

FARM NOTES.

Linsed meal contains a proportion of oil, (some kinds more than others), which is not only nutritious but serves to prevent constipation. It is also a better food than grain, as it contains more nitrogen and mineral matter. The manure from animals that are allowed linsed meal or cottonseed meal is more valuable than that from animals that do not receive such foods.

Now that frost has come it will be noticed that the cornstalks are yet standing in some fields, not having been cut down at the proper time. Such corn is a dead loss to the farmer so far as the fodder is concerned, and reduces the profit of the crop. It is such farmers who abandon their farms because "farming does not pay," and they go in debt, or mortgage their farms, because they do not know how to manage their business.

All fruit trees should be sprayed, without regard to whether they have been attacked by insects or diseases, or escaped, as it is less labor to prevent attacks than to remedy an evil after it appears. It costs more to repair damage than to ward off danger. In some States, such as California, spraying of trees and vines is enforced by law. If the grower neglects his duty he is considered as one maintaining a public nuisance, and some official is ordered to spray the orchard and add the cost to the tax bill of the negligent owner.

If pure, unleached wood ashes could be obtained plentifully, and at a moderate cost, they would give perhaps more satisfactory results, as the ashes are rich in potash and contain lime in its best form, also serving well as a protection against the attacks of some kinds of insects. Ashes can be used without liability of injury on all kinds of crops if broadcasted over the soil, as many as 150 bushels per acre not being considered excessive on certain soils, and they make a better fertilizer for clover than barn-yard manure. For fruit trees ashes cannot be exalted.

Butcher's wagons are now traveling the country roads in all directions, peddling fresh meats, and sometimes taking along bacon, ham and sausage. It is entirely proper for merchants and mechanics to patronize these traveling markets, because they have not the time nor the convenience to fatten animals and make meats so cheaply as farmers can. The butchers can supply them at less cost than they could supply themselves. With farmers, the case is entirely different, and it is poor farming to sell a hog to the butcher for six cents a pound, and buy it back in small pieces at from 12 to 15 cents a pound. Economical farmers endeavor to salt down pork enough in the fall to supply their families with smoked bacon, hams and shoulders for a year. The jowls are also better smoked. There are pieces of lean meat and scraps that can be made into sausage to last all the winter after butchering. Unless a large quantity of lard is desirable, hogs designed for family use should not be too large nor made too fat.

When at the right temperature for cutting up (cold, but not frozen), a hog is taken down and laid on the chopping bench square on his back. The head is first taken off by a cut just back of the ears, and thence down through the sticking hole in the throat, and laid aside to be cut up later. Then, with a sharp axe, the hog is split down through the centre of the back from the neck to the tail; but is only chopped through the bone; the meat should be cut smooth and true with a sharp knife. Some people cut at the side of the backbone because they cannot strike straight enough to split in the centre. One-half the hog is laid aside, and the other is left on the bench. The first and most difficult operation is to take out the spare-ribs without making it too spare, or leaving too much meat on it. If too spare, a person has to gnaw a rib like a dog, and not get a mouthful of meat. If too much is left on, a large proportion will be clear fat, and will grease the chine of the eater more than is desirable.

There are two small strips of lean meat along the back called the tenderloins, which should be eaten fresh, when very tender and sweet, either baked or fried; the tenderloins are good for nothing when salted. There are two larger strips of purely lean meat along the back under the spare-ribs which should be laid out for sausage. When salted this meat is coarse grained, tough, and unsavory; but in the shoulders it is excellent. The hams and shoulders are next taken off, being cut smoothly in an oval shape to give them a handsome, pleasing appearance. There is a great deal in looks to tempt the appetite and make food taste better. We should take as much pains in preparing our own provisions, with an eye to beauty, as if we intended them for sale. The trimmings from the hams and shoulders, and all the neck, should go into the sausage. The side pork is cut in strips from back to belly, about four inches wide. Western packers cut them much wider than this, but for farmers' pork three or four inches is wide enough. The pieces are more easily packed when placed on the edge and curled around in the barrel, but if laid down flat on the rind, the brine does not settle so much when a piece is taken out for use. Meat should be kept constantly covered with brine. The other half of the hog is now placed on the bench and cut up as already described. The heads must be cut with an old axe, as the teeth, if hit, will dull a sharp axe. The jowls are usually very bloody, and must be soaked and washed to get the blood off before being salted.

The pork barrels before the pork is packed must be thoroughly soiled and scrubbed inside and out, with boiling water. Pork cannot be kept sweet and palatable, no matter how much salt is used, unless the barrels are as sweet as if they had just come new from the cooper shop. Many farmers salt the hams, and shoulders of their hogs in the same barrel with their side pork. This is not the best way, as the hams and shoulders become too salt for eating, and when freshened by soaking, or parboiling, lose their finest flavor.

The writer packs hams, shoulders, jowls and some thin pieces of side pork, called bacon, in a barrel by itself, putting no salt on it, only a strong brine, which will bear an egg, or potato, and prepared as follows: For 100 pounds of meat, take about 8 pounds of salt, 5 pounds of sugar, 1 pint of New Orleans molasses and 2 ounces of saltpetre. Pulverize the saltpetre, dissolve it in water, and with the sugar and molasses stir it into the brine. It requires three gallons of water with the eight pounds of salt to make the brine strong enough.

Selecting Christmas Presents.

It is quite heartrending to me to hear people say: "Oh I don't you dread Christmas? I am always half dead before it is half over." Long years on years of incessantly delightful days come back to me, and cannot understand. Memory travels back even to my childhood, and I can yet conjure up the thrill of delightful excitement with which, despite every precaution on the part of my parents, I, reveling in the wholly uncommon state of being awake at midnight, could detect faint echoes of footsteps and soft rustlings of paper which might mean anything. What effort would be too much to bring to one's children the same unique delight, different from other pleasures because of some subtle link with the supernatural, created by the divine cause of the feast? Perhaps Santa Claus, perhaps fairies, perhaps the "Herald angels"—an imaginative child is ready to see and believe anything on Christmas eve.

Perhaps in the old days men and women wearied themselves with preparations, but we did not know it or hear of it. Plenty of healthily, wholesomely tired women, but eminently happy over their fatigue, and weary only when the empty purses said, "Go no further."

Let us count the cost of our celebration and resolve that our expenditures shall be strictly in accordance with our means—that there shall be no Christmas bills to worry and perplex the head of the house—that not once shall any petty rivalry or ignoble strife as to exchange of gifts be even thought of.

One can keep a happy and even a jolly Christmas without gifts but the custom is so natural, so delightful, so full of possibilities of giving enjoyment, that it is worth saving from the beginning of the year to its close, cent by cent, to keep it up. And the poor are happier than the rich in thus giving, since sacrifice enters into their scheme and a bit of one's self lies hidden in the gift.

The children must of course come first, but to begin with do not crowd the nursery with a lot of expensive toys that may be easily destroyed. A few gifts wisely selected are far better. Mechanical toys, leaden soldiers, iron trains of cars, fire engine, hose cart, etc., are a delight to the heart of the small boy. Games are excellent gifts for small children, and so are books, only the selection must be careful in each case.

A doll, or a doll's house, of course, is always a source of unlimited delight to the mother, and these may be had in all sizes, and in all degrees of completeness. In buying dolls be sure not to have all the same size. For the little girl wants a doll in long clothes, and the "mamma doll" must be larger than the baby.

The young girl who has put away her dolls, and is merging into womanhood, will be proud of her dainty fan, brooch or bracelet. If she goes in for athletic exercises, there are numberless presents which suggest themselves,—skates, hockey-sticks and tennis rackets for the summer months. Furnishings for her room, too, are very acceptable. A picture in a pretty frame will be appreciated. So will be a cup and saucer in delicate china, or any article for her tea-table. Cases for handkerchiefs, veils and gloves she will receive gladly. Books, too, may be given, only be sure the author is one of her favorites.

The aforementioned gifts, of course, are nearly all equally suitable for married lady friends. But one could add to the list such things as center-pieces and dollies in the work or embroidered linen. A pin cushion or sofa pillow is also a pleasing gift, or, in lieu of these, a quaint fruit and

bonbon dish or cracker jar, all of which form handsome acquisitions to the home. Christmas gifts for men folks are somewhat more difficult to choose, and it is much easier to tell what not to give than otherwise. Never select pipes or cigars for a man. You know nothing about them and he knows everything about his favorite kind. If you give him a cigar case, do not select too large a one, and if there is any silver mounting let it be flat and as plain as possible. Then it will be a joy, not a trouble. If a card case is to be the gift, let it be a plain curved silver or gunmetal case. Books are also good presents. A man likes substantial, masculine-looking things, and not gifts which he is almost afraid to handle.

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BELLEFONTE, PA. 44-18

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