

OUR WEEKLY LETTER FROM SUNNY HOME

Have Green Grass About the Home Grounds—A Lesson From the Cotton Market Situation—Clean Up the Fields and Use Machinery

IN THE outward adornment of the home, the general opinion seems to be that grass takes first rank. There are few sections of the world where



MR. FRENCH

grass will grow that it is not made use of by people of taste to lend its charms toward the adornment of their homes, and where it is thus employed it very generally is found playing the major part—acting as the base upon which a general beauty scheme is founded. To my mind, few grounds are ever as beautiful, no matter how adorned otherwise, as they would be were a rich sward present.

A beautiful garden of roses or a splendidly grouped mass of shrubbery looks as if the finishing touch were lacking until grass comes to add its charm to the foreground, and I always catch myself looking to see if the rear grounds, too, have received the finishing touch that green grass gives. Rich men all over the United States purchase lots at prices that would stagger the ordinary farmer; then almost the first thing they do toward beautifying them is to seed heavily in grass and manure liberally to encourage the grass to put forth its greatest effort.

The farmer can have around his home for almost nothing this same beautifier that the man of wealth pays his thousands for, and, too, it will add more charm to the ordinary home than it will to the home that costs thousands. If you don't believe this take a plain log cabin out in an open field—whitewash the building, then train vines to run over it, and all around grow a dense green carpet of grass. If this place is within sight of the road you will find travelers stopping to enjoy for a brief period the wonderful beauty of the scene.

Let's do all we can to drive the desolate, barren dooryard out of our Southland and—if it is nowhere else on the farm—let us have grass about our homes, at least. There is no place in the South where—with a little work and less expense in cash—some sort of grass cannot be made to grow. Work the yards up deep this spring, if the soil be poor, fertilize liberally, and sow to cowpeas. Cut the vines off in August or September; level and smooth the lawn carefully, making the soil solid at the same time; then sow with the sort of grass that makes the best sod on the sort of soil you have, and in your climate. Many times a very deep, sandy soil may be improved greatly by hauling clay and giving it a top-dressing of this.

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It might be a good thing to keep in mind the fact that a few of our long-headed Southern men have got rich during the past six months buying our six and seven-cent cotton and exporting it, or holding and selling on our home markets. The South as a whole hasn't lost—by considerable—all the money that has been lost on the 1914 cotton crop; but the farmer of the South has been the loser, and always will be, I suspect, until he gets to be as smart as the other fellow. The time hasn't arrived yet for disinterested philanthropists to take the farmers and their wives and protect them during periods of inclement weather, and when that time does come I hope to be able to change to some other line of work; for I don't wish anybody to put me in a cradle and rock me.

But I want to see the time come when the farmer will be so well educated, so well trained in business

methods, and his business so well financed, that he will be abundantly able to care for himself during times of stress? And a good time for us to make a start toward this much-to-be-desired condition is right now, by fixing to feed ourselves and our livestock this present year, and while we are about it let us raise enough of food necessities to have some to sell.

Then try to give the children on the farms a better chance at schooling than they have ever had before. Then let us keep them on the farm, after the farm has furnished means for this education, by—among other things—letting them know that because we have not made a roaring success of farming as a business, isn't by reason of anything being wrong with the business; but that we are inefficiently equipped in training or capital or both to handle our business and that we are now making it our business to see that our children are properly equipped for their life work, and are expecting them to push the business of agriculture into premier place among all the businesses of the land.

It takes such a little time to remove from a field one single obstruction to cultivation that we all might do this much at least for our cultivated fields this season. I know of one rock out in a big field that has cost the owner of the farm \$2 or \$3 in wasted time and broken-down plants during the past five years, and in one hour's time—that we will call worth 50 cents—I could have dug a hole beside that rock deep enough that, when the rock had been rolled into it, would have left nothing within reach of the plow. Men have been working around that rock for 75 years. Everything of this sort adds to the cost of production, and to reduce the cost of production is our big farm problem.

The gradual removal of obstructions has been a steady business on Sunny Home Farm for 14 years now. Our experience last fall in seeding grain on the home place, where the 20-acre to 35-acre fields contain practically no obstructions, then going to the newly acquired farm, where the obstructions run from 30 to 100 per acre, was a practical demonstration to us that obstructions to cultivation are both vexatious and very costly.

A. L. FRENCH.

HOW THE FARMER CAN INCREASE POULTRY PROFITS

Community Circles Recommended to Increase the Quality of the Produce of the Farmer's Poultry Yard—Send for Bulletin No. 656

A COÖPERATIVE plan to reduce the enormous waste now caused by the careless marketing of eggs is outlined in Farmers' Bulletin 656, "The Community Egg Circle," which has just been published by the United States Department of Agriculture. It is estimated that under the present haphazard methods of gathering and marketing eggs nearly 8 per cent of the country's output is a total loss. Since the annual production of poultry and eggs in the United States is valued at more than \$600,000,000—a sum equal to the value of the hay or wheat crop—the importance of reducing this loss is obvious.

The individual farmer too often regards his eggs as a mere by-product to which it is hardly worth his while to devote himself seriously; in consequence he is inclined both to neglect his poultry and to gather his eggs whenever he happens to have a spare moment or two. In consequence the output of his poultry yard is not only small to begin with, but a large proportion of it has begun to spoil before it reaches the hands of the country merchants. They usually buy the eggs on "case count," paying the same price for good, bad, and indifferent. The large markets, however, do not pay the same price and reject many altogether; in consequence the price per egg to the farmer is made suffi-

ciently low to provide a safe margin and to cover the loss on eggs of poor quality.

These conditions have been so firmly established by long usage that the individual unaided can do little to alter them. Community coöperation, however, can quickly raise the standard of the eggs shipped from any one neighborhood, and with the standard the price. The fancy trade is quite willing to pay more for a guaranteed article and the extra cost of producing the guaranteed article is more in pains than in cash.

The plan outlined in the bulletin already mentioned calls for the organization of a community egg circle which should include as soon as possible enough members to warrant the employment of a manager. Each member agrees to gather his eggs daily and in hot weather twice a day, to keep them in a cold place, and to deliver none that is more than seven days old. No eggs are to be washed and the male bird is to be kept away from the flock except during the mating season.

The manager of the circle inspects, grades, and markets as a whole the deliveries the members make to him. Payment is made to the members in proportion to the number of eggs of each grade that they deliver and the prevailing market prices, less their proportion of necessary expenses. The bulletin also gives suggestions for convenient receipt forms which will enable the members to check up their payments with their deliveries.

Such a system will enable the circle to make arrangements for the delivery of regular supplies to the best and most discriminating class of trade. There is always a demand for guaranteed eggs on the part of clubs, hotels, restaurants, and even well-to-do private families, but the individual farmer rarely has a sufficient output to enable him to make a contract with any of these consumers, and the country merchant has no means to guarantee to the consumer the eggs that he buys from individuals over whom he has no control. Coöperative marketing also enables the eggs to be put up in attractive cartons which can be turned into valuable mediums of advertising and reduces the expense of shipments. The increased returns, furthermore, will encourage the producer to devote more time and care to his stock, better hens will be kept, they will be kept in better condition, and in consequence there will be more eggs as well as better ones to market.

Every farmer should send for this bulletin.

THE WHOLE OR NONE

An Easterner who had bought a farm in California had heard of his neighbor's talent for raising large potatoes, so sent his farm-hand over to get a hundred pounds.

"You go back home," answered the talented farmer to the messenger, "and tell your boss that I won't cut a potato for any one."—Exchange.

"Every one in our family is some kind of an animal," said Jimmie to the amazed preacher.

"Why, you shouldn't say that!" the good man exclaimed.

"Well," said Jimmie, "Mother's a dear, the baby is mother's little lamb, I'm the kid and dad's the goat."—Exchange.

REMEMBER that India and Egypt will grow more food stuffs at the expense of Cotton acreage.

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