

MAKING CORN CHEAPLY.

Mr. French's System of Cultivation and Preparation Set Forth—No. 27 of the Sunny Home Stock Talks.

Messrs. Editors: The corn crop being the greatest stock food produce we have, merits better treatment than it gets at the hands of most of us. Yet I believe the great majority of farmers are making advancement along the line of better preparation of the seed bed for this important crop and are also giving more attention to the later cultivation of the plants.

Holding on to Old Systems.

Still we see altogether too many fields yet which give evidence that their owners are not troubling themselves with any "new-fangled notions" regarding corn cultivation. I pass such a field frequently. The field has about twelve corners, is covered with rocks, contains several flourishing patches of thorn and blackberry bushes. The land was plowed rather early while altogether too wet, but as the furrows were not over three inches in depth the main body of the soil wasn't injured greatly. This plowing was deemed sufficient preparation for the crop, so along in the first days of May the shovel plow was started laying off the rows. Then followed the boy with the bucket of seed corn, dropping one, two or three kernels, as was most convenient, at distances apart ranging from one foot to four. The other man then came along with the double-shovel, shaking the clods up good and I think there was little doubt about the grain being covered, but "what will the harvest be?"

Is It Cheap?

Was this a cheap preparation of the soil? Let us see. The plowing—because of the irregular-shaped field and the many obstructions, cost not less than \$2.50 per acre, or enough—had the field been cleaned of trash—to have plowed it well and harrowed it thoroughly both ways with a spring-tooth riding cultivator. So if conditions had been right the land could have been made ready and in fine condition for the two-horse planter at no more cost of labor than has been incurred with the almost no preparation that has been given. The planting of this little piece of land cost, as near as I could figure, about \$1.10 per acre, whereas the work could have been done with the two-horse planter at about seventeen cents per acre.

We will see that this was a case where the so-called cheap preparation was not cheap after all, and is a good illustration of the worst form of patch-farming. In the one case a poor crop is assured whatever the season may be, while had the other method of preparation been used a fair crop was almost sure to follow, no matter what the season may have been.

How Mr. French Prepares His Land.

On our place, while we make no pretense of doing any fancy farming, we are trying each year to do our work some better than it was done the year previous, and I think we are succeeding in this. Our corn land was well-plowed before Christmas to a depth of not less than eight inches, and along in April was cross-plowed in an equally thorough manner. Then a light roller was passed over the fields, crushing the soft clods very effectually. The spring-tooth cultivator was then used in the harrowing of the fields both ways, when we thought the land in condition to plant. The planting of a corn crop is a very small matter when we use a machine to do the work that covers nearly a rod in width at every round. And I tell you truly I wouldn't trade

one two-horse corn planter for a dozen boys with their corn buckets, because we can regulate the planters, but not the boys.

How the Crop Should be Cultivated Now.

Since planting, our fields have had two thorough harrowings with the short-tooth, iron harrow and now (May 14th) the corn plants are breaking through fine mellow soil at a great rate. After we have another rain and when the plants are three or four inches high, the light roller will go over these fields again at the rate of fifteen acres per day.

Then the sulky cultivator with its ten spring teeth, 2½ inches in width and equipped with the dirt guards, will begin its work. For the first cultivation the shovels will be set to cut four inches deep, afterward 2½ inches will be the rule.

We have found the foregoing treatment to be good medicine for the corn crop in years past, and we are banking on it and our stable manure to carry us through the present season. A. L. FRENCH.

R. F. D. 2, Byrdville, Va.

GROWING SWEET POTATOES.

Mr. Powell Also Has Something to Say About the Matter of Crop Diversification and Farm Tools.

Messrs. Editors: I intended to say something more about the potatoes before this. It is now time to begin to set them out and this may yet be in time to reach some. I never broke my land till late and try to do it with a good season so the land will break finely; if I do this and before I set out it rains, I harrow the land and try to keep it flush. By so doing it will stay damp. Any one can set out potatoes. I have set when dry, but the air was damp, and that is when to do it. I use nitrate of soda in the mud, and would mud the roots. I have done this at 12 o'clock, and when the sun sets ninety-five in every one hundred would be standing up. When ten days old, I would side them with a cotton plow with a No. 3 mole-board, which would nearly get all the grass. When they have run from row to row I take a turn plow and hill up, running a cotton plow. I pull grass out with my hand, but if I do have to chop, I am very careful not to cut the roots. Some people use hoe before they plow, but too much chopping is not best. You chop the roots off. The first roots that come out near top of ground are the ones that make the fruit, so if there are five roots to the hill, and you cut three, it will not make but two potatoes. I run rows three feet and three inches. I plant after corn.

One man wrote me the same week that my article came out on handling and hilling last fall, urging me to say more about the potato. I think his name is Mr. J. M. Bunch, Columbia, S. C. He stated that his vines were very thrifty, but his potatoes very stringy; though he made, I think, one thousand bushels. I think if Mr. Bunch will use only acid phosphate and potash he will make more potatoes and less vines on such land—something like four or five hundred pounds of phosphate and twenty-five pounds of potash. Plantings are best raised from vines. They sprout better and have less rotten leg on draws. They keep better and you have fewer rotten germs in your bed, which cause the rotten leg—that is, a poor draw or sprout. The rotten sprout you can notice, if it lives, will raise potatoes with a black rusty look on

the stem of the potatoes when housed which carry the rot back to hill.

I highly approve of Mr. R. M. Scott's letter this week. I think if more of the big farmers would take up his mode we little fellows could buy us a little home and pay for it quicker with the cotton and tobacco, as it would bring better prices. About half the farmers are buying corn now and expect to pay for it with cotton.

I'm with Mr. P. A. Hoyle on the farm tool question. We little farmers would have to quit if we had to buy corn shredders, etc. But let me say that we can buy some such as the Cole Planter and Guano Distributor. I run rows with the distributor, then run an Iron Age cultivator with the wings on behind, then the Cole Planter comes and the work is done—three times to the row. These are about as good tools as a small farmer could have, as the Cole Planter plants corn, cotton, peas, cane, and does it well, unless the land is very wet.

Raise plenty of potatoes for the hogs. One acre will make more feed than anything else that a small farmer can plant. Plant cantaloupes to feed in summer to your hogs, and if you don't mind, you will have meat to sell. D. POWELL.

Rocky Mountain, N. C.

Third Annual Meeting Virginia State Farmers' Institute, Roanoke, July 10th, 11th and 12th.

Messrs. Editors.—The Third Annual Meeting of the Virginia State Farmers' Institute will be held in the Casino, in Roanoke, on July 10th, 11th and 12th. This decision was reached at a recent conference of the sub-committee appointed by the Executive Committee to determine on the time and place for holding the next meeting. Application has been made to the railroads for a fare and a third rate, which it is confidently believed will be granted. For the convenience of farmers who may not be able to spend the three days away from home, a request has been made to have the rates good going on the 9th, 10th and 11th, and returning on the 13th inclusive. Assurances have been given that a special train will be available to carry the delegates to the Experiment Station at Blacksburg, where they will have an opportunity to inspect the various lines of investigation in progress there and see the equipment of the College of Agriculture free of cost.

The last institute was highly successful, more than 500 farmers being in attendance, and the organization is in a thriving and vigorous condition, as is shown by the publication of a creditable report containing more than 150 pages. The following are the names of the officers and vice presidents:

President, J. Hoge Tyler, Radford; First Vice President, T. O. Sandy, Burkeville; Second Vice President, John T. Cowan, Cowan's Mills; Secretary, Andrew M. Soule, Blacksburg; Assistant Secretary, J. M. Williams, Roanoke.

The following are the vice presidents for the several Congressional Districts:

First Congressional District, A. Jeffers, Norfolk; Second, Jos. Ryan, Eagle Point; Third, Jos. R. Anderson, Goochland; Fourth, C. N. Stacy, Amelia; Fifth, Dr. J. R. Cuerrant, Calloway; Sixth, S. C. Coggin, Rustburg; Seventh, J. G. Martin, Coveseville; Eighth, W. S. Lewis, Leesburg; Ninth, W. B. Robertson, Saltville; Tenth, Joel Flood, Appomattox.

Any farmer in the State is eligible to membership on the payment of \$1.00 and every person is cordially invited to attend, as the sole object of this organization is to have an annual gathering of representatives

of the agricultural interests of Virginia, at which various topics of general concern to the farmers may be discussed. No effort or expense will be spared to make the program superior to those of previous meetings. Announcements in reference to this and other matters of interest to farmers who desire to attend the meetings will be made from time to time. Every farmer interested in better methods of agriculture, insuring a more permanent prosperity for this State should make it a point to paste these dates in his hat and so adjust his farming operations that he will have sufficient leisure on the dates indicated to attend the institute. ANDREW M. SOULE,

Secretary.

Blacksburg, Va.

A Kingdom in a One-Mule Farm.

The following communication is sent us by Mr. Raymond L. Griffiss, 35 Wall Street, New York, whose experience as president of the Southern Immigration Society has brought him into close touch with the agricultural problems of the South and with the possibilities which that section offers to immigrants. Mr. Griffiss adds that he can prove every word of his story (we do not doubt it, for we know what can be done in the South) and offers to send the name of the "King" of the little "Kingdom" and other information in regard to what has been done by others to any who will write him:

As an illustration of what can be accomplished on Georgia land by studying the soil, supplying it with the necessary plant food, diversifying crops, using brains as well as hands, and superintending everything personally, a Southern farmer has year by year added to his possessions, until his one-mule farm has become one of the largest in the world, covering thirty square miles of land, and giving employment to 1,250 men, women and children.

His average for years has been twenty-five bushels of corn per acre and one thousand pounds of seed cotton. Some acres yielded sixty-five bushels of corn, thirty-five of wheat and two bales of cotton. His land at first was worth \$10 per acre, now \$60. His cattle now number 500, beside his one hundred thoroughbred Jerseys and Holsteins, which have produced each year 20,000 pounds of butter at eighteen to twenty-five cents per pound. With agriculture he has combined manufacturing, and his raw material has been turned into valuable manufactured articles by means of the steam ginny, oil mills and fertilizer factory. He has employed negro labor only. His saw mill cuts his lumber for his houses, etc.; his brickyard turns out his brick; his wagons are made in his shop. His own railroad, seventeen miles long, hauls materials to his factories and his marketable products to the outside world.

The average production of lint cotton is one bale to two and one-half acres on good, bad and indifferent farms, but it is not at all uncommon for a good farmer to raise a bale to the acre by good culture and abundant fertilizer. Intensive farming, which applies the lessons of science and experience, has achieved some remarkable results.

The following is the average annual product of this farm: 2,200 bales of cotton, 120,000 gallons of cottonseed oil, 3,000 tons of fertilizer, 20,000 bushels of corn, 10,000 bushels of wheat, 1,000 bushels of rye, 5,000 bushels of oats, 6,000 of peas, 20,000 pounds of butter, 100,000 pounds of fat cattle, 5,000 pounds of bacon and hams, besides such crops as sweet and Irish potatoes, watermelons, ground peas, sorghum, etc.—Country Gentleman.