

makes the best of its opportunities. Under most circumstances the weed plant, or weed seed is in the land ready when the spring opens up, and always has the advantage of early seeding. Life is revived from the dormant winter state in many instances very early, and the weeds get a good start.

There are two kinds of weeds with which the tiller of the soil must deal—weeds of the field and weeds of the roadside and fence rows. If the land is badly infested a hoe crop, or a summer fallow, is generally advised for the former class, and how important it is to begin the cleaning operations early in the season. Where roots or corn are placed in a dirty field as much work as possible should have been done before planting or sowing, and then when the crop is small, and also while the weeds are young and tender the weeder harrow and cultivator can do a world of good and save a great amount of hand hoeing by killing the weeds before they have gained sufficient root-hold and strength to survive such treatment. Did you ever try to thin mangels or turnips after the weeds had gained a height of six inches or more, and the turnips had become spindly as a consequence? If so, you will realize the difference between getting after the weeds while they are small and allowing them to get such a start. The difference in time is not all. A cleaner job is almost invariably done while weeds are small. The larger plants are very often sufficiently advanced that the seed while still quite green has enough vitality to mature, and thus the land is reseeded. Yellow foxtail is a good example of a weed of this kind.

The summer fallow should be worked up as early as possible. There are many weeds which, if allowed to make a large growth before the plow is put on, like the foxtail in the hoed crop, mature when plowed down, and all the land is seeded for the following year.

It is a good plan where the summer fallow is very dirty to get it plowed early, and work it down to a fine dust mulch on top and keep it well cultivated once every week or so until sometime early in July, when buckwheat may be sown fairly thick or the land drilled up and sown to rape. These are good smothering crops and keep the weeds which have been weakened by early cultivation down well and smother them out in many cases completely. This system is to be recommended because it is a great saving of labor during the busy harvest season when, if the land is left bare there is some danger of cultivation being delayed, or neglected during the rush of work.

Roadside and fence-corner weeds present another problem. How can one hope to keep his farm clean with all kinds of noxious pests growing and seeding along its borders? Many seem to think that it is not their duty to cut weeds on the road adjacent to their farms. Whether they are paid in money for it or not is a municipal matter, but it surely is profitable from the viewpoint of clean farming, and no one should allow weeds to seed on the road in front of his place because of negligence on the part of the municipal authorities. Plan to cut these roadside weeds in good time before they mature any seed.

Undoubtedly the best way to clean weeds from fence-rows is to have less fences, but some are absolutely necessary where mixed farming is carried on, and to keep these bottoms free from noxious pests no better practice can be recommended than to each year take a good sharp scythe and cut everything growing thereon. Mow all the herbage and make cow hay of it, unless it is very weedy, in which case it might be advisable to burn it. We have seen dirty fence-rows cleaned up very well by this method, and it adds much to the appearance of the farm. Get after the weeds and keep at it. They are persistent; their fighters must also be persistent.

Experiments at the Rhode Island Experiment Station indicated that marked increases in the phosphorus percentage of turnips were caused by applications of acid phosphate to the soil.

THE DAIRY.

Fluctuations in Cow Testing.

Not a few dairymen who start in to test their cows become disheartened by an unsatisfactory test or two on the start. Finding some of their cows yielding milk with a small percentage of butter-fat, they lose interest and enthusiasm. It often happens that cows at this particular season, just after going out on grass, give milk much lower in butter-fat than the average of their year's production. Also there will be many fluctuations of individual cows from month to month, owing to a variety of causes that are difficult to trace. It is never wise to jump at conclusions. Just a leaf from our own recent experience. The official inspectors

for the Record of Performance are visiting our herd from month to month to supervise the record of a Shorthorn cow we have entered for that test, and we have availed ourselves of their services to test the grade cows as well. Of course we weigh the milk of all the cows. The first tests were made May 14th, and the second on May 31st. Some of the differences were striking. One cow, which tested 4.2% on the first occasion, dropped to 2.9%; another, from 3.7 to 3.0; another, from 4.3 to 3.7; others held their own, while one increased a tenth. The average decreased from 3.7 to 3.3%. In this case the cows were on grass at the time of both tests. The city-supply house which has been getting our milk, has previously made frequent bulk-lot tests, finding it to range from 3.8 to 4 per cent, and a shade higher. We may have one or two more grade Holsteins in the herd at present than formerly. But the main point is the fluctuation in test of the different cows. No doubt at the next test some of the three per cents will be up considerably. So it goes. We have no thought of discontinuing the testing because some of the cows showed a decrease. That would be sheer folly. If there are habitually low-testing cows in the herd we want to know it. It is to be feared that the main motive some dairymen have in testing is a desire to prove how good their cows are. How much more profitable to learn the truth! Often in this work the truth turns out to be much less distasteful than it seems on the start. Persevere.

HORTICULTURE.

Cultivation of Blackberries.

A fruit which is not appreciated as it might be is the blackberry, often called thimbleberry. An American bulletin on small fruit culture has this to say of this fruit:

The blackberry is undoubtedly the most profitable of the brambles. They are easily cared for, especially in localities where they do not require covering in the winter. The method of pruning the canes is like that of the black raspberry and since the plant produces suckers, the method of propagation is like that of the red raspberry and the suckers should be cut out the same as suggested with the red raspberry.

The requirements for a good location of a blackberry plantation are similar to those of the raspberry, except that more care must be taken not to select a place where the soil is too rich in nitrogen. The blackberry grows later in the fall than the raspberries and if grown on rich soil will not stop soon enough to thoroughly harden the canes for winter, and winter killing may result.

Although the blackberry is quite free from disease, the same spraying recommended for the raspberries will be found beneficial. Orange rust is frequently found in blackberry plantations. Plants affected should be cut out and burned as soon as found.

For the varieties that require covering during the winter the following method is best: Plow a furrow towards the plants in fall to keep them from being bent over too sharply. Then bend the canes over at right angles to the row and cover with two or three inches of soil. With a fork loosen the roots a little on the opposite side, to relieve the strain. In spring, as soon as the frost is out of the ground, the canes should be raised with a fork.

Stumbling on Cowper.

By Peter McArthur.

The May frost was a real disaster in this district, though it took us fully a month to find out about it. Yesterday an orchardist told me that it meant a difference of fully five hundred barrels of apples to him. He never had a better showing of blossoms, but most of them have dropped off. The Spies and Baldwins will yield about half a crop as they were later in coming into bloom, but the Russets and all the early varieties were completely killed. Even the notorious Ben Davises have been destroyed. An examination of our orchard shows that only a small percentage of the Baldwins and Spies have escaped, and the Spies are not going to do nearly so well as at first hoped. The late blossoms do not appear to have been fertilized, even though they have escaped the frost. I wonder if that was because the blossoms on all the trees around them had been killed. Everything seems to be against the orchard this year. Though we sprayed and put up a pretty fight against the usual, and some unusual, bugs, pests and blights, the frost put an end to everything. All of which puts me in the mood to quote Cowper's address to the rich and luxurious people for whom our choicest fruit is developed.

"Ye little know the cares,
The vigilance, the labor, and the skill,
That day and night are exercised, and hang
Upon the ticklish balance of suspense,
That ye may garnish your profuse regales.

Ten thousand dangers lie in wait to thwart
The process. Heat, and cold, and wind and steam,
Moisture, and drought, mice, worms and swarming flies,
Minute as dust, and numberless, oft work
Dire disappointment, that admits no cure,
And which no care can obviate. It were long,
Too long, to tell the expedients and the shifts
Which he that fights a season so severe
Devises while he guards his tender trust;
And oft at last in vain."

You will notice that although the poet's category of evils is fairly full, he evidently knew nothing of spores or microbes that are often more devastating than anything else.

As very few people read Cowper nowadays, I am going to tell how I happened to find that appropriate quotation. Last week we were hauling out manure to the corn ground and the young orchard, and while toiling at that arduous job it occurred to me that it was also somewhat prosaic. Burns and other Scotch poets have occasional references to "The midden," but I could remember nothing cheering. At last I remembered one word—"stercoraceous", and after a little reflection managed to locate it in Cowper's Task. At the noon hour I hunted it up.

"The stable yields a stercoraceous heap,
Impregnated with quick fermenting salts."

That certainly described in chosen words the pile at which we were working, and a little further on in the description I found this satisfying touch:

"A pestilent and most corrosive steam,
Like a gross fog Boeotian, rising fast."

From this it would appear that there is no kind of farm work to which the poets have not given their attention at some time.

Instead of putting down the volume after finding what I was looking for I kept on reading, and was not only delighted but amazed to find my own point of view expressed more beautifully than I could ever hope to express it. Because I found my own thoughts lifted above the work I was doing, I am going to quote a generous piece for the edification of others.

"With few associated, in remote
And silent woods I wander, far from those
My former partners in the peopled scene;
With few associates, not wishing more.
Here much I ruminate, as much I may,
With other views of men and manners now
Than once.

I see that all are wanderers, gone astray
Each in his own delusions; they are lost
In chase of fancied happiness, still woo'd
And never won. Dream after dream ensues;
And still they dream that they still succeed;
And still are disappointed. Rings the world
With the vain stir. I sum up half mankind,
And add two-thirds of the remaining half,
And find the total of their hopes and fears
Dreams, empty dreams. The million flit as gay
As if created only like the fly,
That spreads his motley wings in the eye of
noon,

To sport their season, and be seen no more.
The rest are sober dreamers, grave and wise,
And pregnant with discoveries new and rare.
Some write a narrative of wars, and feats.
Of heroes little known; and call the rant
A history; describe the man of whom
His own co-evals took but little note;
And paint his person, character and views,
As they had known him from his mother's womb.
They disentangle from the puzzled skein,
In which obscurity has wrapped them up,
The threads of politic and shrewd design,
That ran through all his purposes, and charge
His mind with meanings that he never had,
Or having, kept concealed. Some drill and bore
The solid earth, and from the strata there
Extract a register, by which we learn,
That He who made it and revealed its date
To Moses was mistaken in its age.
Some, more acute and more industrious still,
Contrive creation; travel nature up
To the sharp peak of her sublimest height,
And tell us whence the stars; why some are
fixed,
And planetary some; what gave them first
Rotation, from what fountain flowed their light.
Great contest follows, and much learned dust
Involves the combatants; each claiming truth,
And truth disclaiming both. And thus they
spend

The little wick of life's poor shallow lamp
In playing tricks with nature, giving laws