

Will be published every

SATURDAY by

ANDREW LIPSETT,

at the

OFFICE ON QUEEN STREET,

Opposite City Hall, F<sup>o</sup>ton, N. B.

Subscription, - \$1.00, in advance.

Should the subscription remain unpaid for 3 months from the time the first paper is sent to the subscriber, the price will be \$1.50.

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The Agriculturist.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL DEVOTED TO LITERATURE, AGRICULTURE, AND NEWS.

ANDREW LIPSETT, Publisher.

"AGRICULTURE THE TRUE BASIS OF A NATION'S WEALTH."

ANDREW ARCHER, Editor

VOL. II.

FREDERICTON, N. B., MAY 3, 1879.

NO. 4

Agriculture.

For the "Agriculturist," Farm Accounts.

Sir—I notice an article on keeping an account with the farm, that may answer in some cases, but it is a very complicated affair to keep a good plain account. Let us say first that the farm costs \$2,000, then the stock and tools will cost \$500. Now these are the capital and must be kept up to that value at least, while to keep up the fencing, buildings and soil, together with the losses in stock occasionally and the wear and breakage of implements and harness, will all require to be taken into the account. Then there is the interest of \$2,500, to be made every year and reasonable wages for the men and women that are required to do the work. I am doubtful if one out of ten of the wealthy farmers are not coming out minus of profits, after all the accounts are correctly reckoned up and the balance struck at the end of the year. The man that can earn good farm wages, and has \$2,500 out at interest, at 6 per cent and in sure hands will clear more money yearly than one out of fifty farmers on similar amounts of expenditures or deposits of capital in farm stock, &c., in ninety nine out of a hundred cases. The farmers profits are simply that he has a sure home and a kingdom of his own to govern. Farmers are not often among the mean class of insolvents that are so numerous now a days. If they only live by their means will afford, and keep themselves clear of the cursed Provincial Building Society, and other extortioners who charge interest as high as an unmerciful and unjust law will allow them.

The farmer, like the owner of the "goose that laid the golden eggs," must be careful of the farm and not kill it by mortgaging it to hurry money into hand for present use, and pay such high interest that it "cuts off the gooses head." The farm goes and the golden eggs go with it, even they were few. It is true occasional circumstances occur to throw good profits into the farmer's accounts. Some times, but as a class the farmers are more or less imposed upon, and especially young men that venture to buy a farm and go in debt for a large part of its price. While paying in interest on that debt, then add taxes to interest, it is unjust in the extreme. It is hard on rich men to pay taxes on what they really own, but it is out rages for a man to pay interest at a high rate and taxes both on his debts.

I do agree with the plan of farmers keeping accounts of all expenditures and incomes, and believe that every farmers son and daughter should study or learn at school a simple and plain style of bookkeeping and practice it at home in keeping an account of all the expenditures and incomes connected with their work.

ISAIAH S. WEBB, Sec. Treas. of Q. C. A. S.

When Should a Heifer come in?

A farmer who has a heifer one year old well grown, fine in the flesh and ambitious to increase her kind writes to the Editor of an agricultural paper asking him to answer the above important question. The Editor says:—

There are several things to be taken into consideration, when discussing the question of the proper age for a heifer to come in. If she is of good size, pretty well matured, and "ambitious" in that direction, there will be no serious harm in letting her come in at twenty-five months. We have had several calves at twenty one months that did well, making large healthy cows. Of course they must be well fed and well cared for. When a heifer comes in at two years old, she ought to pay for herself by the time she is four years old in the milk and calves she has produced. But, if the main object is to breed for improvement of the race in health, strength, and size, we should delay the breeding period. The great danger from early breeding lies in overworking the animal while young, so that her days of usefulness will be shortened. Some farmers prefer to let heifers come in young and then go farrow a year, in this way getting a fair income for their keeping while they are growing to full size. After all, every one must use judgment in deciding upon individual cases of this kind. Some heifers are as well advanced and competent to become cows at two years or two and a half years old, as are others at three. We have little doubt in our own mind that continuous early breeding from generation to generation will tend to weaken the constitution of animals, and leave them more subject to disease and early decay, than if they are kept from breeding till nearly mature. It is a question between immediate and future profit.

Make Farm Homes Attractive.

In the first place, no home on the farm is worthy of the name unless its inmates are moral, intelligent and kind to one another. Good principles kind actions, and a loving spirit are indispensable to happiness every where and the lack of these essentials will cause a greater or less degree of discontent and consequent misery even under the most favorable outward circumstances. Of all others the farmer's home should be made attractive to its inmates, a cherished resort for those who are to a great extent isolated from society and the busy, exciting scenes of village and city life. The wise farmer will strive to make his home pleasant to wife, sons and daughters. Instead of attempting to purchase "all the land that joms him," by slaving himself and depriving his family of needed comforts and conveniences—to say nothing of pleasures and occasional luxuries which he could well afford—he makes his home and its surroundings so pleasant that wife and children regard it as the most loved spot on earth. According to his ability the dwelling, outbuildings, fences and other farm appurtenances indicate intelligence and taste in their location, style, convenience and general appearance. The buildings, fixtures and their surroundings apprise the passing stranger that here is the residence—nay, more, the loved and cherished home—of a man and family possessing refined taste and superior intelligence. The dwelling house is made specially attractive by its beautiful adjuncts—the neat fences, good walks, fine shade and ornamental trees, choice shrubbery, flowers, &c.

Both the garden and orchard, usually in proximity to the homestead buildings, are regarded as indispensable requisites. They are not only well arranged and stocked with a regular succession of the best flowers, vegetables and fruits, but receive sufficient timely care and attention to keep them in good and profitable condition—a source of pleasure to both eye and palate. Unlike too many—it is safe to say the great majority—the wise and thoughtful farmer and father estimates properly the health and pleasure to say nothing of mere profit, derivable by himself and family from the best varieties of fruits and vegetables, and choice yet hardy ornamental trees, shrubs and plants.

Hence, he has taken great pains, and made somewhat liberal expenditure, to procure, plant and cultivate both the useful and the beautiful accessories and auxiliaries of the garden and orchard, thereby rendering the homestead and its belongings far more attractive and interestingly valuable. And though it requires years for many trees to arrive at maturity and profitable production, he continues planting, well knowing that they grow apace while those who are to gather their fruits are sleeping—and that, though he may not partake of their choice products, his posterity will derive pleasure and benefit from his forethought, care and attention. Furthermore, if his children do not continue in possession, he knows that the improvements in the appearance and value of the premises will rebound to their pecuniary interest—for the intrinsic value of his beautiful homestead is greatly enhanced by the variety and abundance of choice fruits and flowers it is capable of producing annually for a long series of years. He thus adorns the exterior of his home with those charms which good sense and refinement suggest, yes, and easily, for a farm home can be rendered beautiful without a large outlay of money or time. It is not expensive to have a neat flower garden and other pleasant surroundings that delight the eye and make home far more attractive than costly objects. Of course woman loves a garden, for it was there man first found and loved her.

Flowers are certainly an important factor in keeping children at home on the farm. Touching this point James Vick—a born florist, who has been a passionate lover and cultivator of flowers from the time of his childhood who was passed in an English cottage over fifty years ago thus logically writes: "Farmers' children have the same aspirations, the same love of the beautiful as other children, and, if of sufficient enterprise, will find means to gratify this aesthetic taste. Unless it is provided in their homes and grounds, farmers will continue to mourn over the fact that their daughters have no love for the old homestead, and their sons fly to the cities, crowding already over flowing thoroughfares, robbing the country of its wealth. In our cities, lawns and flowers are to be found and enjoyed by all who seek them, for among the many there are some persons of taste and culture; but, if the farmer neglects the culture of flowers in his own garden and dooryard, where, in the country, can his children find such

Eden-spots? If the father begrudge wife and little ones a few dollars and a little labor to make home beautiful he need not be surprised if his children have no love for home. If, in addition to this, he endeavors, by coarse and disparaging remarks to suppress the love of the beautiful in the little ones, as they grow up they will think little of the taste and wisdom of father. A man may think a bill of potatoes or corn more handsome than any flower that ever grew; but if he has a grain of sense, or any regard for the good opinions of these about him, he will keep such nonsense to himself."

But no farmer should confine his efforts to externals, for mere outside appearances are of little avail in securing either a peaceful, happy home or a clear conscience. Hence, in addition to a proper display of taste about his dwelling and grounds, he will see that the inner temple is rendered pleasant and convenient by being suitably arranged and furnished. In this respect he is quite different from many really excellent and successful husbandmen—those, for example, who from month to month, and year to year, promise their wives and daughters that by and by they shall have this and that requisite to convenience and comfort. And pray why should not the farmer's wife have her labor saving implements and machines—her sewing machine and various other improvements—as well as her husband his reaper-mower, thrasher, or horse-hoe? But our judicious friend goes still farther by providing for the mental recreation and improvements of his family. He procures such books and periodicals as are best calculated to correctly inform and instruct the various members of his family circle. In this his foresight and wisdom are most manifest, for he is as careful to provide mental entertainment for his wife, sons and daughters as for himself. He obtains books and journals which treat upon historical, scientific, practical and timely topics, while those belonging to the yellow-covered, love-and-murder or dime-novel general are few and far between. Thus both the external and internal concomitants of the true farmer are rendered attractive to his family, friends and casual observers. Indeed, and finally, his whole premises cannot be equalled by those of any one who does not possess intelligence, enterprise and aesthetic taste in arrangement and embellishment—in other words, a genuine love of home and its inmates, are about the only foretaste of heaven to be found on earth.

Setting out Fruit Trees.

The time for transplanting apple and other fruit trees has arrived, and a few practical suggestions for the benefit of the inexperienced may not come amiss. The soil for fruit trees should be in good order for corn, free from stagnant water, in other words well drained, and should be deeply ploughed or spaded. Trees should not be stuck into the ground like bean-poles, nor, on the other hand, need a great hole be dug to receive them. They should not be planted too deeply nor is there any necessity of applying manure at the time of transplanting; in fact it is better to apply the dressing on the surface over the roots, after the tree has commenced to grow. The hole to receive the tree while not too deep, should be broad to receive the roots, spread out in the natural way; surface soil should then be filled around the roots, until the spaces are carefully filled. When the roots are covered, the earth should be firmly packed above them until the hole is filled.

Unless the soil is very dry at the time of planting, no water should be used for while it will do no good, it may do much harm. If dry weather ensues after the tree has commenced to grow, an inch or so of the soil around the roots should be removed and water poured on until thoroughly saturated; then replace the soil removed and mulch with hay, straw or tan bark; the process will not need repeating unless the drought shall be uncommonly severe. It will be seen that the principal errors to be avoided in transplanting are planting too deeply, using manure at the time of planting, planting too loosely and the free use of water.

Concerning Seeds.

While it is important that seed should be good enough to grow, it is very far from being the only test which should be required. In many cases the power of germination possessed by the seeds has proved a damage to the buyer. He would have been better off at the end of the season if not a plant had come up. For though the seeds grew, they possessed so little vitality that the plants were weak and unproductive. The owner had to do a great deal of work to take care of them and found at harvest time that they were of little value. Now if the seeds had utterly failed, the land would have been re-sown and a much larger crop might have been secured. It has been said that "a little learning" (if there be but a little) "is a dangerous thing." On the same principle a little vitality in seed is worse than none at all. To this rule some growers would make an exception in the case of the seeds of the squash, cucumber, melon, &c., on the ground that a loss of part of the vitality of the seed renders the plants more fruitful. It is claimed that old seeds which have been properly kept will not "run to vines" as new seed will, but will make very productive plants. I think the vines from old seeds are smaller than they are from fresh ones but I have not found them more productive. And as the weak vine is more likely to be injured by bad weather, it does not seem to me that it is an object to try to induce productivity by the use of old seed. I do not believe that there is danger of getting seed which has too much vitality.

The seed should be obtained, if possible, from very productive plants, when a careful farmer goes out to buy heifer calves he is very careful to ascertain whether the cows which brought them were good milkers. He recognizes a close connection between the character of the cow and that of the calf. Now just as close a relation, and one fully as important, exists between the plant and the seed which it bears. If the plant is weak, and comparatively unproductive, the seed produced by it will necessarily partake of these evil qualities and transmit them. Seed from a strong, thrifty and full developed stalk of corn which has been fertilized by a stalk of equal vigor will be much more productive than that from inferior stalks. The truth of this view has been often and forcibly demonstrated.

The seed should be plump and heavy. Half-grown seeds never should be used. I would not sow oats which weighed only twenty-five pounds per measured bushel if I could have all I wanted, for nothing. If the seed is undeveloped, there is no reason to suppose that the plant will be strong and fruitful. Good cultivation and careful nursing may enable a farmer to get something of a crop from seed which is weak and poor. Many men use small potatoes for seed and obtain fair crops; but they work at a disadvantage. Better seed—by which I mean seed which is mature and fully developed—would give much larger crops which would pay the grower a great deal better. The carpenter cannot do his best work with poor tools; no more can the farmer obtain the best results from the use of inferior means. The man who wants to grow large crops must have good seed or he cannot secure the desired end. He will find that the best seed is none too good for his purpose and that with all the help which a superior quality can give, he has much to do to obtain the prize.

Another thing which is required and which should always be insisted upon, is that the seed should be clean. A great deal of the trouble with many farmers comes from the use of seed which has not been properly cleaned. Wheat, rye, and oats, which contain considerable foreign matter, including many weed seeds, are frequently sown. When it is remembered that a single seed of a troublesome weed is capable of producing a plant, which shall mature fifty thousand seeds, each one of which, under favorable circumstances may produce a vile plant, and that these seeds are sown, not singly, but by the hundred and the thousand, in our grain fields, and also that the plants growing from them are fed and strengthened with the food which has been applied for the use of the legitimate crop, there will be no further cause for surprise that the average farmer's grain fields are too weedy. To the man who understands the vast possibilities of reproduction which weeds possess, the great mystery will be how the careless farmer manages to get anything but weeds. He will see that the sowing of foul seeds with grain is a reckless proceeding which involves the certainty of considerable loss and even risk the whole crop. Sometimes the weeds overpower the

crop and take full possession of the soil. But in ordinary cases, those which do not attract much attention and which cause no alarm, the weeds prove very injurious. They use a great deal of food which the grain ought to have, and by crowding the roots and shading the stalks they seriously injure the plants which ought to have the benefit of the sunlight and room. Then, too, many of their seeds are harvested with the grain, while multitudes of others fall upon the ground and wait their time, often many years in the future, for springing up and giving the farmer a great deal of trouble. It would be better to spend a great deal of time, if it were required for the purpose, in cleaning the grain, than it is to have the crops diminished by weeds, the land filled full of these seeds, and then be obliged to fight weeds continually during the next season in which a hood crop is grown on the same soil. But if a farmer has a good fanning mill (and he ought to own one if he does a large business, or have a right in one owned by several neighbors, if he does a small one) it will take but a short time to clean the grain well. If the weed seeds were not removed last fall when the grain was put in the bin another cleaning should be given before it is sown. I am going to clean some wheat this afternoon. It was run through the mill which I have used for some time, but the sieve was not just right for wheat and some of the weed seeds were not removed. Having borrowed a mill which has a differently formed sieve, I design to get rid of the small quantity of foul stuff which is now mixed with the grain. It will pay me to be to this trouble, and I know that it will also pay other farmers who are similarly situated.

To sum up: Seeds should not only possess enough vitality to insure their germination, but should also be able to produce vigorous plants. The seed grown by strong and prolific plants should be secured. Plump, heavy, and fully matured seeds should be used. All foreign matter, and especially all weed seeds, should be removed.

A Poultry Yard.

The Editor of the New England Farmer recently paid a visit with his eyes open, to the farm and poultry yards of Mr. W. A. Carleton, Fitchburg, Mass. He found the poultry department most interesting. He says:—

"Many city people who plan for a taste of country life seem to think that, with a flock of hens, money can be coined ad libitum if not ad infinitum. They read about how many eggs a hen will lay in a year, beside bringing up one or more broods of chickens, and by estimating prices from their own experience in buying of the city grocers. Christmas and Thanksgiving weeks, they are able to figure wonderfully handsome profits. But in real life, these paper fortunes are seldom realized. Keeping poultry at a profit demands experience and intelligence quite as much as any other kind of business. There are drawbacks and disappointments here, as everywhere else. It is doubtless true that no live stock pays so high a per cent of profit on the investment as poultry, when properly cared for, and perhaps none pay less under neglect.

Mr. Carleton has made poultry a special study for many years. His library indicates a familiarity with birds, to be acquired only by much reading and long observation, yet he is not a fancy breeder, as many understand that term. He keeps and breeds such varieties as he believes will give the best result as egg producers, aside from any chance sales for choice stock. At present, the Plymouth Rocks and Leghorns are found to bring the largest return, but enough of the latter are bred to give him laying pullets early in the fall, when eggs are unusually scarce and high. The Plymouth Rocks excel the Asiatic breeds in coming earlier to maturity, and in being more indifferent sitters. The large breeds have been so long bred for size that it takes from six to seven months for a pullet hatched in the spring, to come to maturity. This requires very early hatching to bring them along in season for fall laying. The Plymouth Rocks mature in from one to two months less time, so it is not necessary to have them hatched till spring fairly opens, thus avoiding much risk from loss by cold and confinement during the late winter months. At the time of our visit, March 20th, no hens had been set, but active preparations were being made in this direction, and the third week in April will probably find a large number of chickens running about the premises. Mr. Carleton's method of tending sitting hens, it seemed to us, is worthy of trial by others. The sitting room is entirely separate from the other departments, and each hen

is confined in a separate coop some three or four feet square, in which is placed her nest, made up of earth and hay, in a common round cheese box. She is placed upon the nest at night, a few false eggs being given her. If she proves really broody, good eggs are put under her the following night, otherwise she is turned over to the laying department again. Once in her coop and at work as a sitter, she is not again handled or disturbed till the brood is hatched, the food and water being placed just outside the grating where it can be reached at all times, but not wasted or soiled. In this way all the labor of taking off to feed, and all the danger of fighting with one another, and getting on the wrong nests, is avoided. The Plymouth Rocks being of a little lighter weight than the Brahmas there is less loss from egg breakage during incubation. Chicken raising, however, is only of secondary importance here, eggs for market being the main object.

Sheep as Renovators.

A correspondent of the *Dirigo Rural* gives farmers the benefit of his observations on the utility of having sheep on run-out lands in order to renovate. He says:—

In 1863, I turned 40 large grade Cotswold sheep with an equal number of lambs on to an old, badly run-out field of seventeen acres of good strong soil, rather high and dry, and kept them there while the ground was bare for six or eight years. They did remarkably well, but were not stock enough for the good of the pasture. The most of the ground was kept grazed pretty close, but on portions of it the grass headed out, and in one or two years there was some cut hay. That year the grasshoppers destroyed the grass but the next season there was a good crop of fine hay, so thick that it was hard to get a mower through it. It continued to produce a good crop for four years when the sheep were again turned out. If I was to try the experiment again, I would put on fifty or sixty per cent more sheep, or enough to crop the whole surface close to the ground, even if I have to feed a little grain to keep up the sheep. I believe any old field—if dry ground—can be renovated with sheep, and that sheep while doing it will pay their owner a profit beside.

I can handle the ticks pretty effectively by applying yellow snuff in early winter. Sheep lice have beat me; I can't reach them. To get rid of them last year, I sheared them in April and saw no more of them till a few months since. I shall shew again in a few days. I keep kerosene in the barn and put a little on the cards frequently, and the cattle lice do not trouble. After cattle get lousy, I know of nothing equal to a solution of tobacco with plenty of soft soap added.

I have sown two bushels of plaster to the acre on pastures several times but with no benefit.

Amber Sugar Cane.

It is well to hear both sides of a question from the opponents as well as its friends. Adverse opinions with regard to any cherished scheme tend to check hopes that are to sanguine and to lead to due regulation of the mind, so that, if disappointment comes it is met half way, and it is easier to confront. The New Brunswick Sugar Company have wisely determined to begin in a small ring, and only to import the least expensive kind machinery after the cane has been grown here, and to proceed by slow and sure degrees to test the matter:—

After the seed comes the crop, and then the syrup and sugar. To get the latter two articles, good machinery must be purchased; and right there is where the profit comes in. Sorghum molasses granulates everywhere under certain conditions. We have seen barrels a third full of the murky stuff; and we have a number of acquaintances who have seen it granulate by the thousand dollars' worth—at least they saw their money go for machinery, and patents, and chemist's fees—but they never saw any returns. The man who expects to make sugar in paying quantities from sorghum or corn-stalks had better be put under restraint by his friends, for he will spend his money in a jack-o'-lantern chase.

Hens do much better when allowed a free range outdoors than when confined. Darwin says: "In Europe close confinement has marked effect on the fertility of the fowl; in France it has been found that with fowls allowed considerable freedom, 20 per cent. only of their eggs fail to hatch; with less freedom, 46 per cent. failed; and in close confinement, 60 per cent. were not hatched." These facts should be borne in mind by breeders of fowls.

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The Vegetable Garden.

A good vegetable garden is equally important to the mechanic, the professional man and the farmer, but we are inclined to believe that as a rule, the average farmer gives less attention to gardening than either of the other classes, especially when we take into account his superior advantages.—Only those who have paid particular attention to the subject are aware of the actual profit which can be derived from a fourth or half of an acre of ground devoted to this purpose, or how much the comfort and health of the family are promoted where the crisp vegetables and luscious fruit from the garden, are daily enjoyed. The garden is a farm in miniature, and in the variety which it usually produces, it is ahead even of the farm itself; so also in respect to actual respect.

The season is very backward both for farm and garden work, but everything should be put in readiness to commence active operations as soon as the weather and condition of the soil will permit. Nothing is gained, as a rule, by putting garden seeds into the ground too early in the season, or before the temperature is sufficient to promote ordinary vegetation. Seeds put in early may vegetate, but they do not generally produce as vigorous and thrifty plants, as those that spring up quickly, under the influence of a more genial temperature. Some seeds of course, may be sown with equal advantage either in early spring or even in the fall, and where it can be done, results in a saving of time. Lettuces may be sown early and some gardeners recommend that they be sowed as late in the autumn as possible.

The advantages of the forcing or hot bed are not to be underestimated where lettuces and other vegetables may be started; the expense is trifling and the value of early vegetables to the family is very great. Radishes will admit of early sowing and are beautiful and very desirable for the table. This plant will not stand a frost as well as lettuce, but when frost is feared they can be easily covered up for the night. The more rapid the growth of a radish, the more crisp and palatable it will be. Don't fail of providing for a supply of this valuable relish. Every one must decide for himself what vegetables he will raise, but we advise that the variety be as great as possible. Of some of the most important early vegetables such as radishes, lettuces, &c., only a small quantity is required for the use of a family and they will occupy but little space. Of other garden vegetables, beets, carrots, turnips, cabbages, onions, peas, beans, tomatoes, squashes, cucumbers, sweet corn, melons and early potatoes, should each be allotted a proper space. They are all delicious in their season, and tend to promote the health of the family; from sanitary considerations, if there were no other reasons, their cultivation should not be neglected. Work in the garden can generally be performed morning and evenings and on other odd occasions when its loss to farm operations would scarcely be felt. Its valuable products therefore, cost but little, while they do much toward the support of the family.

Farming looking up.

Never since our recollection have we known so many men of other occupations turning towards the farm as a means of getting a living as at the present time, nor has agricultural labor for many years been as popular among all classes in New England as now. Of course there are more or less who are dissatisfied everywhere, but even among farmers who have the reputation of being confirmed grumblers, the feeling is decidedly more cheerful than during the period of inflated prices. One would hardly have believed, ten years ago, that the sons of our city merchants would, in a few years, be found preparing themselves for farmers, but such is the fact to a greater extent, perhaps, than many may suppose. Some of the most promising boys now at our agricultural colleges are the sons of wealthy city merchants.

One of the largest dealers in clothing in this city recently expressed himself strongly in favor of young men learning the business of agriculture, and proves his sincerity by placing his own son upon a farm where he will not only learn the business, but probably continue in it as a life occupation.

A physician having a large practice writes us that he seriously contemplates retiring from the profession, that he may give more attention to his farm which he thinks may pay him quite as well, while he will be far more independent than at present. So let hesitating farmers take courage.—*New England Farmer.*

Prepare for planting.