

Five out of Seven American Housewives

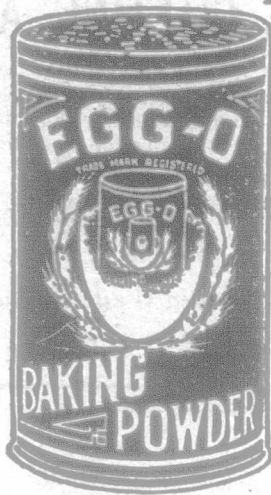
now use what are known as combination or double-acting baking powders. This style of baking powder has two actions. It acts first when cold water or milk is added in the mixing bowl. Its second action requires the heat of the oven. This strong, double leavening power is what is needed for the heavy Government Standard flour in use today.

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The Story of the Plow.

BY J. R. SPRY, B.S.A.

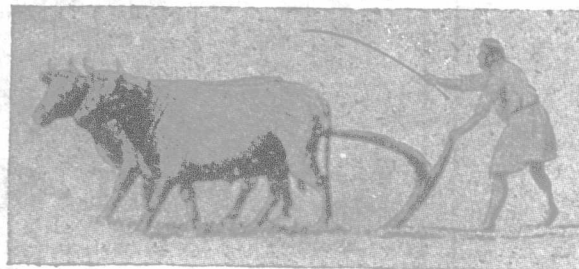
You have seen your fathers or brothers plowing in the fields, and are doubtless so accustomed to this commonplace farm operation that you may think that farmers always had horses, harness and plows like we have to-day. But plowing the fields was not always the simple and easy thing it is now. A long time ago the farmers had no horses, but had to use slow, clumsy oxen instead. They had no leather harness, but used willow branches twisted into thongs with which to hitch the oxen to the plow. They had no steel plow like your father's, but used a crooked stick as a substitute. The first plow was a pig's nose. Not that

cover the weeds and grass as a good plow should do.

A peculiar custom in some countries was to draw plows by tying them to the tails of the horses or oxen. They had no harness-makers such as we have, and leather harness was unknown. So tying the plow to the horse's tail was about as handy and cheap a way of "hitching up" the horse or ox as could be thought of. After a while people began to see that this was a cruel practice, and laws were passed making it a crime to plow in this manner. About the time the first houses were built where we now have the city of Montreal, an Irish Parliament passed a law entitled "An Act Against Plowing by the Tayle," which declared that any person plowing by hitching the plow to the tail of any animal should be fined and imprisoned.

The plow of those days left the soil lumpy, and the farmer or his sons broke up the clods with a club. One of the reasons for plowing is to make the soil fine and granular. It would never do to leave the ground all lumps.

A lumpy soil will not germinate seeds well, for to make seeds come up quickly the soil should be fine enough to touch the seed on all



Primitive Plowing, which Simply Scratched the Surface of the Ground.

the farmer plowed with a pig's nose, but the first plowing was done by pigs as they rooted over the soft earth in search of juicy plant-roots or fat grubs. The farmer of long ago noticed the efficient manner in which the pigs turned over the soil and tried to imitate them. He cut down a small tree and trimmed off all but one branch, leaving this one about two feet long and sharpened on the end. A long stick was fastened to the trunk of the tree with which to steady it, and the plow was ready to use. This was dragged up and down over the area to be planted and the earth torn up until it was sufficiently loosened to give a covering of soil for the seed to be sown.

The only reason given for plowing the soil in those days was to get a covering of earth for the seeds. It was soon found, however, that the weeds got thicker and thicker after each crop, and as years went by and the field was plowed again and again the soil became harder to work. It would be very sticky when wet and bake into a hard mass when dry, and the plants were greatly injured by the dry weather.

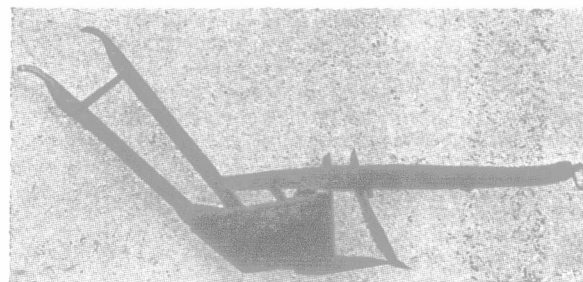
Now the reason of this was that the stick-plow did not turn the weeds and weed seeds under the soil to smother and die, neither did it turn up their roots to be killed by the frost. Neither did the plow crumble the soil as do the plows we now use; nor did this stick-plow loosen the soil to any great depth, for had the soil been worked deeper it would have held more of the rains and the plants would not have died of thirst in the hot season.

And so we see with such a poor plow only poor crops could be produced, and farmers were not very prosperous at this time. Some men who have studied the history of farming tell us that the story of the plow is the story of farming; that if the plow used by the farmers of a nation is poorly constructed and gives but indifferent results, we are sure to find that nation lacking in agricultural knowledge, and the homes of the farmers not very comfortable. I suppose this shows that the man who is a good farmer is a careful plowman, and the boy or girl who would have a good garden must spade and hoe the ground carefully and often.

But even if these farmers of long ago had a poor plow they at least had grasped the idea suggested by the pig's nose, and many improvements were soon made in the shape of the plow, which increased its usefulness. But for many years the plow remained at best a clumsy implement which served to stir the soil to only a very slight depth, and did not

sides. A lumpy soil will not grow large and healthy plants for the roots find it difficult to obtain food and water. In Ontario if our plow should leave the soil lumpy when plowed in the fall, the frosts of winter push the little soil grains apart, the lumps fall to pieces, and the following spring where we had lumpy soil we have a loose, easily-worked soil layer. So in this country the frost does the work of breaking up the clods which the farmers' sons had to do in the olden times.

All the plows we have been telling you about were made of wood, but they used to break easily and would wear out quickly, so some one made one partly of iron, placing the iron on the parts of the plow that used to wear out first; the other parts were still made of wood. Later the plows were made of iron except the handles. But a peculiar thing happened. You may remember hearing your grandfather tell how that when stoves first came into use they were looked upon as something which would poison the air in a house, using up the good air and giving off air not fit to breathe. He might also tell you how that oil lamps were expected to explode and burn down houses, and how that people would sit away back from the table awaiting the calamity. These may seem queer ideas to you, but a new and useful idea is oftentimes ridiculed, and so it was with the iron plow. Some farmers said it made the weeds grow,



The First Type of Plow with Moldboard.

others that it poisoned the soil, and many refused to use it. However, this strange opinion soon died out, and the wooden plows can now be found only in our museums.

And so to-day the plow your father uses is the result of 4,000 years of slow improvement, from the crooked sticks that only scratched the ground to an implement that pulverizes the soil and exerts a more important influence on the productiveness of a soil than any other single tillage operation. As a result of all this your father works more land and grows better crops, and you live in more comfortable homes than did the early farmer and his family.