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OLD SERIES]

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

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Agricultural Journal.

From the Albany Cultivator.

HINTS FOR THE SEASON.

Autumn is a favorable part of the year for making improvements on the farm. After the hay, the wheat, and other small grains have been secured, there is a lapse of time before the latter harvest demands attention, which furnishes a good opportunity for clearing fields of stumps and stones, making fences, improving meadows and pastures, reclaiming swamps and wet lands, digging peat and muck for manure, &c. The present season has been so dry that wet grounds may be worked on to good advantage, unless there should soon be heavy rains.

Moist grass lands, whether in meadow or pasture, are liable to be more or less injured by the growth of bushes, rushes, and wild, worthless vegetation of various kinds. The most effectual remedy for this is thorough drainage, which should therefore be the first object. Bushes had better be pulled up root and branch.—They generally grow in stools, raised a little from the general bed of the field, and may be readily torn up with a root-claw, (or in default of that, a plow,) to which oxen are attached. When the bushes are large they should be cut, in order to give a fair chance to get at the roots.

Tussocks of flat, wild grass, and small knobs, or bunches caused by moles, ants, &c., frequently occur on the surface of pastures and meadows. These should be cut off. If not too tough, they may be put at once into the bog-pen or barn-yard to be wrought into manure; or they may be piled in heaps to lay till rotten before being used; or the hardest and toughest tussocks may be burnt, as soon as they are a little dried, and the ashes spread on grass grounds or used for other crops. They make a large quantity of ashes, especially if taken from a mucky soil, and they produce very good effects, (as we have proved,) when spread on grass, turnips, or grain. The best mode of burning is to collect the tussocks into piles. Commence a fire in the centre, and when a few get well on fire, heap on a large quantity. The fire should work slowly, with as little flame as possible.

What is called a *bog-hoe*, is a proper tool for cutting tussocks. They should be ground to a sharp edge to do the work easily and well. We have seen at the implement warehouses in Boston, a tool to be drawn by oxen or horses, for shaving excrescences from pastures and meadows. We have no personal knowledge of its operation. Will some one who knows tell us how it works?

Peat or bog earth, designed for compost or for spreading on cultivated fields, is much better for being dug sometime before being used. The action of the air, the frost, and the rains, dissipates its sourness, and a partial fermentation or decomposition takes place, by which it is pulverised, and brought into a good state to be applied to plants. The banks of ditches should be hauled to the barn yard, or piled on dry land. If the ground is too soft and mucky to admit of a team going on it, let the muck remain where it is first thrown out till winter, when the ground becomes frozen sufficiently to bear a yoke of oxen and sled; and then the muck can be easily cut into junks and carried off.

Peat or muck that has undergone a fermentation mixed with ashes and saturated with urine, is one of the best manures for gardens and nurseries that can be used as it contains few or no seeds of weeds that will grow on dry ground.

That process of improving land called *paring and burning*, though seldom practiced in this country, we feel sure, from what we have seen, might be adopted in many cases with excellent advantage.—The operation consists in cutting a thin slice from the surface of sward or old grass lands. The sods are dried and burnt, and the ashes spread over the land. It is most beneficial to clayey soils and those impregnated with iron—the iron

being converted by the fire into what is called a peroxide, in which state it is harmless to vegetation.

The advantages of paring and burning are several; it destroys the seeds of weeds and much of the foul growth with which the land may be filled; it also destroys many insects and their eggs, and furnishes in the ashes and calcined earth, a powerful manure, impregnated with alkaline salts and carbonaceous matter, which is found highly beneficial in correcting the tenacity of clays, and converting them into friable loams.

We are so well satisfied of the advantages of this operation, that we intend to call attention to it again, giving a more particular account of the process and its effects.

O, SCORN NOT THE PLOUGH!

O, scorn not the Plough! which for ages has been

The staff of the Isle of the Free;
And for ages to come, when our tombstones are green,
Our posterity's staff let it be.

Our cottons and silks we might give to the moth,

Nor be much worse off you'd allow;
For the loom, after all, can but furnish his cloth:

The MAN is sustained by the Plough!

'Twas well with our sires when their wives spun the fleece,

Which at church and at market they wore;

When the loom, still domestic was clicking in peace,

On the flags of the cottager's floor.

And though matters have changed, yet let worst come to worst,

We could live as they lived, even now;
For garb is but second—food ever is first.

And our food is produced by the Plough!

When England waged war, as again she may do,

And conquered, as conquer she will—
Whence came the brave band that, on fam'd Waterloo,

Kept her soil the free soil it is still?

All fresh from the country, not pale from the towns

They marched—as they still would, I trow—

The fine healthy men of the dales and the downs,

The broad-shouldered sons of the Plough!

From the Albany Cultivator.

PEAT AND POND MUD.

In many localities, it is not practicable to obtain these enriching substances except at the driest seasons of the year, when the water is evaporated which usually covers them. The vast quantities of them which abound in many parts of the country, especially of peat and swamp muck, while the scant crops of the adjoining fields show how much their presence is needed, ought to stimulate a greater number of our farmers to seize the present opportunity to cart them upon their fields.

Many have been disappointed from the use of swamp muck or peat. Its results are much less striking than those of farm yard manure, not only because it possesses less inherent richness, but because it contains far less of soluble parts, and consequently imparts its strength more slowly to growing plants. This quality however only makes it more enduring.—Chemists have found that by decoctions in water, vegetable mould loses a small portion of its weight by solution; but if the remaining insoluble portion is exposed to air and moisture a few months, another part may be again dissolved.—Thus, peat, muck, and all decayed vegetable fibre, becomes a slow, but lasting source of nourishment.

Disappointment also results from the want of thorough intermixture with the soil. If peat or muck is merely spread in masses upon the surface of the soil,

and then plowed in, it rarely proves of much benefit, until, by several years tillage, it becomes thoroughly intermixed. To prevent such failure, it should be very thoroughly and repeatedly harrowed, so as to promote a thorough admixture with the surface soil, before it is turned under by the plow.

By such treatment as this, heavy soils may often be greatly improved, and rendered lighter and more free, as well as more fertile.

But it is when shovelled out and dried, to be mixed with farm yard manure, as a recipient for its volatile or liquid parts, that peat or muck becomes pre-eminently valuable. We say *dried* because it is already saturated with water, of which it will often take in *five-sixths of its own weight*, it cannot absorb the liquid portions of the manure. But if well dried before hand, that is if these five-sixths of water are expelled, it will then absorb five-sixths of its weight in liquid manure and it then becomes eminently fertilising. The chief reason that the application of peat to barn-yards has not proved of greater value, is, that farmers have applied it when it was already filled with water, and consequently it could take in little of anything else.

When peat or muck is to be drawn to a distance, it is obvious that a great saving would be made by shovelling it out under large coarse sheds, some months before drawing, that the water may be well evaporated, and so obviate the necessity of drawing several tons of water to every ton of peat.

Pond mud is sometimes a highly fertilising substance. Where the materials which streams deposit, consist of road washings, or the drainings of farm yards or of manured fields, they constitute frequently a compost of the richest kind. The same remark will apply to stagnant ponds which have been much frequented by animals, and which have become dry. In the latter part of summer and early in autumn, these valuable materials may be easily carted out on the adjacent lands and they form one of the best and most suitable manures for wheat, being free from the objections which exist in cases of unfermented or long farm yard manure.

From the same.

WINTER GRAIN—STEEPS FOR SEED.

We should be in favor of sowing rye as early in September is practicable; and where there is no danger to be feared from the fly, we would observe the same rule in regard to wheat. There is a particular reason for early sowing rye this season, and that is the advantage it will afford for feed to sheep and young stock. Rye, if allowed to get good root, may be pastured with light stock in the fall, and to some extent during winter. In some cases it may even be expedient to feed in spring. The diminution which results to the yield of grain is not equivalent to the advantages as pasture. The crop starts very early, and is particularly adapted to the dry lands on which the grass has suffered most. Would it not be judicious to sow this crop largely, to be used this fall and next spring as a substitute for hay and grass? In passing through the country, we notice in the barn yards and around the bars, or sometimes by the road side, considerable piles of manure, exposed to waste by evaporation and washing of rains. If some of the fields where the grass is dried up were plowed, and all the manure now lying useless, was carefully collected and applied to them, a large amount of feed might be produced, which would be available before much grass would be had next season.

In the preparation of ground for winter grain, either wheat or rye, we doubt the propriety of bringing to the surface, the sward, and vegetable matter which had been buried but a few weeks before; especially where the soil is sufficiently porous and loose. Some tool should be used which will sufficiently mellow the soil, without reversing the furrows. A cultivator, if rightly constructed, and

worked at first mostly lengthwise of the furrows, is found to answer a good purpose.

The preparation of the seed is an important matter. The cleanest and heaviest should be sown. If it contain seeds of pernicious plants, they should be taken out. It will amply pay to pick over by hand a peck or half a bushel of wheat, or other grain to be sown on a spot of good clean ground, purposely for seed. Chess, oats, and other seeds, lighter than wheat kernels, may be principally taken out by putting the grain into strong brine, a small quantity at a time and stirring it with a stick. The foul seeds will rise, and may be skimmed off. When it has been finished, it may be put on a floor and dried off, or rendered fit for sowing, by mixing with it air slacked lime or plaster. Passing the grain slowly thro' a good winnowing mill, will clean it from nearly all the small seed such as wild pink, wild mustard, and seeds of most weeds, as well as the most shivelled and imperfect kernels.

The various kinds of smut in grain have been well ascertained to be the vegetable parasites of the fungi tribe. The species known as *Uredo fatida*, commonly called 'dust or pepper brand,' is the most injurious to wheat. Its seeds are so minute that they are believed to be taken in by the spongioles of the plant, and are with the sap carried up the pores into the cavity or the embryo kernel, where the fungus reproduces itself; causing an abortion of the grain, and giving in its place a black dust of most pungent and disagreeable odor and taste.

There is no longer any doubt that this substance may be eradicated from wheat by means of certain substances applied to the seed. So often has this been proved by actual experiment, that we hold him no longer guiltless, who neglects the application of the remedy. The vegetative power of the fungus may be killed by lime, ashes, brine, solutions of arsenic, vitriol, &c. We have tried nearly all these substances, and give the preference to vitriol. Our mode of using it has been as follows:—Dissolve in hot water two ounces of blue vitriol, (sulphate of copper) for each bushel of wheat, add as much water as is necessary to cover the grain, stirring the solution well. Soak the wheat two or three hours, and dry it with plaster before sowing.

In regard to fertilising steeps, we do not know that we can add anything to the suggestions given in our May No., page 158, to which we would refer those wishing to make experiments of this kind.

DESTROYING ALDERS AND OTHER BUSHES.

EDITOR OF THE CULTIVATOR.—Sir, on the receipt of your August number, I noticed the article on 'Killing Alders,' and your invitation to others for facts on that subject.

Mr Jefferson somewhere suggests the importance and utility of perpetuating the experience of old men and agriculturists depend so much upon facts for what they do, that I am induced to state my own experience on this subject.

In the town of Salem, Washington County, N. Y., where I have resided for more than forty years, I have been in the habit yearly of cutting all kinds of brush that sprout in the open and cleared fields. This has been done in the months either of July or August, in the old of the moon, when the sign is in the heart and when it has been done on the day the moon changed, but before the change the sign being in the heart, it has never failed, to my recollection, to destroy the brush.

JOHN CRARY.

DRIPPING CAKES.—Mix one pound of flour a quarter of a pound of moist sugar, a tea-spoonful of salt, and a dessert-spoonful of baking powder. Melt half a pound of dripping; add to it about half a pint of cold milk. Mix quickly, and place in the oven immediately.