

Professor Massey's Editorial Page.

Farm Work for January.

FARMERS WHOSE barns are filled with feed and whose stalls have cattle in them to make beef, or cows to make butter, will have plenty to do during the winter. But the man like an old fellow I struck once at an institute in Eastern North Carolina, who "don't want to be pestered with them," will have no cows nor beeves to feed, and will kick his heels by the fire and borrow money to start his cotton "crap" in the spring, and year after year will be doing the same thing over and over.

II.

The farmer will now have a chance to improve his soil by driving out daily with a load on a manure spreader and leaving it well spread on the land, whenever he can go with team and spreader. If you have a chance to get a lot of good rich wood's earth when you have nothing better to do, haul that out and spread it, too. But do not waste manure and time and labor mixing up a lot of fence-row earth, cottonseed and poor lot manure into what you call "compost," and then imagine that it is good manure, dribbling it in the cotton rows like something precious, when it has very little more value than so much leaf mold. Spread over the land anything you can get that will help it, but have good feed and feed well, and then you will have good manure to spread. But cows standing outside all winter and living on corn shucks or straw cannot make manure of much value. It will be shucks and straw and nothing better.

But feed peavine hay, cottonseed meal, corn and corn fodder, and you will have the manurial value represented by the feed. And peavine manure is as far ahead of straw manure as the hay is above the straw before feeding.

III.

Repair all buildings that need it, and you will find that comfortable quarters will save feed in the barn. Pine boards may be higher than usual, but they are cheaper than corn and hay to maintain the animal heat.

If you left any implements or machines out in the field last fall get them in at once, clean them up, and oil the metal parts and paint the woodwork. Farm tools and machines cost too much to let them waste for lack of care and shelter.

IV.

Land that is now bare can be plowed in readiness for the spring crops, but the real farmer will not have any such, but will have a winter cover of crimson clover, or even of rye, to protect the land in winter.

Now is a good time to see where the land needs drainage, for if water stands at any time it will be standing now. Then while other work is not pressing, look after the ditches, and see if you

cannot profitably use some tile drains. Nothing like tiles for sinking the water level in the soil.

V.

There is this difference between feeding dairy cows in winter and feeding beeves: the cows will need more work and attention, but the product will bring money every day, while you must wait till spring for the beeves. But where dairying cannot be done in the best way, it is better to feed beeves.

Cows that will be coming in fresh in the spring should have extra good attention in winter, and do not imagine that because a cow is dry she can live on nothing and make a good calf.

See that the sows that are to furnish the spring litters have dry and comfortable shelter.

Get all your hog meat smoked during the winter and have it ready to sack and secure from flies before warm weather.

VI.

If you have to buy corn or cottonseed to plant in spring, get it early. But do not go far away to distant sections of the country to seek seed corn. You may have better for your purposes in your own granary. And if you get good and early cottonseed try to keep it up to standard, or above, by careful selection next summer.

Thoughts Suggested by Our Last Issue.

RIGHT INDEED is the future for such farmers as Mr. Jesse M. Jones, who has realized the value of deep plowing as a means not only for checking surface washing, but for conserving the moisture of the soil to tide over the summer drouths. I hope to see the day when the hill farmers in the South will realize that with deep plowing and filling the soil with humus-making material, having a sod to turn whenever breaking for a hoed crop, they can abandon terracing altogether, and when all the hoed crops are cultivated shallowly and flat and no furrows made to gather heads of water on the hills to break down and make gullies.

I am glad that Mr. Batts is going to try to see what can be done with corn over a field in a business-like and profitable way. There is far more to be learned in this way than by the wasteful piling on of a lot of fertilizer on a single acre. Good crops made at the least cost is what we need to learn more than big crops on an acre regardless of cost.

Another thing, too, in Mr. Batts' experience should be adopted by every farmer. This is the keeping of a seed plot of corn and cotton, and breeding up the productivity of the seed used. There is fully as much to be gained in this way as through the improvement of the soil itself. "Less land in cotton and more cotton per acre" should be the slogan of the Southern farmer. Fifteen-cent cotton is not going to last, and the man who figures from this year's price that he cannot afford to grow anything but cotton, is going to find out his mistake soon. The high price and scarcity of cotton now may prevent very low prices next year, but a bumper crop the coming

year will certainly see the last of fifteen cents a pound.

As Dr. Butler says, what we must aim at is the building up of the soil by the restoration of the humus that made it fertile and productive when it was new ground, and I wish that every farmer in the South could realize what a great help the cowpea is in doing this. The farmer who makes plenty of peavine hay at a cost of \$7.50 per ton, and does not sell it for even \$20, but feeds it on the place—he is the man whose farm will be on the upward road, and when he makes a big crop of oats and has a big crop of hay on the same land after the oats, it matters far less what cotton sells for than it does to the man whose whole fate depends on the cotton crop. Mr. Kyzar has found this out in Alabama, and every farmer in the Cotton Belt will find it true if he pins his faith on the cowpea and a good rotation, with all the cattle he can feed.

In the week beginning January 17th I have engaged to make seven lectures at the University of West Virginia to the students in the Short course, on horticultural subjects. I would like to meet there the West Virginia subscribers to The Progressive Farmer and Gazette, and I know that, young or old, they can gain by attending the entire winter course there, for there will be other weeks besides mine.

Did you notice that Mr. Johnson got 305 bushels of corn from four acres planted with prolific corn, and 562 on ten acres planted with the one-ear sort? And yet, there are farmers who will insist that they can get more corn from one big ear per stalk than they can from two medium-sized ears. But when it comes to a contest the prolific corn always wins.

In Mr. J. F. Batts' article in our last issue Mr. Batts was made to say that he applied 2,000 pounds cottonseed meal to his corn land. This should have been 200 pounds.

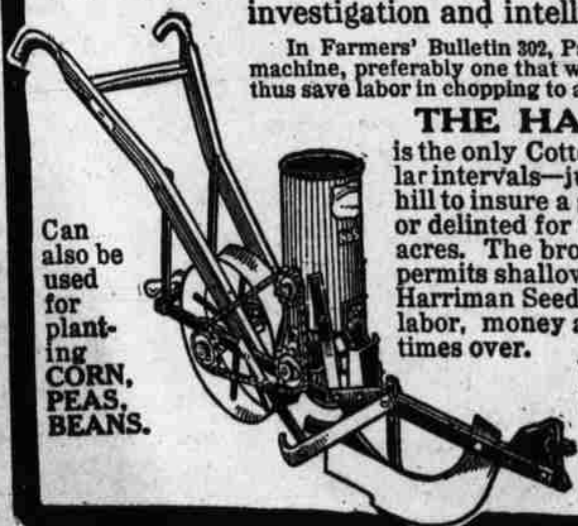
It is the folks in The Progressive Farmer and Gazette Family who are carrying Southern agriculture forward with such amazing strides. It is one of our readers—Mr. J. F. Batts—who holds the world's record for corn growing this last decade. It is another one of our readers—Mr. W. A. Simpkins—who probably beat the South in yield of cotton last year. The men who won the leading prizes at the Virginia Corn Show were subscribers of ours. Writing in the Daily News and Observer in his first report of how he made his banner yield, Mr. Batts said: "Let me say, Mr. Editor, that I am a reader of The Progressive Farmer and Gazette, and this article would not be complete if I failed to give credit for the help I have received from it."

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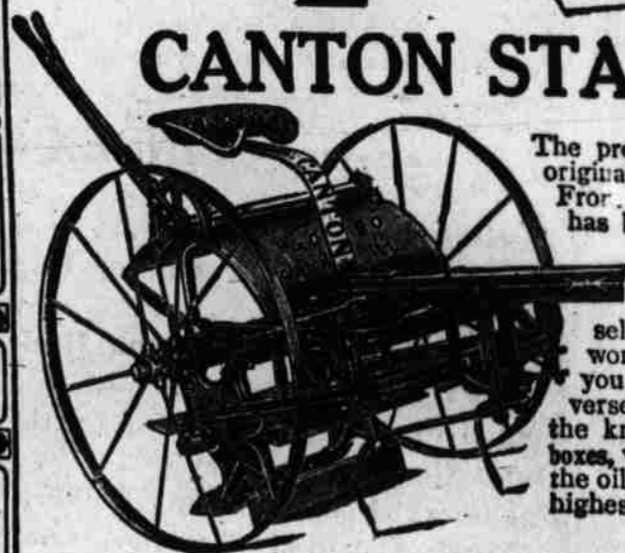
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