in the gizzard and still further on. Now, when the grain contains too much water before it is fed, the solvents prepared by the digestive organs are diluted and impaired. In all animals, when healthy, thirst is regulated with wonderful nicety by the needs of the system. Hence, if constantly supplied with water separate from the food, they will drink only what is necessary, and in mixing dough it is better to be on the safe side.

GREEN FOOD FOR STOCK.—When comparing potatoes and other green food for stock, our books cannot be relied on to make up an estimate of values. Not that the tables of the chemists are not accurately made up, but because of the better use made of the green than the dry food. The food elements in potatoes, turnips, and other fresh roots, have a greater value than the same amount of such element contained in common hay. Being in intimate combination with water, the former are quickly and perfectly digested and assimilated, while the digestion of hay is slow and imperfect. Neat cattle will barely sustain themselves when fed all they will eat of hay alone. But take away one-half the amount of hay, and give in its place a weight of turnips which contain food elements equal to the hay removed, and the stock instead of barely living will thrive. This is a uniform result, and it demonstrates the greater value of green food elements. In feeding potatoes and similar green food to cattle there is no loss from imperfect digestion, while in hay, as commonly cut and handled by our farmers, the loss is considerable.

FANCY FARMERS.—No class of men have been ridiculed so much, and there are none who have done so much good, as those who are denominated fancy farmers. They have been, in all times and countries, the benefactors of the men who have treated them with derision. They have been to farmers what inventors have been to manufacturers. They have experimented for the good of the world while others have simply worked for their own good. They tested theories while others have raised crops for market. They have given a dignity and glory to the occupation of farming it never had before. Fancy farmers have changed the wild boar into the Suffolk and Berkshire; the wild bull of Britain into the Shorthorn; the mountain sheep, with its lean body and hair fleece, into the South-down and Merino. They brought up the milk of cows from pails to gallons. They have lengthened the udder of the cow, enlarged the ham of the hog, given strength to the shoulder of the ox, rendered finer the wool of the sheep, added fleetness to the speed of the horse, and made beautiful every animal that is kept in the service of man. They have improved and hastened the development of all domestic animals, till they hardly resembled the creatures from which they sprang.—Chicago Times.

GRINDING TOOLS.—Edge tools are prepared by grinding, very much as a plank would be reduced in thickness were a large plane employed in which were set a hundred or more very small gouges, each cutting a narrow groove. As the sharp grit of the grindstone is much harder than the iron or steel, it cuts very small channels in the surface of the metal and the revolving disc takes away all the little particles that are detached by the grit. It you will examine a tool that has just been sharpened on a grindstone, with a powerful microscope, you will see that it looks like the rough surface of a field which has just been plowed and as the ridges and furrows run together from both sides, at the cutting edge, the freshly sharpened edge seems to be formed of very small teeth rather than to be a perfectly smooth edge. On this account a tool should first be ground on a coarse stone, so as to wear away the surface rapidly; then polish it on a wheel of much finer texture, and then, so as to reduce the furrows as much as possible, a whetstone of the finest grit should be used. This will give cutting edge with the smallest possible serration. Look at your razor after you have sharpened it thoroughly through the microscope, and see the small projections or teeth upon its edge, which appears to the naked eye perfectly smooth. Beginners are sometimes told, when grinding edge tools, to make the stone revolve towards the cutting edge, and occasionally from it. When the first grinding is being done, it matters little whether this is attended to; but when the finishing touches are given near and at the very edge, the task can always be accomplished with much greater accuracy if the periphery or circumference of the grindstone revolves towards the cutting edge, for the steel which is worn away will be more easily removed; and when the stone runs in an opposite direction, the grinder can not always tell when the tool is ground up to the edge. This is particularly the case when the steel is of a soft temper. The stone, when running from the edge can not sweep away every particle of the metal, but when it revolves towards the edge, it carries off all the feathery edge.—Cov. Country Gen.

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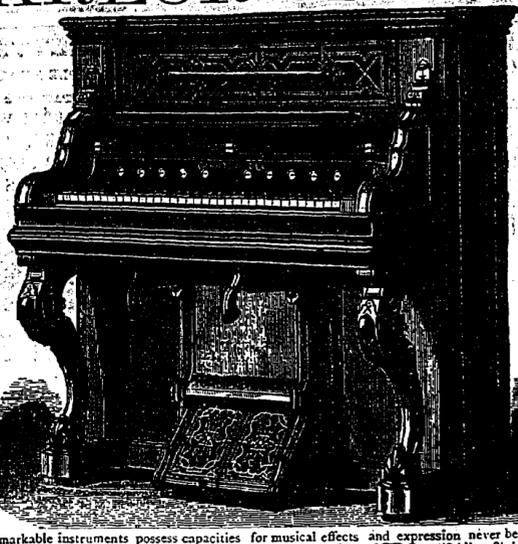
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