

Correspondence.

HOW THEY FARM.

Straightout Describes the three Methods Pursued in the Blue's Gully Section.

BLUE'S GULLEY.

EDITOR PROGRESSIVE FARMER:—THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER, as its name implies, should be not only acquainted with the best methods of farming but should know how farming is done in every section of the State, and since the Farmers' convention adopted THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER as the organ of the farmers of North Carolina I thought I would tell my brethren how we in these parts do it.

There are three ways of farming in these parts. First, do it yourself on your own account. Second, do it by giving a crop lien. Third, get tenants to do it for you.

The first of these methods is very unpopular in these parts, but has proved to be the most satisfactory and remunerative after it is done. This unpopularity grows out of the fact it requires more work and allows less time for talking politics, rabbit hunting and attending protracted meetings, and these things have a great charm for the people down here, so much so that even the negroes have been known to walk ten miles to attend a political speaking and some of their churches hold meetings for a month at a time. It is not unusual for some young men up in Raleigh connected with the railroads to give a negro preacher \$100 to hold a protracted meeting near some depot to which they run excursion trains and make \$1,000 by the operation as they get out posters telling of the hundreds to be baptized, and hire runners to spread the report among the negroes. Our people are fond of idling. They do not like any work, profession or calling that keeps them busy, hence doing the farm work, preparing compost heaps, plowing the ground and cultivating the crop is to them very laborious and distasteful. They rather try any other method and for this reason only a few of my neighbors farm themselves. Those who do are the best off, have most to sell, and seem the happiest, though they don't know so much. It is very astonishing to note the great improvement in the men who farm by proxy. They are posted on politics, religion and gossip and can talk learnedly on any subject, besides repeating day or night every one of Vance's tales or Col. Steele's old jokes. They have become so wordy that it takes the most advanced of them a solid hour to tell how Squire Wiggins' dog, Brogdon, whipped Dick Smith's dog, Buxton, in a fight they had at Squire Wiggins' mill. But none of these talkative farmers have as yet paid their taxes. They are all candidates for office and are greatly elated when an office-holder has died or resigned—think possibly the governor will call on them to fill the vacancy. They are prepared in their opinion for any office from minister to St. James to the Post-mastership of Blue's Gully, which pays \$8.50 a year—and would gladly take either. The men who do their own work do not seem to pine after office, but are quietly improving their homes and adding to their farms.

The second method of farming in these parts is by the crop lien. This is easy and very popular as it gives nine months time for politics &c. It is usually done in this way: the farmer goes to his grocer or some agent and says how much land he expects to put in cotton and how many acres he is going to put in corn. He has the land, a horse, and two steers and himself and a boy to work. The merchant takes a crop lien on the prospective crop and chattel mortgage on the horse and steers, then he agrees to furnish the farmer \$200. In Cincinnati pork, corn, guano, &c., and possibly a little cash in the busy season when the cotton is chopped and the corn hoed. The farmer after fixing the papers returns to his home in great joy. In a day or two he sends the boy to the store with an order. The writing of that order fills his soul with pride. He has ordered the merchant to send him by the boy all that his soul desires. He didn't ask the price; no, that would be low and mean, not he. He would not condescend to such small matters. He leaves that to his friend, the merchant. This is repeated for months

running from January to June, and with the "order" comes a request for \$10 or \$20, to pay "day labor". His orders for July, August and September are only partially filled and the merchant sends him word that the amount has been overdrawn and that he must stop. This makes him mad for a day or two and he swears as soon as he settles his account he will never trade with that villainous middle man and sharper again.

Then sullenly he and the boy arrange to gather the crop. He hires hands to do the work, all the boy can't do, and sends his cotton to market. When it reaches town he finds his merchant's clerk standing on the corner waiting for him. The cotton is taken. He is not even allowed to offer it for sale, and he is ordered to hurry up with the rest as the price of cotton is falling every day. He finishes gathering the crop and goes up for a settlement to find that the meal and corn he "ordered" was \$1.25 per bushel and the pork was fifteen cents per pound, and the interest on the cash was two per cent. a month. He has delivered his crop and is \$50 in debt, and the chattel mortgage takes the horse and steers. Next year he has to find another merchant "to run him," and the merchant furnishes a mule and takes a mortgage on his plantation "just for security, you know." It is astonishing, Mr. Editor, how popular this "order" system of farming is and it is still more astonishing what these "orders" sometimes call for. Not long since one of these "order" farmers in these parts had great trouble in finding a merchant "to run him," and after spending weeks in finding his man, the first order he made was for "five gallons of good rye whiskey and fifty pounds of crushed sugar." The merchant sent the boy back and cancelled the crop lien. No man has ever yet been enabled to describe the joy derived from writing "orders." It pays for loss of farm and steer. It pays for poverty and even want. And when these men are run down and out of everything, they sit in silence and gloat on joy's long passed when they wrote "orders on their merchant." The last method is that of the tenant, which I reserve for the next issue, if I don't forget it.

STRAIGHTOUT.

CLUBS AND FERTILIZER.

What an Old Farmer Thinks About the one and Manages the Other.

EDITOR PROGRESSIVE FARMER:—Your efforts are worthy of the success that is attending your labor in the interest of the farming people of our State, which is shown by the multiplication of Farmers' Clubs, the increased interest manifested in stock-raising, economical fertilizing of lands, and farming generally. I was familiar with Farmers' Clubs some thirty years ago; know something of their value and use to farmers and am heartily glad to read of their introduction and success. I like your position on commercial fertilizers. The large use of them is ruinous to farmers. The New England people learned this some years ago, and while the sale of fertilizers has decreased north and east for some twenty years they have increased south to the depletion of many a farmer's pocket, yea more stock and land, while the manufacturer's of these and the dealers have grown fat.

It may be asked how shall we fertilize? Our lands are too poor to produce without help. Make your fertilizers at home. Improve every hour you can spare. Have yards or pens for all stock, horses, mules, cattle, hogs, sheep, goats and poultry, with comfortable shelter. In all these pens put plenty of litter, washing from ditches, roadsides, jams of fences, muck when you can get it. After these have lain some time pitch over, pile up, and haul in a fresh supply. Feed all your coarse feed to your stock, corn also, sell none. Instead sell butter, milk, eggs, beef, pork, mutton, kids, chickens, turkeys, geese, ducks. Put soil where the slops are thrown from the house, also under the garden house. Thus many loads of the best quality may be compounded at little or no cost in money. Try it.

Hardwood ashes heavily spread on land have shown their good effect thirty years ago. Night soil (garden house gatherings) is a very lasting fertilizer and can usually be obtained in cities and villages for the hauling.

I should like to read in THE FARM-

ER more articles from practical farmers. They would add much to the interest and value of the paper and help us get acquainted.

The Farmers' Clubs are a grand move in the right direction. Organize more of them, and go and take part in them. I was familiar with them thirty years ago, and know their value. Having had some fifty year's experience in stock farming, darning and sheep husbandry, I propose to contribute articles for THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER on these subjects.

JOE CURTIS.

ROTATION AND REFORMATION.

EDITOR PROGRESSIVE FARMER:—I believe in rotation and reformation in business, as well as in everything else. Without it things grow dull and insipid.

Every practical farmer knows that he must rotate or rest his fields occasionally, if he expects to succeed in farming, and he also should know when, where and how he can do this to the best advantage. The best way I know how to learn this is, just to get at it and learn it; and there is nothing very hard about it either.

Read all you can get from journals. You must have one or two of these, but your own good judgment and sense must guide you most. Put your own wits to work, which is your only safe guide after all. One field may require corn to follow after wheat, another oats, another rye, or some of the grasses (clover &c.) and I believe the latter would be the thing just now for thousands of fields all over our country, especially if they be somewhat rolling; but I don't believe any of them in Piedmont North Carolina should be planted in cotton or tobacco. Tobacco and whiskey (for they go together) are two more things, poisons I should say, upon which I would like to see the farmers male and female, unite, and label them poisons, all over this country, and hand down to the rising generation, a name worthy of emulation. Just here, I wish to say a word to the lady-farmers, for, there are many I know, who can plow and hoe, and bustle and go about as fast as any other farmers, but I don't believe you read THE FARMER quite enough. Write the Editor a letter for his paper occasionally. I know he would gladly publish it. Try it and see.

I hope every young woman and old one too, who may chance to read this, will see in a stronger light than ever before, the great field of work—ripe unto the harvest—that lies open before her; for, if the moral power of woman, and her Christian fidelity cannot reach the degradation into which this age is fast plunging, and begin, in the cradle, and around the fireside a moral reformation, and a Christian elevation, I fear the hearts of men will never be touched with that higher Christian life.

There is one rule for all—"Fear God and keep his Commandments."

There seems to be a better time, just now, for that much needed rotation and reformation than has been offered to the people of this great country for a long time, and I hope they will all see it, take the lesson and profit thereby.

Politics, almost without religion has ruled till it has well nigh ruined; specially so, when we look and see, a special few ruling the many, a small minority governing the masses. But I am glad to see the farmers, all over the broad land, the farmers—who far out number all other professions and trades combined—coming to the front, and asking once for all, their common rights, and who shall say no? Nobody.

It may seem rather slow coming, but it is sure—Remember, the world was not made in a day—rather let us labor on and wait. "Work while it is day for the night cometh when no man can work." Then all should rest in peace.

FARMER.

—The manufacture of agricultural implements in the United States is a very extensive industry. In 1870 there were over 2,000 establishments devoted to this manufacture, employing more than 25,000 persons, who received \$12,000,000 in wages.

In ancient times the carrying of the four-leaved clover was believed to bring luck in play and in business, safety on a journey and the power of detecting evil spirits. In Germany the clover was held almost sacred, whether it had two or four blades.

Farm Notes.

SHELTERING SHEEP.

If the wool of sheep becomes wet it dries very slowly and only by chilling the animal through. Shelter from rain and snow, especially the former, is therefore more important than protection from cold. If a sheep is chilled so as to give it cold or fever, the fibre of the wool is injured, and if this occurs in Winter the injury is in the middle of the fleece, where it will do the greatest damage and most hurt its sale.

WATER FROM FARM BUILDINGS.

There need never be any scarcity of water in any district fit for farming if what falls on house and barn roofs is saved in cisterns and used. The barns needed to shelter stock and the provender for their Winter feed will shed water enough to last through the driest time in Winter or Summer. For house use rain water is better than most well water, provided it has first been filtered. Nearly all well water contains mineral impurities which make it unhealthful for use.

MICE IN CORN STOOKS.

Where corn is left out in the stook through the Winter the greater part of its value is lost. Rains and melting snows soak and drain the stalks of their nutriment, while inside the mice stook pursue their ravages without fear of their numerous enemies. A family of mice will easily destroy one-quarter of the value of the corn in a stook through the Winter. This is a pretty heavy tax to pay for delaying work that costs fully as much to do in the Spring as it would to do in its proper time in the Fall.

TREE ROOTS SPOILING WELL WATER.

Some kinds of trees have such an affinity for water that it is not good policy to plant them near drains or wells. The elm is most troublesome to drains, while the common locust is especially objectionable if planted near house wells. Their roots will travel a distance of two or three rods to reach the water, and give it a most offensive taste. The locust is not often now planted near dwellings, but it may be in order to give a caution against digging wells near locust trees, unless they are first removed. This is no easy task, as the locust when cut down sprouts from the stump, and its roots throw up suckers wherever they are broken by cultivation.

THE HOG CROP OF 1886-87.

The hog crop this year is only an average for the past ten years. Yet the country has added probably 10,000,000 or more mouths to be fed during this period. This means either that the present crop is deficient and prices must advance, or we must consume more largely of other meats than usual. A year ago low prices for wool caused the slaughter of large quantities of sheep, which was turned off for mutton. The failure of cattle ranching at the West has during the past Fall put a great amount of beef upon the market. This has nearly passed. Prices of meats of all kinds are higher, and the natural effect of a short pork crop is likely to be felt in higher prices later in the season.

KEEPING GRADE FOWLS.

The great majority of fowls kept by farmers are grades, few having the courage to stock up with high-priced thoroughbreds, or the time and skill required to breed them pure when got. If rightly managed grade fowls will do as well as any, but the flock must be kept down by unsparing weeding out of all objectionable specimens, and every year the grade roosters must be killed, and pure bred males of some kind purchased in their place. It is this breeding from thoroughbred males that is the greatest secret of success in grading fowls. With mixed blood on both sides of the parentage the offspring becomes not grades but mongrels, and the flock soon runs out so as not to be worth keeping.

DRAINS SPOILED BY FROST.

The tile at the outlet of a drain exposed to the weather is often more or less crumbled by the action of frost. A careless observer would naturally conclude that the outlet is closed and the drain effectually spoiled. But by digging in the distance of one tile it will generally be found that the drain is not injured so much as superficial examination would lead any one to suppose. The crumbling of the tile is caused by the freezing of water absorbed by it, not the bursting caused by

freezing of water in it. Wherever there is a current of water from the outlet it can never be full enough to do injury. It will not even freeze for a distance of several feet, and often two or three rods below the outlet, even in the coldest weather. Where water runs in underdrains in midwinter it comes from springs which bring considerable of the interior warmth of the earth. It is practically impossible to freeze up an underdrain that has running water in Winter. If ice could form in cold weather it would speedily diminish the flow of water so that no bursting of the tile could occur.

BREEDING DRAFT HORSES.

We know of no department of the farm that pays better than raising draft horses. A good two-year-old filly, sired by a good draft horse and from a native mare, will sell at twelve and a half cents per pound. A good gelding three-year old will sell for as much. Will anything else pay better?

On this subject of horse raising we have some notions that may seem whimsical. We believe, for instance, that a better horse can be raised on dry land than wet, on rolling or rough land than smooth, on blue grass than on clover, and on grass than on corn. Why? The horse that is raised on wet land will have a bad foot, because it is always moist and soft, whilst if the land be dry, it will have a tough, compact, hard hoof that will stand hardship. The horse raised on rough land will have a better muscular development than one that has no up-hill or down hill exercise. The horse raised on blue grass will have better shape, because fed on more nutritious and less bulky grass. The horse raised to three years old on grass, hay and oats, with just enough corn to keep up heat in cold weather, will out wear the corn-fed colt. Of course if you want to sell him for a big price to shippers you must consult fashion and make him hog-fat. When buyers get good sense this will not be necessary, but until then it's a good way to market corn. How much grain is needed to raise a colt? Given plenty of grass in summer, a winter pastures, good hay and shelter from storms, and the entire amount of grain to take a colt from weaning time until it is three years old and ready to fit for active work is not over thirty bushels, of which twenty-five should be oats. This allows four quarts of oats per day from weaning time till grass comes. It allows a light corn ration for about a month in the spring between hay and grass. Colts raised in this way will wear, and their future development will be an agreeable surprise to the fortunate owner, whereas a colt shoved right along on a heavy corn diet will sell high and look well, and be a grief and disappointment to the buyer.

It is always a pleasant thing to hear good word from the young stock you sell, and our experience is that stock raised in this way gives entire satisfaction to the buyer.—*Loca Homestead*

FEEDING WHOLE vs. GROUND CORN.

A contemporary, in relation to an experiment at the Agricultural Experiment Station of Maine, bearing upon the feeding of whole or ground corn, made with a pig, which was kept so confined that all the excrement could be collected and weighed, the object of the experiment being to ascertain the proportion of the food actually digested when fed in the various forms of whole grain, corn meal, and corn-and-cob meal, omitting the details of the experiment, summarized the result as follows: Of the total organic matter in the corn, nearly eight pounds more in a hundred were digested from the corn meal than from the whole corn, the difference being greatest in the most valuable portion of the grain—the albuminoid material—whence it appears that in feeding a bushel of corn without grinding, about five pounds more would be wasted in the excrement than in feeding the same weight of meal. In feeding the corn-and-cob meal, it appeared that about eleven per cent of the organic matter of the cobs was digested; but it also appeared that this increase of digestible matter fell almost entirely upon the crude fibre of the cobs, material that probably has the least value of any of the prominent ingredients of feeding stuffs.