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The Agriculturist

A WEEKLY JOURNAL DEVOTED TO LITERATURE, AGRICULTURE, AND NEWS.

ANDREW LIPSETT, Publisher.

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ANDREW ARCHER, Editor.

VOL. II.

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NO. 10

Agriculture.

Short-horns. The editor of the Maine Farmer, last Saturday, in reviewing volume 18 of the American Short-horn herd book, says that the number of Short-horns in the United States is greater than ever before.

This breed of stock was never more highly appreciated than now, and though prices are lower than a few years ago, there is no greater depreciation than in other kinds of stock.

The Short-horns have nobly subserved the purpose for which they were first imported, that is to furnish a supply of larger beef, and now that Europe must be supplied with this article from this country, and will take none but the first quality, preference being given to animals that will weigh twelve hundred pounds net, and upwards, the outlook for this interest is certainly most promising.

Corn for Fodder. A correspondent of the Husbanman says: "As the season is near at hand for providing for a full supply of fodder for fall and winter use, there is the question of the value of corn fodder to supply deficiencies in succulent food, that frequently occur to a greater or less extent in consequence of drought or some other cause, that may diminish the crop of good grass in those sections where stock and dairy products form the leading profits of the people."

After relating how he first came to raise corn for fodder, he goes on to say how it should be raised. He has found from experience that: "About a bushel and a half of seed to an acre, evenly distributed in drills three feet apart, with the land well supplied with manure, gives the best results. I always run the cultivator through it three or four times in the early stages of growth. If any is left for winter feed, I would cut it up before the frost injures it, and shock it without binding, but bind it around the top as I would field corn, and let it stand until the weather becomes settled, cold and dry before hauling into the barn. I never have fed any hay from which cows should yield more or better milk in winter, than from cornstalks in this condition."

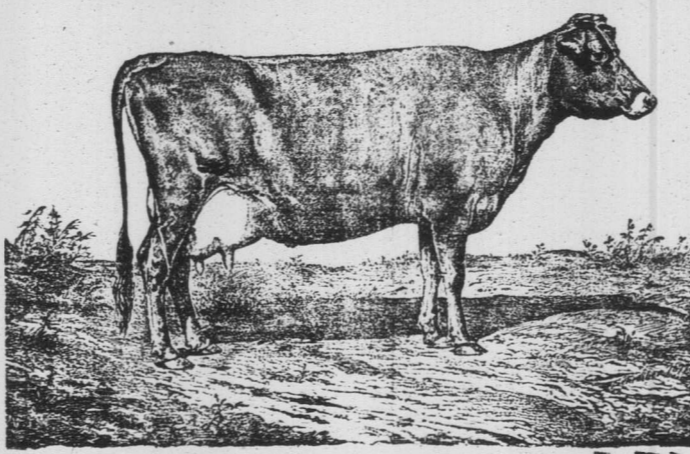
PLANTING FRUIT.—In Spain there is a proverb that the man who eats fruit that was planted by a former generation is unjust if he does not plant for future generations. So when a Spaniard at a peach or a pear he digs a hole with his foot and covers the seed. In Spain, therefore, trees grow by the roadside, and there is fruit for all. William Cullen Bryant, in his poem on "The Planting of the Apple Tree," told, in solemn numbers, how he did not expect to eat the fruit of the tree, but his pleasure came from knowing that long after he was dead, people yet unborn would see its blossoms and have its fruit. Too many people depend upon the old orchard planted by their grandfathers.

Something about Turkeys.

At this season, and especially when there are a few warm days with a genial sun, turkeys are restless, noisy, and wandering from place to place, manifesting a strong disposition to use the wing and break through enclosures. Turkeys are impatient of restraint and love freedom. The turkey carries a good deal of wild blood in her veins that has never been tamed neither can it be bred out. This uneasy state will continue to a greater or less degree until the hens have fairly settled down to laying, when they will become the quietest of all domestic fowls. They are mischievous birds about the garden and flower beds, and their mischief is conducted in so sly a manner that they often go unsuspected. The male seldom commits depredations in the spring. His principal business is to spread his gay banner on the sunny lawn, and strut in his gorgeous full dress, subject to all the whims and caprices of the females, to follow wherever they lead. There are some varieties that manifest less of this roaming disposition, and are more quiet and domestic in their habits. One of these is the Narragansett. They are tame compared to the majestic Bronze, that no damper can check, or no enclosure or confinement can tame. Apart from this wildness there is no doubt but that the Turkey is the most profitable bird the farmer can raise, if only the thing can be done. To do this successfully requires a knowledge of their habits and disposition, and to become thoroughly acquainted with these the attendant needs to be constant, strict and studious until the flocks are thoroughly trained, and of an age to be trusted with their natural freedom. Not that they should be constantly restrained for this will not answer; but their movements should have a careful eye over them, and their course watched, that when necessary the broods may be readily found. Turkeys that are trained are generally very regular in their habits, and can be depended on. Conning the expenditure of feed, the turkey is the easiest and cheapest raised of any of our domestic fowls, not excepting the geese, which lives on next to nothing. When we come to reckon the extra care and trouble that begins with the first advent of the broods until the birds are brought to the block, the profits depreciate in value. Frequently the turkeys are hatched and reared by the common hen, and they are more quiet and hen-like in their habits, but are never so large or valuable as the sweet succulent grasses and insects that dwell in the meadow lands. This staying at home gives them a stunt from which they seldom recover. Daily exercise strengthens and spreads the limbs, and gives a broader expanse to the body, which is not gained by mere food alone. For all their roving propensities, the turkey is a bird that seeks considerable ease and rest. Their first move is to get out of sight and hearing of home; then at midday, or rather as soon as the sun comes out hot and scorching on a summer day, they draw up under the deep shade, and rest until toward nightfall, while the home broods with the domestic hen have been on the move from the first rise of day, and continue over on the alert until sunset. Turkeys require warm, dry weather. Broods to be wholly successful should never be out of the shell before the 1st of June, when they will be ready to meet the great harvest of insects that are about at this season. It will not answer to put a boy at the business of attending the flocks, unless he be an apt one and has a fondness for the occupation, or a strong interest therein. As a general thing people raise turkeys at a loss, simply because they are determined to raise them in their own way. Their wills are the strongest, and the birds suffer in the flesh, while the owners depreciate in pocket. The turkey's way is the best, only we must teach, govern and control the natural habit in a quiet manner, and still not cross the desires of the mother to so great an extent as to cause a restraint which she will not endure.—Barclay's Turkey.

Food for Calves.—They should never be reared by an effort to save either care or food, though quite young. Plenty of food, though of the kinds that are cheaper than milk, will cause a healthy calf to grow and hold his smooth coat and rounded form. What a pitiful sight is a pen of calves that have been "knocked on the head with a churn-dasher?" Gruel made of flour, buckwheat flour, oat meal, cornmeal, and hay tea, and added to skim milk or buttermilk, and fed with care, will raise a calf in fine style. There must be care not to over-feed. This is very important. A hungry calf is a glutton, whether fed on milk or anything else. At three weeks old, or less, a calf will take shelled corn and oats, and soon thereafter will eat hay. Do not ruin the calves by starvation. The rounded form once lost is seldom fully restored.

NEW USES OF SAWDUST.—We have tried the experiment in our garden of mixing the rich, heavy, solid, clayish earth with sawdust, and find it makes the soil loose, giving a chance for water and air to penetrate, preventing the hard caking on the top, which before was a most objectionable fault, while the plants and seeds grow better than ever before. We ought to mention that we have also added some bone dust, and moistened with a weak solution of nitrate of potash.—Ez.



"Black Jess," one of the Herd of Jerseys which took First Prize at the Centennial. Property of Chas. L. Sharpless, Esq., of Philadelphia.

Clovering Land.

By clovering land, hundreds of worn out farms have been rescued from dilapidation and ruin. It is an accepted truism that "clover will catch," the farm can soon be restored to paying fertility, and by a good rotation is even getting more profitable; for after some years of such treatment the land will bear harder farming; that is, two or three crops may succeed a good crop of clover before laying down to clover again. Rough new land should be subsoiled by the use of large (some call it English) clover. Nothing so effectually roots out stumps and kills weeds and sprouts, and prepare the land for the plow and good paying crops. Wild, new land should always have it sown on the first grain crop down. It saves a vast amount of labor, for in a few years it so tames the ground and clears it of enemies to the plow that it works like old ground, and is good for full crops. One great error is often fallen into; and that is following the old tradition that a bushel of clover seed will do for eight acres. That may have been enough to clover land partially when it was new, but whover aims at getting up his land in a speedy and profitable way should sow a bushel on four acres, so that his land may be thoroughly shaded.

Sugar Beets a Better Crop than Potatoes.

To those whose farms are situated upon the railways, or on the seacoast, or along our navigable rivers, the beet sugar movement warmly commends itself, and in our judgment, at the present time, there is nothing that promises so well for a cash crop as raising beets for sugar, at the prices offered. Land which is in good condition for corn should produce from twenty to thirty tons of sugar beets, something of course depending upon the season. The labor of raising an acre of sugar beets is no greater than an acre of corn; they are not so exhausting to the soil, and the value of the crop promises much better, beside bringing the ready cash, which corn will rarely do. As compared with the potato crop, the sugar beet has several advantages. The average yield of potatoes on the old farms in Maine is probably not over one hundred bushels to the acre, and the price varies very much from year to year. Last year they were high, and the farmer who had a good quantity to sell, was fortunate. For some years previous to that, prices had ruled quite low, the average we think being less than fifty cents per bushel, and even then bringing more than their food value. Beside, what with the rust, the rot, and the beetle, the potato crop is becoming to be considered by farmers as quite uncertain.—Maine Farmer.

PRUNING. Judicious pruning gives life and fruitfulness to the apple tree. June is generally accounted the month for the operation. But the wide-awake farmer who has an orchard will not put it off so late, but always keep his eyes open and his knife handy. From the middle of February to the middle of March, is said, in this climate to be a good time for removing large limbs. An experienced orchardist says there are some things which ought to be observed in pruning.

Have a true ideal of how your subject shall look when you are done with it; of course circumstances must govern, but for a general rule let it be in shape somewhat like the frame of an open umbrella inverted, only a little more upright, in young trees, as they incline to spread when in fruit. Leave the centre sufficiently open to admit the sun and the picker. Remove unsound limbs, those crossing others, and such as would interfere with travel on the highway, or limbs that may overhang a neighbor's field too far. Remove suckers, always, unless your judgment tells you to leave a few on the stocks of trees lately grafted, as they may sometimes serve a good purpose for a time in equalizing the flow of sap. Do not be in too great haste to remove all side limbs and spurs on the trunk below the head of the tree, whether shaping a young seedling or making war on a neglected tree several inches in diameter. If a tree divides into several leaders near the ground, don't sacrifice the balance of the tree for looks, by taking off too much. Don't prune when the sap is active, unless you wish to the tree; also, great care should be taken if it is necessary to climb to graft at such time. It is well to use rubber boots or stepping-stairs for this purpose.

The Apple Tree Borer.

The young orchard in charge of the inexperienced fruit grower has no more destructive enemy than the borer, yet there are but few enemies to the orchard so easily controlled and destroyed by the experienced cultivator as this.

He who expects to keep his trees free from borers by looking for them above ground and by plugging up the holes with camphor hair soap, etc., will be as successful in saving his trees from destruction as the farmer would be in keeping his horse in safety by locking the stable door after the horse is stolen. By careful observation it has been found that the miller that lays the eggs hovers around the trunks of the trees in the shades of the evening during the month of June and when a tree possessing just the right conditions is found, deposits from three to six eggs near the surface of the ground; the most favorable conditions are an uneven surface caused by wounds or the work of a former generation of borers, which uneven surface must be moist or the eggs will not be kept in a proper condition to hatch.

When the eggs are hatched the little worms take a downward course, each by itself, increasing the distance from each other from the starting point; in September they will be found from two to three inches from the point where the eggs were laid just under the outside bark, and so near has been their course that they have left a streak resembling iron rust. Sharp eyes will easily discover their exact location by following the streak to its termination, and with the point of a knife destroy them; if left unmolested they will keep on their downward course to a distance of from four to six inches from the starting point, where they probably spend their first winter, early in the Spring they turn their course upward along the sides of their downward passage, and as they increase in size they eat deeper into the bark and wood of the tree. During the second summer they do most of their destructive work, and if four be unmolested and live, it is not more than three inches in diameter, they will be very likely to completely girdle the tree and thus destroy it.

Sometimes in October they make their way to a point near where the eggs were deposited, and there bore a hole into the wood of the tree about an inch from the bark, running up six or eight inches, where they approach the bark so near the surface that the miller can push itself out; in this position the worm spends the winter and transforms itself from a very disgusting worm to a respectable looking, but not beautiful, miller, which makes its way out the last of May or early in June. When the worm has started on his upward passage by boring into the tree, unless he can be reached with a small round stick of whalebone, he had better be left unmolested, as to cut him out would injure the tree much more than the small hole he would bore.

A very easy way to prevent injury by this pest of the orchard is to improve the first warm day after 15th of May to scrape the trunk of the tree from a few inches below the surface of the ground to a foot or more above, removing all of the rough portions of the bark, and killing all borers that previous neglect may have permitted to find lodgment, the trunk of the tree should then be protected with a sound made of coarse sand or fine gravel reaching above the surface of the ground from six to twelve inches, according to the size and condition of the tree; it should be high enough to cover all scars and wounds made by borers, and small enough in diameter to keep dry several inches on the top. It is very rare that a miller will lay eggs on a smooth surface and in contact with dry earth; if they do it is still more rare for them to hatch.

The mound of earth should be permitted to remain until the first of September, when it should be taken away and the trees examined, to remove any borers that may have been overlooked in the spring, and to scrape off any new ones if any may chance to have hatched; but if the work has been properly done, ninety-nine trees out of every hundred will have escaped the enemy.

Many writers recommend wood ashes, but repeated trials have proved that a hundred borers find lodgment in trees protected with ashes, where one will in trees protected with gravel. The cost is so trifling that every one can afford to try it.—Ploverman.

Quassia and soft soap will destroy aphides or plant lice on roses, by boiling four ounces of quassia chips for half an hour in a gallon of water, and when cold and strained, add two more gallons of water, six ounces of soft water, and six ounces of soft soap. With this mixture syringe the bushes.

On Rearing Calves.

Young's 'Annals of Agriculture' contains an interesting communication from the Duke of Northumberland on the subject of rearing calves. The Duke evidently wrote with a thorough knowledge of his subject, and, notwithstanding all our progress since 1782, it is doubtful if any living nobleman could better the duke's instruction. The plan consisted in using skimmed milk, thickened with common linned cake oil, ground very fine. His grace particularly directed attention to this last point. The cake, he said, should be ground 'almost to an impalpable powder,' in which state—to quote his words—"mixes very readily and almost intimately with the milk, making it more rich and mucilaginous, without giving it any disagreeable taste." The duke advised the addition of a little treacle, and sends with his letter the following recipe:—Take one gallon of skimmed milk, and in one pint of it add half an ounce of common treacle, stirring it until it is well mixed; then take one ounce of linseed oil cake, finely pulverised, and with the hand let it fall gradually, in very small quantities into the milk, stirring it in the meantime with a spoon or lalle, until it is thoroughly incorporated; then let the mixtures be put into the other part of the milk, and the whole be made nearly as warm as new milk when it is first taken from the cow, and in that state it is fit for use.

N. B.—The quantity of oil cake powder may, from time to time, be increased as occasion may require, and as the calf becomes inured to the flavor of it. In an editorial comment on this letter, Arthur Young informed his readers that he had tried all sorts of mixtures for rearing calves, except skimmed milk, and they had all failed. He had since tried skim milk, enriched according to the above recipe, and it had succeeded.—Agricultural Gazette.

GRUB IN THE HEAD OF SHEEP.—The "grub" or worm in the head, troubling the sheep are the larvae of sheep-gad-fly. The fly deposits its eggs in the nostrils of the sheep in July and August, where they immediately hatch, the young grubs crawling up the nose to the sinuses, where they remain through the winter and are ejected the following spring. They produce great irritation and excitement, causing much inconvenience to the sheep and frequently death. When the grub comes from the head in spring it burrows in the earth, assumes the form of a chrysalis, and finally comes forth again to a perfect fly, to torment the sheep during the hot months and go through the transformations. Of course no remedy is now of service. In July smear the nose of the sheep with tar, and turn fresh furrows in the pastures that they may have access to them as a means of warding off the attacks of the fly.

Young chicks will thrive best when they are kept dry and clean, and moved frequently to fresh ground. There is no better place for a coop than the garden through which the chicks will wander freely picking up or driving off many insects. A bed of young cabbages may be kept clear of flea-beetles, and other crows may be preserved in a similar manner by a few broods of chicks: Provide an abundance of clean water, tight shelter overhead and a dry floor. There will rarely be grapes if this plan is followed.

Dr. J. R. Nichols recently said all concentrated manures must be spread very evenly, as one would sow grass seed. They should also be applied, especially the nitrates, in the spring, just as the plants begin to use up fertility, while the more slowly acting barn manure should be applied the fall previous, that its plant food may have time to become developed. Nitrates of soda, he thought, ought never to be applied alone, but in connection with phosphates. Just why, he could not tell, further than that practice seemed to warrant such an application.

For a kicking horse, I would fill an old sack with hay, and suspend it from the loft by means of a rope in such a manner that the horse will be able to kick it every time it swings against him. Let him kick until he stops of his own accord, and I feel quite satisfied you will have no more trouble with him in that way.—Toronto Globe.

Shoot for Roses.—Collect some soot from a chimney or stove where wood is used for fuel, put into an old pitcher and pour hot water upon it. When cool, use it to water your plants every few days. The effect upon plants is wonderful in producing a rapid growth of thirty shoots, with large thick leaves and a great number of richly tinted roses.

Fattening poultry by machinery and special food is a plan very extensively employed in France and with profit. Many dislike fowls thus prepared for market; the flesh is very white and very insipid, and though plump looking, the bird on being roasted shrinks to small proportions.

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