



Agricultural Department.

THE BEST-PAYING CROPS.

Every once in a while some poor fellow's head is turned at the report of some other body's success with some one crop or another. The figures are astounding. He firmly believes that what one man has done another can do, and he ventures in the same field, only to lose, in some cases, all. And yet it is true that almost all the best success in farming or gardening comes from close attention to some one crop, specially and above all.

But no one can tell another what is best for him to grow. Even when the soil is specially adapted to a certain crop, there are all the little details of practical culture to be mastered; and even then the question of marketing enters largely into the success of the experiment.

It is often a matter of envy with farmers of a certain class, that mercantile affairs should seem to make more satisfactory ventures than farming; but it is seldom thought over, how these very successful businesses are established. There is no reason why just the same processes may not lead to great successes on the land as in the store; indeed, it is a common experience that it is so. Hundreds of men every year make money to their entire satisfaction out of agricultural or horticultural pursuits. They are not so well known—do not make as much show as the store-keeper—agriculturists are too much scattered to make this imposing appearance—but the profits we speak of are there as surely in the one case as in the other.

These successful businesses are simply the result of a series of experiments as to what can best be done. Hardly a business that we know of, that may be pointed out as illustrative of great success, achieved that success in the line marked out for it at the start. A general knowledge of some one thing may have suggested the enterprise, but one after another, as some parts would be better understood, the least profitable would be dropped, and in many instances, firms that began dealing in a dozen articles would end in only one. We have frequently pointed out the fact, and urged on cultivators that this is the only way to get into the special crop business; but we have the matter brought to our mind just now through a history of a very wealthy farmer of Massachusetts, which is running the rounds of the papers, and serves very well to illustrate the doctrine which we have so long taught.

This man farmed as other men farmed, but with an eye to any special excellence of anything that his land, his knowledge or his circumstances might suggest. He, however, kept in with all the regular routine of farm crops in the meantime. He found that he could grow small pickling cucumbers better than his neighbors, but he did not thereupon plant all his farm with cucumbers. He knew that such a business, like the crop, must have time to grow. His first crop was on about an acre. The crop was good, but the sales were bad. For these specialties it is always hard to find a market at first. The next year he had less difficulty in selling, and he ventured to increase the acreage. Thus he has gone on till he has sold easily and at good prices the product of seventy-five acres of cucumbers, and now feels that he is safe with no other crop but this.

Now there is scarcely a district of country in the whole United States but is able to grow some one thing a little better than another thing. It should be a continual subject of experiment on every farm as to what will grow and thrive remarkably well; and having found this out, what would be the prospects of a good market for it. It is rare indeed that any one who raises just exactly what his neighbor does, ever makes a great strike in the way of wealth. He makes out of wheat, or corn, or pork, a fair, average, living price; and if he is a little more intelligent than some as to the niceties of cultivation, he may make more than his neighbor; but the rich farmer is generally he who by careful observation and calculation is able gradually but surely to get out of the beaten track.—*Germantown Telegraph*.

MAKING AND REPAIRING ROADS.

Most farmers usually expect to do a portion of their road work before harvest. The whole of the road tax should be worked before this time comes, where the old and unsatisfactory system of doing the work by day's labor is in vogue, since thus you have the roads well settled to do the after hauling on. We are fully aware that by the old plan of working roads, much dissatisfaction is felt, and much useless labor thrown away. Nevertheless, until the laws are changed so the work may

be done by machines, or by contract, it must be endured. Still, proper system in the prosecution of the work, by any means, will save fully one-half the cost of labor, as usually performed by hauling earth, and filling up holes with the spade and shovel.

However the work be accomplished it must be done at the right time. If the road be rutty, and not too hard, the ruts may be filled by fastening a plate of steel to a plank, as in the common upright scraper, only so arranged as to run diagonally, and of a width sufficient to cover the wagon track—say eight feet long. This steel-shod plank is placed between the fore and hind wheels of a wagon, so that as the wagon travels forward, it cuts and scrapes the earth from the high places, into those which are lower, being governed by a lever by which it is raised and lowered; the whole being drawn by four horses. Then a heavy iron roller following after, compresses the earth, and finishes all, unless more earth is needed to raise the grade; and then the road bed is in proper condition to receive it.

One of the great mistakes often made in grading roads, is the unequal manner in which the earth is laid thereon with the scraper. Care should be taken and the hands so instructed that they shall leave the earth nearly where it is wanted. This it is almost impossible to do with the old-fashioned dump scraper. These should be cast away and replaced with modern implements which will do the work properly.

If road-making machines are used, and there are now such that do the work—in land free from stumps and ledges of rock—almost automatically, the whole process is very much cheapened and simplified. Once a town owns the proper appliances for road-making, there is thereafter no difficulty in raising the light yearly tax, in money, for highway purposes, to be expended under the direction of the proper officers of the town; and the roads of a town once graded, all that is necessary thereafter, annually, is to keep them sufficiently crowning, as they wear, to carry off the water into the ditches.

The absence of stone and gravel, except in isolated places, preclude—as we have before written—these materials for prairie roads. They must perforce be made of the ordinary soil of a district. This soil, it has been amply demonstrated, time and again, makes really good roads for fully nine months in the year, and passable roads all the time, if only they are made and kept sufficiently rounding. How to do this with the least expense to their constituents, is one of the problems which the commissioners and road overseers are called to solve. It is well known that it cannot be done economically or properly, by working out the tax in the old way, with such crude implements as farmers usually have. Without good roads the cost of getting produce to market is more than doubled; and more time and money is thus yearly lost to farmers than would pay for making and keeping in repair a good earth road.—*Western Farm Journal*.

PRESERVING SMOKED MEATS IN SUMMER.

We have been asked to give directions by which a farmer having no tight smoke-house may preserve hams, bacon and smoked beef through the summer from the attacks of flies.

We do not consider the smoke-house, as ordinarily built, to be the best place to preserve cured meats. Our July and August suns are generally so hot as to cause the fat parts to melt more or less, and this destroys the integrity of the whole.

The very best way we know is to wrap the meat in thick brown paper, and enclose each piece separately in sacks made to fit. Sew tight; dip them in a preparation of slacked lime, of the consistency of ordinary paint. Then the pieces may be packed in barrels, with plenty of ashes, or better, pounded charcoal, and kept in a cool, well-ventilated cellar, or in the coolest place in the barn.

Another plan is to wrap in paper as before directed, then in an outer layer, and pack in barrels with some good absorbent.

Still another plan is, after wrapping in thick brown paper, to pack in barrels with plenty of dry cut straw, examining them occasionally to see that they do not mould, if the weather is damp for any considerable length of time. By this plan, however, it is difficult to keep the meat from contracting mould if entirely excluded from light and air, and where light and air may enter, insects and mould are pretty sure to follow.

A smoke-house built so as to prevent the admission of light, and at the same time ensure ventilation and a degree of coolness so that the meat will not mould, may be had by placing it under the shade of a spreading tree. It should be built of brick, with an ample flue on top protected with blinds at the sides, and a wire gauze at the bottom to prevent the admission of insects, the gauze to be removed when smoking the meat. Another flue at the bottom protected with gauze allows the admission of air. Thus the house may be kept cool and well-ventilated, and by throwing it en-

tirely open occasionally at night, when dry, meat may be kept perfectly for a long time. This smoke-house may be used for a variety of purposes, as for the keeping of ashes in districts where wood is used for fuel.—*Exchange Paper*.

POULTRY FOR FARMERS' TABLES.—A correspondent of the *Michigan Farmer* says of raising poultry on the farm: "The profit to a farmer in keeping and raising poultry, is to provide for and supply his own table. A farmer cannot afford to raise eggs and poultry for the market. That is work for the women and children, let them do it if they please. Now I am talking about farmers; not about city people, or town people who live in the suburbs of cities and towns, but about farmers, men who raise crops of wheat and corn, who breed cattle, sheep and swine, who have pork, beef and wool to send to market. It is preposterous for these men to go into the poultry business. They are away from the market, and they have a market of their own, and that is their own table. The profit of eggs and poultry, for the general farmer, is in eating them. To entertain his friends and exercise the privileges of hospitality, he should have the best the land affords, and fresh eggs and fat poultry are his privilege. It is a good hen that will lay seventy-five eggs, an extra hen that will lay one-hundred eggs per annum. These are worth, on an average, at the farm-house, one cent each to sell; occasionally they will bring fifteen cents per dozen. But if a hen lays a dollar's worth of eggs per annum she is doing well. As food for the family of the farmer this is cheap—nothing can be cheaper—but for a man to sell, nothing raised on the farm is dearer. It is a good chicken that at a year old will bring \$1.25 for eggs, feathers and carcass. The profit of poultry to the farmer is in having them fresh and fat the year round, but the man who spends time running to the country store with the product of his fowls will never make a thrifty, profitable farmer. I believe in poultry on the farm, and nothing looks finer than a flock of Light Brahmas, without mixture—but I do not believe that a hen is a horse or a cow."

WHAT THE BIRDS ACCOMPLISH.—The swallow, swift and nighthawk are the guardians of the atmosphere. They check the increase of insects that otherwise would overload it. Woodpeckers, creepers and chickadees are the guardians of the trunks of trees. Warblers and flycatchers protect the foliage. Blackbirds, thrushes, crows and larks protect the soil under the surface. Each tribe has its respective duties to perform in the economy of nature; and it is an undoubted fact that, if the birds were all swept off from the earth, man could not live upon it, vegetation would wither and die, insects would become so numerous that no living thing could withstand their attacks. The wholesale destruction occasioned by the grasshoppers, which have lately devastated the West, is undoubtedly caused by the thinning out of the birds, such as grouse, prairie hens, etc., which feed upon them. The great and inestimable service done to the farmer, gardener and florist by the birds is only becoming known by sad experience. Spare the birds and save your fruit; the little corn and fruit taken by them is more than compensated by the vast quantities of noxious insects destroyed. The long-persecuted crow has been found, by actual experiment, to do far more good by the vast quantity of grubs and insects he devours than the little harm he does in a few grains of corn he pulls up. He is one of the farmer's best friends.

EARLY CUCUMBERS.—We read in the quotations of the prices of green vegetables for March 11th, in Chicago, the following: "There was a small consignment of very choice cucumbers received from New Orleans, which were held at \$3.00 per doz." A celebrated physician being asked what was the best way to prepare cucumbers for the table, said: "Pare them nicely; cut them up in thin slices transversely, pour good cider vinegar on them, sprinkle them with salt and pepper, and then throw them into the pig-pen." To all those who are careless of what or how much they eat, this was excellent advice. Made into pickles they are less dangerous, but all the good there is in them is contained in the acetic acid which fills their pores, and frequently they are pickled in vinegar made from sulphuric acid, a poison which cannot be said to be healthy. Notwithstanding thousands of children and young persons with weak stomachs, have been manufactured into miserable dyspeptics by the aid of green cucumbers, yet this edible is raised and used by almost everybody in the country, and the cities are flooded with them in their season. Perhaps it pays some folks to buy green cucumbers at \$3.00 per doz., but all things considered, probably everybody but the doctors would be just as well off without them.—*R. K. S., in Western Farm Journal*.

TREE SPLITTING.—When I find a forked tree that is likely to split, I look for a small limb on each fork, and clean them of leaves

and lateral branches for most of their length. I then carefully bring them together and wind them round each other, from one main branch to the other. In twelve months they will have united, and in two years the ends can be cut off. The brace will grow as fast as any other part of the tree, and is a perfect security from splitting. I have them now of all sizes, and I scarcely ever knew one fail to grow.—*Prairie Farmer*.

DOMESTIC.

VARIOUS HINTS.

—Frosted feet may be relieved of soreness by bathing in a weak solution of alum.

—Common wheat flour made into paste with cold water, applied dry, will take out grease spots without injuring the most delicate fabric.

—The surest remedy for chapped hands is to rinse them well after washing with soap, and dry them thoroughly by applying Indian meal or rice powder.

—Lemons can be preserved by varnishing them with a solution of shellac in alcohol. The skin of shellac formed is easily removed by rubbing the fruit in the hands.

—To remove the coal clinkers that sometimes attach themselves to stoves, put a few oyster shells into the fire, and the clinkers will be softened so they can be readily removed.

—Lemon juice and glycerine, equal parts, are recommended to remove tan and freckles. For cleansing, softening, and whitening the skin of the hands and face, nothing can be better. Apply at night, and wash off in the morning.

—Scorches made by overheated flat-irons can be removed from linen by spreading over the cloth a paste made of the juice pressed from two onions, one-half ounce white soap, two ounces fuller's earth, and one-half pint vinegar. Mix, boil well, and cool before using.

—To remove freshly-spilt ink from carpets, first take up as much as possible of the ink with a teaspoon. Then pour cold sweet milk upon the spot and take up as before, pouring on milk until at last it becomes only slightly tinged with black. Then wash with cold water, and absorb with a cloth without too much rubbing.

—Red pepper is said to have a more potent effect than the article sold in the drug stores is not always fresh, but every one can cultivate the plant easily. The variety commonly known by the name of "bird's pepper" is the best, and the plant itself is so pretty that it is an ornament for a flower stand. The seeds possess a stimulating and reviving property. One seed given daily to canary-birds, if they seem drooping, will have an excellent effect.

BUNNS.—Rub together one lb. of butter, one and a half lbs. of sugar, ten eggs, one teaspoonful of soda, one teaspoonful of cream of tartar, or the juice of a lemon, three lbs. of flour, a few currants if you like; beat the eggs with the sugar; dip them with a spoon into the baking pan. Bake in a quick oven.

ECONOMICAL VEAL SOUP.—Boil a piece of veal suitable for a fricassee, pie or hash; when tender, take the meat up and slip out the bones; put these back into the kettle, and boil for two hours. Then strain the liquor and stand away until the next day. When wanted, take off the fat, put the soup into a clean pot, and add pepper, salt, an onion, a half-tablespoonful of flour mixed in cold water, and slices of potato. Boil thirty minutes and serve hot.

SHIRRED EGGS ON TOAST.—Buttered toast, one egg to each slice; butter; pepper; salt. Drop whole eggs into a dish. Set it in the oven. Let it remain there until the whites of the eggs are set. The moment the dish is taken from the oven break the eggs with a fork, add pepper, salt, and butter to taste. Then spread it on hot and crisp toasted bread, well buttered. Eggs prepared in this way are equally nice on Graham, brown, or flour bread, toasted.

INDIAN DOWDIE is a dish we like very much. I take a three-quart basin or pan and cut it not quite full of quartered apples, sprinkle a little salt over, pour in water till they are not quite covered, then make ready a "batch" of Johnnycake or brown bread dough and cover the apples, heaping up a little. Set in the oven and bake till the crust is done and the apples soft, then take out, break up the crust, and stir all in among the apple, mixing and mixing till both are well incorporated. Then cover close and keep warm—not hot—till your next meal is ready. Then take out a plateful and pour over milk (or cream), and with a bit of cheese, will have "a dish fit for a king." I think the daintiest pudding ever made would not tempt my people from a breakfast of "Indian Dowdie," made just nice.