Farm and Garden.

Top-Dressing Lands.

Messrs. Eds.—Some scientific farmers have promulgated the idea that all manures applied on the surface of the earth, lose a great part of their value by evaporation. This is undoubtedly true many times, and at others a more beneficial effect comes from the application, than if it had been otherwise made. We give one or two illustratings that have recently come under our observation.

A year ago farmer C. sowed a field of rather frosty land, facing the northwest, to winter rye. We thought the field rather unpromising to the crop. It looked passably well, however, through autumn and spring. The middle of June we passed by it, and could not help remarking the difference between a couple of acres in a lower corner, from the other parts of the field. The first impression was, that it was a different grain, but as we reached the field bordering on the wayside, we saw it was rye and nothing else. We inquired of farmer C. the cause of difference, and were informed that all parts of the field were subject to the same treatment, except the corner giving "the largest and best," was top-dressed with good manure after sowing. It appeared to us, at the time, that this fertile corner would be ready for harvest a full week before the other part of the field, and were informed that it was sowed ten days later, making half a month difference in the time between sowing and harvest in the two pieces or portions of the field.

Farmer D. sowed oats last spring in two fields of a similar soil. The difference in cultivation had been that field number one was planted with corn the, previous year, and well manured with rotten manure in the hill, and was sown to oats about April 20. No. 2 was, in part, planted with corn, manured in the hill with recent manure, and a part planted with potatoes, and no manure given. This field was plowed and sowed to oats about April 27, and a top-dressing of eight loads of recent manure applied to the acre. No. 2 was ready for harvest a full week earlier than No. 1, the straw was brighter and the grain heavier, and what was more, the grass sown had taken a much better start. In these cases, and we are sure they are not solitary ones, top-dressing plowed crops has been beneficial, by increasing the crops enough to pay cost, leaving the ground in much better condition for future harvests. It has also given new proof that giving fertility to the land lengthens the season, equal to from ten days to two weeks, or in other words, by giving strength to land, it is enabled to bring forth and mature a crop in so much less time than it would do without this cultivation, a consideration of no small importance in our climate, and especially in seasons like the past.

Top-dressing grass lands has been practiced as far back as our memory runs. Formerly, farmers drew the manure for this purpose on their meadows in autumn, and let it lie in small heaps until spring, when it was spread, leaving a full share where the heap stood, which, of course, had taken a pretty fair benefit from it in the fall and early spring rains.

Experience has now taught a better practice, which is to spread the manure evenly from the cart, just early enough in fall to have the rains incorporate it with the earth as much and as soon as may be. In this way the roots of the grasses feed upon its juices in autumn, and what is quite as valuable, it forms a little extra covering for the roots to protect them from the cold of winter. From this the crop derives great benefit.

Compost forms an excellent dressing for grass lands. We have tried spreading simply the soil from the road-side, with good effect, but had this or swamp muck, of which there are thousands of acres now lying useless, and worse, for they are continually filling the air with miasma, been allowed to be mixed with one-third or one-half manure, and to lie so mixed for one season, and then spread, they would produce a very fine effect. One load of such a compost—where a half or two-thirds are taken from the swamp—is worth as much on meadow land, taking the time of continuance into account, as a load of livery-stable manure, though it does not cost a half as much as the latter at present rates.—*W. Bacon, Richmond.*

Miscellaneous.

Men and Women at Home.

A lady of my acquaintance gives it as her sine qua non of domestic felicity, that the "man of the family" should always be absent at least six hours in the day. And truly a mistress of a family, however strong her affection for the male members of it, cannot but acknowledge that this is a great boon. A house where "papa" or "the boys" are always "pottering about" popping in and out at all hours, everlastingly wanting something, or finding fault with something else, is a considerable trial to even feminine patience. And I beg to ask my sex generally—in confidence of course—if it is not the greatest comfort possible when, the masculine half of the family being cleared out for the day, the house settles down into regular work and orderly quietness until evening? Also it is good for us, to have all the inevitable petty domestic bothers got over in their absence; to effect which ought to be one of the principal aims of the mistress of a family. Let them, if possible, return to a quiet smiling home with all its small annoyances brushed away like the dust and cinders from the grate—which *en passant*, is one of the first requisitions to make a fire-side look comfortable.

It might be as well, too, if the master himself could contrive to leave the worldly mud of the day at the scraper outside the door; however, as these chapters do no pretend to lecture the lords of creation, I have nothing more to say on that score. But she who, the minute an unfortunate man comes home, fastens upon him with a long tale of domestic grievances, real or imagined—how the butcher will never bring the meat in time, and the baker keeps a false account of loaves—how she is sure cook is given to drink, and that Mary's "cousin" had his dinner off "our" mutton yesterday—why such a lady deserves all she gets; cold looks, sharp speeches, hasty plunges into the convenient newspaper; perhaps an angry cigar. Poor little woman; sitting crying over her lonely fire, not owning that she is wrong, but only that she is very unhappy, and very much ill-used, might one recommend to her notice one golden rule? "Never pester a man with things that he cannot remedy and does not understand." And when he comes in again, honest man! perhaps a little repentant too, there is but one course of conduct which I recommend to all sensible women—viz, to put her arms round his neck, and—hold her tongue.—*A Woman's Thoughts about Women.*

Gutta Percha.

In its crude state Gutta Percha has no resemblance whatever to India rubber, nor are its chemical or mechanical properties the same, nor does the tree from which it is taken belong to the same family of trees, or grow in the same soil; yet, from the fact it can be dissolved and wrought into water-proof wares, many, not informed upon the subject, have inclined to the belief that the two materials are identically or very nearly the same. Nothing could be more erroneous, as may be seen by the following comparisons.

Gutta Percha is produced from the Isonandra or Gutta tree; is a sap of a brownish color, which, when exposed to the air, soon solidifies, and forms the Gutta Percha of commerce. It is a fibrous material, much resembling the inner coat of white-oak bark, is extremely tenacious, and without elasticity or much flexibility; may be melted and cooled any number of times without injury for further manufacture; it is not injured by coming in contact with grease or other fatty substances; resists the action of sulphuric, muriatic, and nearly every other acid; is a non-conductor of electricity, as well as of heat and cold. When exposed to boiling water it contracts and becomes soft like dough, when it may be moulded into any desirable shape, which it will retain when cool; has an exceedingly fine oily grain, and is not an absorbent, but a perfect repellant of water.

India Rubber or Caoutchouc is produced from a milk-white sap, taken chiefly from the Sapboca Cahuca tree, which soon coagulates, when the whey is pressed out or dried off by heat—the residue is the India rubber of commerce. It is of a soft gummy nature, not very tenacious and astonishingly elastic. When reduced to a liquid by heat it appears like tar, and is unfit for further manufacture. By coming in contact with grease or other fatty substances it is soon decomposed, and ruined for further use. If brought in contact with sulphuric, muriatic and other acids, it soon chars it. It is a conductor of heat, cold, and electricity; exposed to the action of boiling water does not lose its elastic properties, increases in bulk, and cannot be moulded; is not a perfect repellant of water, but more or less absorbent.

The term "vulcanized" is applied to fabrics of gutta percha or India rubber, which have been cured or tanned by submitting them to a high degree of artificial heat; the object being to change the nature of the gum, so it will not afterward be affected by heat or cold.

Gutta Percha is vulcanized for the purpose of giving it elasticity and pliability, and is entirely free from unpleasant odour; will not decompose and become sticky under any circumstances. When exposed to friction it wears away dry; is still a non-conductor, and by vulcanization is not injured in its incomparable repellant properties.

India rubber is vulcanized to reduce its elasticity, and give it more firmness than is natural to the crude material.—*Practical Machinist.*

Moral Greatness.

The highest style of manhood, is that which manifests, as its characteristic, the disposition that abhors what is evil, and cleaves to that which is good. This is the true nobility; the true heroism; the true greatness. He who has this, is reaching toward that which is loftiest in human attainment. He is aspiring toward that for which God made him. No intellectual eminence, no grasp of learning, no practical skill or sagacity, can exalt him so much. With all his attainments, and with all his far-sighted penetration, he is yet, if without moral discrimination, like a mole gifted with an eagle's vision, mining in the earth. His narrow sphere of vision is the mockery of his powers. He sees clearly the falling snow-flake, but not the avalanche that threatens to overwhelm him. He discerns the chances to gather pebbles, but cannot discover the grains of gold intermingled with them. The man who stores up wealth or knowledge, indifferent to the good or evil of his acts in life, is like one who diligently garners the chaff, and leaves the wheat to rot. There can be no true and valuable attainment apart from *moral excellence*. A bad man, with all his gifts of nature and education, is a pitiable object. His life is but the funeral procession of his soul, moving on to the judgment, and lighted on its way by the gloomy, sepulchral torch of his genius. While his thoughts soar to the stars, his passions bind him to the clod. While thousands admire his brilliance, they fail to realize how much it owes to the phosphorescence of moral decay. With just force, exclaims the poet Young:

> "When I behold a genius bright but base,
> Of splendid talents, but terrestrial aims,
> Methinks I see an thrown from her high sphere,
> The glorious fragments of a soul immortal,
> With rubbish mixed and glittering in the dust."

Many a striking example does experience afford of intellectual eminence, smothered and extinguished in moral defilement. Even a heathen philosopher declared, that the true orator must be a good man. He saw that iniquity and vice would palsy the very utterance of those great, pure thoughts, which stir the souls of men as with the notes of a trumpet. The conception of them would be impossible to a mind steeped in the imagery, and clouded by the gloom of dark deeds and lusts. There can be no true greatness of soul, apart from moral purity. We admire mental energy, and gaze with wonder at the intellectual exploits of some men; but the feeling is more akin to that with which we regard feats of muscular strength, than to that called out by the sight of ease, health, or life itself, sacrificed to holy principle. There is a kind of greatness which characterizes daring, dashing genius; which is exhibited by commercial enterprise, or realized in the mere soldier of fortune; but it is no more like that of the good man facing the world's scorn in his devotion to God's will, and enduring the protracted martyrdom of a lifetime in self-denying effort to bless the world, than the spark of the glow-worm is like the sunbeam. There is something that stirs the soul more in Daniel's praying with his window open toward Jerusalem, in spite of the terrors of the lions' den, than in all the eloquence of Demosthenes, or the victories of Alexander. It does not need great battle fields, or immense auditories, to make heroes. The greatness which Heaven recognizes, and to which every heart, subdued by grace Divine, responds, is that of goodness. This can spring up under lowly roofs. It can make solitary places memorable, by the victories of a praying faith. It can fight, kneeling on moss, or heath, or desert sand, and rise in a triumph that pours contempt on muscular prowess. This is a greatness, too, within the reach of all. One need not be born to a throne to obtain it. One need not be so elevated as to be a spectacle to the world, in order to be inspired with, or to exhibit it. The eye of God is enough, and the soul may be its own field. Fidelity to principle is a jewel, that needs no earthly pomp, or courtlike splendor, for its setting. Intellect or learning may be but the foil to its simple greatness. Mount Blanc would gain nothing in impressiveness, if it were hedged about by a Chinese wall; and a holy life, unswerving in devotion to truth and duty, looks down like an Alpine summit upon all the encircling attainments or achievements of intellect.

To be good—to cleave to that which is good—in spite of any and all obstacles, that is greatness, worth, heroism. It is equally at home in high places, or in low. It may ennoble cottages, and dwell in the heart of a little child. Wealth and power have no monopoly of it. Social position gives small advantages toward securing it. Each must win it for himself, and every place, and all time afford the opportunity.

Discipline.

If a child has done wrong, and deserves punishment, punish him; but do it calmly. Scolding, twitching, jerking, frightening, scarcely ever reform. A child's disposition may be ruined by constant fretting, but his evil propensities will have but gathered strength. He has a right to all the sunshine that comes with his years.—Many mothers have a mistaken idea that punishing children is cruel. On the contrary, no children are so happy as those who are well governed; and no children are so miserable as those who are not governed at all. Poor little things, how can it be otherwise? Ignorant, unreasoning, unreflecting, unrestraining, with no steady hand to guide them, they are left to the mercy of their own whims. This is cruel. They do not know, they cannot be expected to know, what is best for themselves, and the relation of mother and child is created by God, that the mother's experience and wisdom may supply the child's deficiency. A mistake here is fatal, and here, alas! the mistake seem to center. Billy wants a piece of plum cake because he sees it on the table. His mamma thinks it too rich for him, and that he has already eaten enough, and she tells him so. Billy is not so strongly impressed with this fact, as he might be, and urges his claim more strongly. Mamma yields. So does not Billy's stomach, but stoutly asserts its grievances. Who is the blame for Billy's sufferings? Certainly not ignorant little Billy. Children are allowed to eat all kinds of food, at all times in the day. Two-year-old in calico is placed on the floor, and stuffed with seed-cake to keep him from crying, while mamma is washing the dishes. Two-year-old in cambric, undergoes the same process, while mamma is crocheting, or nurse entertaining her callers.—Consequently, when two-year-olds have attained fifteen, if they do attain it, they are hired by papa to undergo slow torture at the hands of the dentist.

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