

The Farm.

Hints about Wheat.

It is a mistake to suppose that wheat is not a paying crop. Very often it is not profitably grown, but it is looked upon as a necessary evil, hardly to be avoided, for there is no other crop to be substituted for it in the rotation. Yet wheat is absolutely necessary for us, and it would be strange if a crop which the world can do without could not be grown anywhere and everywhere. The competition with the easily cultivated and productive new lands at the extreme West need not necessarily be overwhelming to the more eastern cultivator, who on his side has an advantage in nearness to market, and cheaper tools and implements, and less waste and cost of harvesting. But the trouble lies in the small field with which the Eastern farmers are contented, consequent on the careless and insufficient methods of preparing and sowing the crop. Very rarely is the oat-stubble, which the wheat crop generally follows, plowed more than once, and very often the corn stubble prepared in the most hurried manner by a simple harrowing is made to bear this crop, which is more than all others dependent for success on a well-prepared seed-bed. The consequence is, that the young wheat is smothered by the more vigorous oats which spring up thickly on the newly plowed ground, and thus weakened is unable to stand the first heavy frost of the fall or winter, and is killed out. So on the harrowed corn stubble there is no depth of root to sustain the plant in the hard beaten soil, and it is in a worse condition in this case even than on the plowed oat-stubble. At present there is not sufficient vigor in the soil to enable the plant to make head against the difficulties it has to contend with, and it succumbs, and the crop either fails completely or is very unprofitable in its results. We must work on a different system. Old things have passed away, and if this crop is to succeed a new system must be adopted. The wheat crop must be the pivot on which our farming must hinge both in the East and West. The West, as we used to understand the term a few years ago, is now the East, and is in exactly the same circumstances as to condition of soil and needs of cultivation as that part of the country we used to call the East. "Thorns and thistles" have taken possession of the soil, and the "virtue has gone out of it" by which it used to grow crops by merely scratching the surface. No fair wheat crop can now be got by merely harrowing a corn-stubble, or by once plowing an oat-stubble; nor can we lay our fields down to grass with a poorly-grown wheat crop and hope to have a good catch or a good crop of clover or grass. Grass is often called our "pivot crop," that upon which the whole rotation depends; but when the precursor of grass, and as it succeeds or fails, so will our clover or grass flourish or fail. Then it will no longer do to bury it into the ground as we have done. A difference of ten bushels per acre depends upon this alone, and this is sufficient to make a crop profitable or otherwise. Two plowings at least should be given, and unless a very fair allowance of fairly good manure can be afforded, some of the purchasable manures should be applied, and those rich in nitrogen or ammonia are preferable to the phosphates, or at least have shown themselves to be more effectual as a full application. Then, again, there is much to the sowing. It is plain as the rapidly accumulating result of experience of late, as the attention of farmers has been more closely drawn to this matter, that broadcast sowing must be abandoned as no longer profitable. It is too costly a method. Especially has the late hard winter shown this. Drill-sown wheat has escaped the evil effects of drought, frost, and excess of wet, while broadcast-sown has been seen dead and cast upon the surface, with its roots all drawn from the soil, and no resources left to the farmer in the spring but to replant his bare fields with other crops. The difference here in the yield of the crop will be from five bushels per acre to the whole crop lost, so that, should farmers generally adopt this and the previously mentioned plan, it is probably safe to say that the yield of wheat would be doubled, certainly we have often seen, in fact we have grown, crops of wheat of twenty-five or thirty bushels per acre, which have been carefully put into the ground, which we are satisfied would not have yielded ten bushels had the old-fashioned system pointed out been followed. In this case, at least expenses were saved, and the one great profit was made, were made if no crop followed; but, and a good hay there was, in the off year, when there opened a serious loss both on the hay crop. Further, in selecting seed, it will pay to exercise care and judgment. None but the plumpst grain should be chosen. The wheat should be cleaned two or three times, and our experience has been that it will pay to steep the seed in a solution of copperas, which destroys rye, and helps to separate the light grains from those which are fit for seed. A crop sown in good season is to be preferred, but it is better to delay a week to complete the preparation, and get the soil into the best condition, than to hurry over and make more haste but less speed in the end.

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To MAKE CIDER.—Pick all the apples, rejecting those not sound, wash them clean, and afterwards let them lie and get dry. Grind and press them using no water or straw, or any substance that will give the cider an unpleasant taste, as on the purity and cleanliness of the apples depends the quality of the cider. Strain the juice through woolen or other close bag, put into clean barrels, and set in a moderately cool place, keeping the barrel full all the time so that the bubbles may work off at the bung. After it has done fermenting carefully rack it off, let it stand a few days, and bring it up. As the acid tends to sour the cider, it is a good plan to provide a bent tin tube, one end fastened in the bung and the other to drop down into a bucket of water. This will let all the gas pass off, and not let the air get to the cider. The quicker the pomace is pressed after being ground, the lighter will the color be, and darker if not pressed for twenty-four hours after being ground. The cider from the second and third pressing will be the richest. The reverse is the case in making wine, as a severe pressure on the must makes no wine. Cider making should be conducted with all the care that wine-making is.

WINE MAKING.—Pick the grapes off the stems when fully ripe, rejecting bad ones. Pass them through one of the Wino Mills to tear open the skins, but not to bruise the pulp. Press moderately; then get all that remains in the must to make brandy or an inferior wine off. Strain and fill into clean barrels; then insert a bent tube right into the bung, and let the lower (outside) end rest under the surface of water in a bucket, so that while all the gas shall escape, air will not get to the wine. When it has done fermenting, rack it off into clean barrels, bring it up, and set in a cool place; bottle it in a few months. The great secret of making good wine is to select only the best grapes, and press out the sour portion of the pulp. Nothing is here said about the numerous mixtures of water, sugar, and grape juice, which are frequently concocted and sold under the name of wine, but only of the pure juice of the grape properly fermented.

SAVING CORN-FODDER.

A ton of well-saved corn-fodder is worth, if well used, the price of a ton of hay; yet how rarely is it well saved or well spent! Exposed, after husking, to all the storms of October, it is tardily stacked or housed in November, and, moist and mildewed, washed and weather-beaten, it is not only the poorest fodder but absolutely injurious to stock, to which it is thrown in the roughest and most careless way in the barn-yard. Then it is trampled down in the snow and mire, and next Spring is cursed as the greatest nuisance a farmer has to contend with. But let corn-fodder be stacked up carefully, spread well at the bottom of the shocks, and tied closely at the top until the corn is husked, and then put up in convenient bundles, and again set up, so that the rain cannot penetrate the shocks, and as soon as cured be carefully stacked or put away beneath a tight roof, and it becomes agreeable-looking, sweet-smelling, nutritious fodder, which will be readily eaten by all sorts of stock. If it is cut up with any one of the various fodder cutters into short lengths, or even chopped up with an ax on the barn floor, wetted and sprinkled with a little salt and a handful of bran, it will be entirely consumed; and the napier in the spring will be altogether freed from the objectionable, unrotted and tangled stalks, while it will be equally enriched by their fertilizing remains. In this way the supply of feed will be economized, often leaving hay in spare for sale, or permitting the number of feeding stock to be doubled, and besides what is often a source of trouble and annoyance may be turned to good account and money made by it.

PICKLING WHEAT TO PREVENT SHMUTZ.—Moisten the wheat with fermented shmurz, and dry it with lime. Or, take three ounces of lime vitriol and dissolve in one quart of boiling water, for each bushel of wheat. When cool, sprinkle it over the wheat, and turn repeatedly, so as to be sure that each kernel is moistened. This is the simplest and best remedy we have yet used. We can confidently recommend it. No lime is needed to dry it, and in fact lime should not be used, as it decomposes the blue vitriol and weakens its action. If the vitriol is applied several days before the wheat is to be sown, all the better. With chamber-lime and lime, or with salt and lime, pickle only just before sowing.

Fred Douglass on the Situation.—Frederick Douglass has published a careful letter reviewing Grant's relation to the colored race. He began by asserting that the President's record shows him to have always been a faithful and sincere friend of Mr. Douglass' race; there is nothing to justify an accusation by Mr. Sumner, or any one else that he is or has been otherwise. Finally, he postulates his own position. Grant, he says, under his hood, shadowing by orders, letters, etc., written in the field, that he says "simply and practically cared for the practical and well-being of the freed people; that he at once sustained the policy of the Lincoln Administration in regard to colored troops, and that he was in advance of them in such a spirit." Mr. Douglass, speaking of recognition by appointment of office, says that they have a good share. He found in one department alone 200 persons of color. On the question of personal recognition, his evidence is very strong, he says: During my varied public career of more than thirty years, I have, perhaps, been brought into closer contact with colored men of my times, been brought into closer contact with our nation's great men and taking with my whole experience into account, I find that after our martyred President, Abraham Lincoln, and Senator Charles Sumner, no man in high position has manifested such interest with me upon all occasions as Mr. Douglass. In the look-out, when meeting with Gen. Grant, Douglass indicates presence of the colored race, and race, I found nothing of the kind in my referring to the San Domingo affair, invited, a fact of which Mr. Douglass was not with the colored men of the commission, White House, and when they called upon him often, never to have found him so easily accessible, gentlemanly, and cordial. Like most of us, I have been in the look-out, when meeting with Gen. 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