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Nec aranearum sane textus ideo melior, quia ex se fila gignunt, nec roster vilior quia ex alienis libamus ut apes.

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Agricultural Journal.

The Agricultural Periodicals FOR APRIL.

From the Albany Cultivator
— PLOWING.

The season for commencing active operations in the field having arrived, it may not be out of place to submit a few remarks on the subject of plowing, as this is perhaps the most important operation in field culture, and one which should be performed with most care and attention. No amount of extra labor in the after culture can compensate for a defect in the plowing of the ground; and he is most certainly an improvident and unwise farmer who will allow his grounds to be imperfectly broken up in the preparation for a crop. We are aware that in submitting our views upon this subject, we shall be met by the remark so often made, that every body knows how to plow, and that no directions are needed upon this point. While it is freely admitted that every man can learn to plow well, it is by no means clear that all do thus perform this branch of their farm labor. Should we make this admission, we fear that in our rambles the great number of poorly plowed fields which may be found in nearly every neighbourhood, would be constantly reproaching us with injustice, while we should get no thanks from the plowmen whose work we had so unjustly recommended. There has evidently been great improvement in this branch of farming in the last five years, more indeed than in ten or even twenty previous ones, but truth requires us to say that not one half of the land in this country is well plowed even in this age of improvement, and when public attention is directed to new methods in cultivating the soil as well as to improvements in the mechanic arts. Were we to look for the cause of improvement in plowing, we should undoubtedly be led in our investigations to the plowing matches which have in the last five years been held under the direction of different agricultural associations as the apparent cause of much of the improvement which is to be seen at the present day. The origin, the first cause of these improvements, may doubtless be traced to discussions and reflections which appeared many years ago, in some of the agricultural journals. To no man are we more indebted for the impetus which has been given to this branch of agriculture than to Judge Buel. In this, as in all things pertaining to the interests of the farmer, he urged the necessity of advances towards perfection, and the skill which is now so often shown in the operations of the plowman, shows that the subject has gained much from investigation.

We would not be unmindful of the great aid which agriculture has received at the hands of mechanical genius, and in no branch of farm labor has science contributed in a greater degree to relieve both man and team from fatigue and toil. Had nothing more been done through the instrumentality of our agricultural societies than the improvements in the plow, their high aim would have been in no small degree accomplished, and farmers would be well repaid for all the time and money expended in their support. To the men who have contributed in so great a degree to improve farm implements our warmest thanks are justly due, and it is really gratifying to know that some of these men are receiving a patronage proportionate to their efforts at improvements.

In an article upon this subject, which was published in many of the agricultural papers some three years ago, we remarked that "any man of ordinary strength and good common sense can learn to plow well," and we are happy to see that a great number who at that time did not perform their work in a proper manner, are now among our best plowmen. We have seen no reason to change the opinion then expressed, although it would hardly do to reverse the proposition, and say that the man who does not thus perform his work is desti-

tute of common sense. It may, however, with truth be said that he is blind to his own interests, and very little hope can be entertained that he will ever contribute his share to the common stock of agricultural knowledge.

We now beg leave to invite all our readers to accompany us to the field where we can witness the practical operations of the plowman, and where, unlike the mere theoretical speculations in the office or by the fire side, we can learn from actual demonstration the difference between good and bad plowing. Here is a field plowed over, but it is not done exactly according to our notion, and we will try our hand at the work. Those furrows are too crooked, the soil is not all properly turned, and then you see one end of the land is finished while the other is a rod wide. The team must turn several times in the middle of the land before the work will be completed. Perhaps we shall not do the work better, but we'll try, and keep trying until we succeed. First let us have the plow in good order, the gauge-wheel properly adjusted, the mold-board bright and smooth, then give us the reins and set a stake yonder at the further end of the land and see if we don't make a straight furrow. There! fifty rods long and as straight as a line; no crooked places to spoil the work of the whole land. Now, we will turn another furrow, not on the first, but so the edges will just meet and continue to "back turrow," until our land is about half done, then go round the land, keeping every furrow perfectly straight, and straightening all the crooked places, so that one furrow will finish the whole length without turning. How much better this land looks than the one poorly done, and then how much more prospect of a good crop. Every inch of ground is broke and every sod is turned, and the whole land presents a neat and workmanlike appearance. But we had forgotten to strike a furrow across each end of the field, about a rod from the fence, so that we may have ample room for the team to turn, while the ends of the furrows are even and uniform. The plow must not be suffered to cross this line until turned out of the ground.

Some of our readers may think it easier to give directions than to do the work. To such we can only say, call on us any day in plowing time, and we will endeavor to satisfy you that we know something of the use of the plow, and that we have spent more time between the plow-handles than in writing for publication.

Much might be said of the propriety of deep or shallow plowing, but as there is not room in this article we will only remark that in our judgment deep plowing on almost all soils is beneficial, especially after that portion of the subsoil turned to the surface has been some time exposed to the action of the frost and to the meliorating influences of the light, heat, &c. We do not consider it certain that the first crop is always benefited by deep plowing, but that the soil is permanently improved by such process there cannot, we think, be the slightest doubt. The subsoil plow is, however, the article best calculated to improve all our heavy and retentive soils, and it is hoped the time is not far distant when it will be in common use among farmers as much perhaps as the common plow. It may not, and probably will not, be found necessary to resort to deep stirring of the soil every year, but as often once in every course of crops, or every three or four years, great benefits would be derived from this operation.

Neither do we purpose to discuss now to any extent the merits of a flat or lapped furrow, although much difference of opinion exists among farmers on this subject. It seems clear that on all wet or tenacious lands the furrow slice should be lapped; and we suppose the opinion also is generally held, that on porous soils flat furrows are preferable. Of the correctness of this last proposition our own convictions are not very clear, and we continue on nearly all soils to lap the furrow slightly, thus exposing full one third more surface and leaving it in condi-

tion to be acted upon by the harrow with good effect.

That there has been very manifest improvement in the practice of farmers in plowing their grounds we have the best evidence in the fields every where presented to our view, in which the straight and handsomely turned furrows, the smooth and unbroken soil and other, evidences of skill and workmanship all prove that the spirit of inquiry and of improvement is abroad, and that a complete change in this department of agriculture is now taking place.

We have already alluded to the very great improvements in the manufacture of plows, and would again say that without this advantage our present state of cultivation would not have been reached. There are many good plows in use in different sections of the country, but the farmers are slow to adopt them in places of old and imperfect implements. For illustration of this fact the writer would state that in the county where he resides there are probably some twelve or fifteen, or even more, different kinds of plows in use, not more than five or six of which are any where near up to the improvements of the age. Of this latter class the difference in principles of construction is so slight that there may, in fact be said to be no more than three kinds in use which are really in accordance with the improved principles of construction. Could farmers see and know the advantages of using a good plow, in place of the poor ones so generally in use, they would at once discard four-fifths of the old patterns, and endeavor to use none but a good article.

The plowing matches at our State Fairs have been well attended, and much good work done, but there seems to be still room for improvement. I think I speak the sentiments of many plowmen in Oneida when I invite those who desire to see specimens of skill, or who may choose to try their hand with our boys at the plow to attend the plowing match at Utica in September next. E. Comstock.

CARE OF STOCK.

During the latter part of winter and beginning of spring, stock requires more attention than at any other season. There is usually much stormy weather about this time, and under the fluctuations from heat to cold, and from fair to foul, the appetite of the animal is very irregular. Cattle, sheep and swine, are now bringing forth their young, and unless they are properly sheltered, provided with suitable food, and carefully watched and attended, they will certainly fall into bad condition. The best hay should have been reserved for feeding the cows and ewes at this period, and they should be fed, besides, with a little grain in some form, and some potatoes, turnips, carrots, or other vegetables. They should be fed lightly for a few days after parturition, because in the weakened state of the system at this critical time, there is danger of bringing on fever and inflammation by overloading the digestive organs. But after the system has become accommodated to the new change in the secretions, and the milk begins to flow freely, the food of the mother may be increased in proportion to the draft made on her by the increasing growth and demands of the young animal. This should be borne in mind. Thus, a cow with two calves to support, or a sheep with two lambs, should be supplied with double the quantity of food which is necessary to support but one; and if this is not done, the constitution of the mother will be very likely to be injured, or else the young will not have sufficient food. To enable a sow with ten pigs to keep herself in as good condition as if she had but five, she must receive food in proportion to the number and as the young grow in size, her food must also be proportionally increased till they are able to obtain a part of their support from some other source.

Care should be taken that cows do not calve while tied to the stanchion, or confined in a narrow stall. Serious accidents may arise from inattention to this. If the birth takes place in the night the calf may get covered with the filth of the stall, and if the weather is severe, he may

freeze before morning; or the cow may be thrown into a position by which she suffers a permanent injury. Separate apartments, warm and well littered, should be provided, in which the cow should be allowed to run loose for a few days preceding the birth of the calf, and for a day or two afterwards.

A word in regard to calves. If veal is the object, feed the cow well, let the calf suck, and make him fat as quick as possible. If milk is of most consequence, and the calf is not to be reared, it is best to "knock him in the head" as soon as the milk of the cow is fit for use. His carcass is worth something for the hogs, and his hide may pay for taking off for the tanner. In rearing calves, the expediency of any particular mode depends on circumstances. In the interior, where cattle are reared almost entirely for beef, and where labor is scarce, it is hardly worth the while to undertake bringing up calves "by hand"—it is less trouble to let them run with the cow for several months, and this is probably the best course in such locations. But where butter and cheese are valuable the case is different, and we should prefer teaching the calves to drink instead of allowing them to suck their dams. With close care and attention, good stock may be reared without giving them any new milk after they are two or three weeks old. Skimmed milk, not sour, with oil-cake gruel, or oat-meal, will make the calf grow very well. But the calf must be kept dry and warm, the food given warm, and the state of its health, till it becomes well accustomed to the diet, constantly watched. There are several advantages of rearing calves in this way. They become more tame, more readily learn to eat every thing, are more tractable, and are more easily brought to their duties, either as cows or oxen, and in some locations, as we have mentioned, this course is most economical.

Oxen and horses, which have worked hard during the winter, will be much benefited by being allowed a respite during this month of storm and mud; and while the farmer and his boys are engaged in cutting and splitting the year's stock of wood, which has been (of course) got up by good sledding, he will find it much to his advantage to let his oxen quietly chew the cud "of sweet and bitter fancy" in the comfortable barn, or sunny barn yard.

This interval of rest will enable the animals to recover some of their flesh and strength, which have been exhausted in hauling wood and logs, or in carrying the farm products to market; their old hair becomes loose and falls off, the pores of the skin are opened, and the animals, reinvigorated, are fitted to withstand the heat and burden of the spring's labor.

DOMESTIC ECONOMY.

Buckwheat Cakes, after standing to rise all night, are much improved by adding, just before baking, sour cream and saleratus—say a teacup full for two quarts of the batter. This treatment improves the flavor, and makes them richer and lighter. It was discovered this winter by a notable housekeeper in the western part of the state, where fine hot buckwheat cakes and keen appetites, on frosty mornings, often go together.

Corn Cake.—Two teacups of buttermilk, one of sour cream previously sweetened with saleratus, one tablespoonful of molasses, and Indian meal to make it nearly as stiff as muffins. Bake half an hour. Thoroughly tried by the above mentioned housekeeper, and found first rate; and also eaten with good gusto by the writer.

Apple Jelly.—Slice thirteen large apples very thin without paring them; then cover them with water; boil and strain them,—and to the juice add a pound and a half of loaf sugar, and as much lemon-juice as your taste may direct. Clarify it with eggs, and boil it to a jelly. It is an exceedingly delicate, palatable, and beautiful dish, fit to grace any wedding table, the writer having partaken of it on such an occasion, the housekeeper above named forming the center of attraction at the time. It is also very fine in sickness.