

FOR THE FARMER.

The Value of Sheep.

Every ordinary sized farm is incomplete without a flock of sheep. For if they yield no profit they would well nigh repay the outlay for feeding by keeping down weeds. On nine-tenths of the farms in America there is a goodly crop of weeds each year. Very often a field will grow a phenomenal number of these obnoxious plants notwithstanding the best of culture, because the seeds have been deposited there many years before. If you cut them some will likely reseed the ground and the chances are that the land will yield as large a growth as soon as the conditions are favorable. It is far better to have them turned into mutton and wool. The land will be freed from their growth and the seeds destroyed. A heavy crop of weeds undoubtedly impoverishes the land if allowed to ripen, and if pastured by sheep the growth is utilized. There are no other domestic animals that will thrive upon weeds alone. In fact they rather enjoy cleaning out a weedy patch and they do it much better than can be done with a scythe. They can subsist and do well on pasturage so scanty that other stock will starve upon it.

We recently had occasion to notice this in a woods pasture that had grown up in the fore part of the season with bluegrass, weeds and sprouts. Since harvest the cattle were turned upon it. The grass was somewhat woody, and it was not many days before they had enough of it. When they were removed the greenest grass was eaten and the leaves of the sprouts were partially nipped. The sheep were then turned to it. Before long they cleaned the sprouts and weeds completely, and one would suppose that everything was devoured that was edible. The grass was dry, and though not tempting seemed to be nutritious. They had abundance of water and were salted frequently. Upon this dry stuff that the cattle refused the sheep made steady growth. Thus the pasture that was practically worthless was turned into sheep and the best of manure. Sheep manure has been recognized as a most valuable fertilizer. It is a short cut to feed the weeds to the sheep and have their seeds destroyed rather than spending a deal of labor by composting them. A sheep's stomach is the best composter in the world.

Some writers of recognized standing maintain that the food that sheep eat is more valuable as a fertilizer when converted into manure than if applied to the ground without being fed. There is an upward tendency in the sheep industry as opposed to the downward a few years ago. This is well for there are vast regions in the west where the water supply is limited and is practically worthless for anything but sheep raising. This is also a feature worthy of notice, for other farm animals suffer materially if the water is cut off. Not so with sheep. The wool brings a timely sum of money in a season when there is but little to sell. The sheep may be wintered with comparatively little grain if allowed the range of a wood lot. It is well to provide shelter for them, but they suffer less than other stock if left to "rough it." If sheep are bred with good bodies they will afford an income both from wool and mutton. This two-fold profit should certainly commend them to every farmer. The nature of the sheep is such that they always prove agreeable additions to the farm. The time that sheep do require attention is the lambing season.—Robt. L. Dean, in the American Rural Home.

Handling Manure in Autumn.

The best practice among those not provided with abundant barn room, is to select a level piece of ground and stack the threshed straw there year after year. The straw can be converted into well rotted manure by using it liberally for bedding in the stables and by turning the cattle to the stack; and all things considered, this is the most profitable disposition of the straw where that not eaten by the cattle in the stock yard is converted into manure, and well cared for. The straw thrown under foot by the cattle will likely be trampled down so solidly that if left to itself it will not be converted into manure in the desired time, and part of the stack may have to

be cut down and strewn over the yard, making necessary some effort to hasten the rotting of the straw. As there is no need of handling wet manure, it is advisable to have the mass aired every day for some days before it is taken to the fields, that it may dry out. To accomplish this it may be necessary to use a manure hook like a two-pronged hoe. It may be made by any blacksmith. A better one, in fact the best for manure not wet, is to have a blacksmith bend the shank of a four or five tined manure fork, making a hook shaped like a potatoe digger. It is sometimes difficult to make the shank hold in place. Take the length of the shank; measure back from the end of the handle this distance less one inch; at this point put a screw through the handle, having it pass through the centre of the hole bored for the shank (the head and point of the screw may be filed off even with the surface of the handle), then drive in the shank with its point heated to a red heat; as the point reaches the screw it will be deflected and enlarged and will make way for itself in the wood, getting a hold that the strength of one man will not overcome. The handle of a manure hook should be quite heavy around the shank, to give strength, and the weight is really needed there.

All the manure should be removed from the yard before the grain is threshed, that the new straw may not be stacked upon it; and the usual method of putting it upon the winter wheat ground is a good one. If strewn over the ground as it is plowed the harrowing necessary to put the seed bed in proper condition will thoroughly fine it and incorporate it with the soil, while it will not be below the roots of the wheat. It is best to strew it over the ground as it is hauled out. This saves one handling. Hauling manure in it so fouls a wagon box that it is best to have a box for this and similar uses. This is best made of loose plank—pine, two inches thick and from nine to twelve inches wide. They are made much more convenient to handle by shaving down the ends to three inches wide. If endboards are desired, grooves can be cut in the side of the handles on the ends of the planks and will be strong enough to hold the boards. If desired to make the box higher than standards, and the latter are not provided with rings to receive pieces, staple rings into the planks forming the sides of the box. Passing pieces of wood through these rings will hold the upper boards in place. The lowest side plank must lie on the bolster, the planks forming the bottom of the box fitting closely inside of them.

The manure crop year properly begins in the fall; and at this time the yards, stable and sheds should be made clean and ready for the next year's crop making.

Extraordinary Smuggling.

An extraordinary case of smuggling is reported from Sourabaya, in Java. A Chinese passenger having died on board a junk which was anchored in the roadstead, the health officer of the port went off, and after viewing the body gave the necessary permit for burial. The master of the junk then came ashore and ordered a large coffin of the usual Chinese kind. During the early hours of the morning the crew, with the coffin, landed, and the funeral procession passed along the streets. After the funeral the party went back to the junk, which immediately put to sea. In the middle of the day some natives found an empty coffin in the middle of the road close by the Chinese cemetery, which not only smelt strongly of opium, but also had small particles of the drug adhering to its sides. The custom house authorities found the maker of the coffin who identified it as the one supplied to the master of the junk, and the body of the Chinaman was washed ashore soon afterward, so that it is clear that he had been thrown overboard, and the burial permit used to smuggle on shore a large coffin full of opium.

The great Democratic gains in Iowa and Ohio, where they made the fight mainly on the issue of tariff reform, is significant of the feeling in the entire northwest. The pressing of this issue maintains the unity and constitutes the strength of the Democratic party of the North. The more it is agitated the stronger it will be before the intelligent people.—Atlanta Journal.

AS YOU LIKE IT.

Mr. John H. Littlefield, a former law student under Abraham Lincoln, is in great demand this season as a lecturer.

Thus far this year the number of building permits for dwellings in Philadelphia exceeds last year's record by 1,400.

The Shah found his harem in a state of disorder on his return to Persia. He now wishes he had remained in Europe permanently.

The State Constitutional Convention of Wyoming has adopted a suffrage chapter by which female citizens possess the right of voting.

The Crouse Memorial College for women, a new institution at Syracuse, N. Y., gives promise of great success. It has very fine buildings.

George Kennan has reached Boston from his summer home at Cape Breton Island, and is about to begin his second year's series of lectures.

Female students are now admitted to the Wesleyan University, and there are six of them in its classes along with the young men this year.

Dr. Frithjof Nansen, the explorer of Greenland, will come to America next spring on a lecture tour, accompanied by his beautiful young bride.

Somebody has taken the trouble to compute that the average consumption of salt per adult capita in this country is nearly fifty pounds per annum.

New York skeptics say that a large part of the reed birds served in restaurants now are really blackbirds which are plentiful in the stalls at 50 cents a dozen.

An eagle that measured eight feet with its wings spread out was shot the other day at Rutledge, Ga. The bird was sitting on a pine tree looking at a six months old baby.

The female college at Mount Holyoke, Mass., has a fund which is used to assist poor students. It is one of the oldest American institutions for the higher education of women.

A prisoner in the custody of a Lancaster constable was rescued by one of his friends, and the officer afterward arrested the rescuer, but on the way to jail he, too, made his escape.

Hugo Zieman, the disgruntled chef of the White House, has a long list of grievances, but the most important of them lies in the fact that President Harrison insists on eating pie at every meal.

While out walking with his mother at Canton, Mass., a little son of Charles Sumner was attacked by a large gray squirrel, which ran up his clothes and severely bit and scratched his face.

The Women's National Industrial League of Washington has prepared a memorial to Congress asking an appropriation for a monument of Queen Isabella of Spain, the patron of Christopher Columbus.

A census of farm animals has recently been taken by the Italian government, and it appears that there is a very large increase in all kinds excepting pigs, which have diminished considerably in numbers.

B. F. Parker, at Blackshear's Mill, Laurens county, Ga., has a boy baby four months and fourteen days old. At four months and ten days he had two teeth and weighed 27 pounds and could sit alone.

Henry Apple owns a small mining claim in Sierra county, New Mexico, that has paid him \$18,000 in five months. He employs one man and the ore is crushed in a hand mortar. Apple is pleased with the fruit of his labor.

There are many applicants for admission to Smith College for women at Northampton, Mass., that cannot be accommodated. It is a melancholy fact that nearly all the professors of the gentle sex at this college are un-married.

PRESIDENT HARRISON declares that he does not consider the Republican defeats in the State elections as any reflection upon the policy of the Administration. This would seem to indicate the necessity that next time the voters should speak a little louder, so that they might be understood.

FARM, FIELD AND GARDEN.

SUBJECTS OF PRACTICAL IMPORTANCE TO AGRICULTURISTS.

The Importance of Sheep Husbandry in This Country—The Sources of Annual Income from Sheep—Fattening Swine for the Butcher's Block.

Every farming industry is subject to periods of discouragement, resulting in alternating from one crop to another or to a change in the breeding of animals from one kind to another as temporarily low price may influence for the time being. Probably in no branch of the animal industries is this more frequently seen than in that most useful one, the raising of sheep. A depression in the price of wool is almost certain to effect a lessening in the number of sheep, and instances are not unknown where what seems to have been but little short of wanton destruction of flocks has followed because of what was at most but temporary unprofitableness.

Singularly enough, says the agricultural editor of The New York World, sheep raising appears to be, at the same time, the only live stock industry in this country that cannot produce a supply equal to the demand. Wool is the one article that has a home market, for which our own farmers have never been able to produce enough to meet the requirements, and there is no probability of our ever raising enough to make its export desirable. This country furnishes as good a climate for sheep as can be found in the world, and cheap, rough lands can be put to no better use, and fortunately on such sheep often do the best.

Farmers who grow discouraged under low prices for wool seem to have forgotten that in other countries, of which England and France may be taken as examples, mutton has taken the first place, and wool is being considered more as an incident of the business than as the prime object in sheep husbandry. In England this has been brought about by improving the Leicester, Cotswold and Southdown mutton sheep, and in France the merino is more and more becoming a fine wool mutton breed. The American merinos are gradually tending in the same direction. Their bodies are larger and better formed, they come to maturity earlier and with longer staple and heavier fleeces than the original importations. There is also a growing tendency to market the flesh, and good feeding improves the coat of an animal, whether it be hair or wool, so that the disposition in favor of mutton, wherever it exists, has increased the quantity without injury to the quality of the wool.

No other animals take so little from the land for the amount returned as do sheep, and none are so effective in freeing their pastures from bushes and weeds. To make the most profit from animals designed for food, whether sheep, cattle or swine, full and generous feeding that will induce rapid growth and early maturity is indispensable. Besides the increase in the weight of their own bodies, sheep afford two sources of annual income, one from the lambs and one from the wool, each being about equally valuable. English experiments as to the amount of food consumed by different animals have shown that sheep can be made to produce as many pounds of mutton from a given quantity of food as can be produced of beef, thus leaving the fleece as an extra profit over cattle. Equally favorable results in this country can hardly be expected, unless in the older states or in localities where the carcasses can be profitably marketed. It is also true that the dairy cow gives a flow of milk to offset the wool, but the cow does not increase in flesh while producing milk as does the sheep while producing wool. No animal can be changed or improved in so short a time as the sheep. From the best crossing and feeding, the first generation from common ewes and high bred males will show a better development in twelve months, and the next cross will show a great improvement on the first. It is thus believed that by judicious crossing and feeding farmers may do very much towards making the raising of sheep independent of fluctuations in the price of wool and as uniformly profitable as most of their other productions.

Crop Bound Chickens.

The disease known as "crop bound" among fowls is occasionally, says a Kansas City poultry grower, because the bird's gizzard is out of order. There is not enough gravel in the gizzard to grind the food. If they cannot get sharp stones enough to supply this want you had better pound up some broken crockery rather fine and see how fast they will pick it up. Then you do not soak their food enough to have it swell to its full capacity before feeding it, and it swells in the crop (or craw, as you have it); then it sours and hardens and finally hurts the coating and death follows of course. Now, if you feed grain, and will take the trouble to soak it in lime water for twelve hours before feeding, you will not complain of your chickens dying off, and if you will stir a tablespoonful of sulphur into each quart of feed, twice a week, you will find it saves you a lot of bother about gapes, cholera and other ills that chickens are heir to.

If you feed meal to your poultry be sure and stir it up so that it will be thoroughly saturated and swelled before throwing it out to them. Lime is one of the best articles to promote health among poultry, as it helps digestion, and lime water for drink for fowls is as useful as it is for human beings. A change of diet for poultry is necessary to keep up a good appetite, and a box of coarse sand is a living comfort to the biddies, as is also a bed of ashes. Sand and ashes mixed together they evidently enjoy at all seasons of the year.

The so called gape worms found in the windpipes of chicks are not taken in from without, according to Poultry Journal, but "are generated within the bird. As some children have worms, so some chicks have gapes."

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