

NOW I LAY ME DOWN TO SLEEP.

The fire upon the hearth is low,  
And there is stillness everywhere,  
While winged spirits here and there,  
The freight shadows nattering go,  
And as the shadows round me creep,  
A childish treble breaks the gloom,  
And softly from the further room  
Comes, "Now I lay me down to sleep."  
And somehow, with that little prayer,  
And that sweet treble in my ears,  
My thoughts go back to distant years,  
And linger with the loved ones there;  
And as I hear the child's "Amen,"  
My mother's faith comes back to me,  
Crouched at her side I seem to be,  
And mother holds my hand again.  
Oh, for an hour in that dear place!  
Oh, for the peace of that dear time!  
Oh, for that childish trust sublime!  
Oh, for a glimpse of mother's face!  
Yet as the shadows round me creep,  
I do not seem to be alone—  
Magic sweet, of that treble tone,  
And "Now I lay me down to sleep."  
—Eugene Field.

FARM NOTES.

In general farming the onion is chiefly grown from seed, but in gardening the "sets" are used. These "sets" are very small onions, which are small bulbs that appear on the tops of onions in place of flowers. Onions are also produced by multipliers—small bulbets formed by division of the parent bulb. Early onions are grown by these sets, tops and multipliers, while the late crop is the product from seed.

The ideal soil is a loam that is rich and well drained. Soils that are heavy clays must be avoided, and so should also stony land and hillsides. A deep, rich muck soil, containing a fair admixture of sand, has grown excellent crops, while very poor returns have come from new, raw muck lands.

If land can be used that the preceding year was devoted to a heavily manured, hoed crop, free from weed seed, a large crop of onions will all the more be sure. It must not be forgotten that to attempt to grow them on weedy land, or a run-down soil, is all a mistake, and only spells failure.

The best results come from a rather firm seed-bed which results from plowing in the fall. For the second year, land on which is a second crop of clover, heavily fertilized with barnyard manure and turned in the fall, followed the next spring by potatoes, is desirable.

The farmer's Cyclopaedia of Agriculture recommends a heavy top dressing of well-rotted barnyard manure or compost, applied in the spring at the rate of 40 to 50 two-horse wagon loads, and worked well into the soil with a disk harrow or narrow blade cultivator; after this a complete commercial fertilizer analyzing 4 per cent. nitrogen, 8 per cent. available phosphoric acid, and 10 per cent. potash should be applied. This is the fertilizer formula used by the Long Island onion growers, and is broadcasted at the rate of 500 to 1500 pounds to the acre. But owing to the scarcity of potash at the present time it is more than likely that there are some changes to be made in the formula for this year, but just what has not yet been made public.

Where the land for some years has been in a high state of cultivation, the commercial fertilizer in part may replace the barnyard manure. There is one thing that can be assured, and that is onion soil cannot be made too rich.

In place of the formula formerly used by the Long Island growers, wherein the per cent. of potash is

high, and the supply very scarce, most growers will have to resort to a top dressing of ashes and hen manure. Some of the most successful growers on a large scale use all the above, and in addition, apply broadcast from 250 to 750 pounds of nitrate of soda. Three or four applications of this are made during the growing period.

It is estimated that it costs as much to seed and cultivate a crop of onions that yields 300 bushels per acre as it does to grow a crop yielding 800 to 1000 bushels per acre. Onion land, unless it should become infested with insects or disease, can be used for this crop year after year.

Just as soon as the young plants appear above ground cultivation with a wheel hoe should begin. This loosens the soil on both sides of the row and throws it slightly away from the plants. Should this not destroy the weeds, the latter should be promptly pulled. Thinning of plants should also be done at this time, allowing the plants to stand about three inches apart in the row. If, however, the soil is rich, crowding will not be so detrimental to growth. Some growers prefer adding additional fertilizer to the plants rather than go to the expense of thinning, unless the plants should be too close. Throughout the entire growing period the crop should be hoed whenever the ground becomes hard and packed, or weeds appear. Cultivation should always be shallow, and the ground kept level.

When the stalks become weak just above the bulbs and fall over on the ground, maturity is approaching, and when the bulk of the tops have died down the crop can be harvested. Throw two or more rows together, allowing them to remain on the ground for a week or ten days to cure. The tops of the onions can be cut off at any time before marketing, but preferably when they are stored.

In a Connecticut Valley are several Massachusetts towns in which onion growing is the main farm industry. How the growers fertilize their onion fields is told by Leslie R. Smith, in a Massachusetts Bulletin, as follows:

Barnyard manure is seldom used because of the weed seeds it carries, as this material in the soil would interfere in a measure with the use of wheel hoes and hand cultivators, and last, because the onion grower does not have it to use; so it is a question of commercial fertilizer.

Opinions, both with regard to the brand and the amount of fertilizer, are as varied as there are different growers. A grower is very apt to try again the brand that has raised him one good crop, or that has raised his neighbor a good crop. There are growers who buy the chemicals and probably the majority, buy ready-mixed goods. Both methods are in vogue, and there are arguments in favor of each. An analysis of 3.3 nitrogen, 8 phosphoric acid, 7 potash is about the popular goods used in the Connecticut Valley. Hundreds of carloads are used annually in the onion section.

The growers all know that there must be no shortage of plant food for the crop. The up-to-date farmer understands that his overhead charges are fixed, that is, he has to stand the expense of plowing, fitting, cultivating and harvesting; that the cost is about the same whether an average crop is grown or a bumper crop, and that up to a certain point the profit increases with the increased yield; so it is a vital error of judgment to hazard chances of a profit by being "penny wise and pound foolish" in skipping the fertilizer. The Connecticut Valley grower sows one and one-half tons of fertilizer to the acre, and is not at all backward about putting on an extra half ton if he thinks that it is necessary. This is usually applied at one time, but some large growers are trying the experiment of keeping one-half ton to apply in mid-season.

Agricultural Possibilities of Alaska.

We have learned to think of that surprising county of Alaska as containing great wealth in the way of furs and gold and having large stores of coal. That this country, regarded at first as practically valueless, may be fit for agriculture comes as a matter of surprise to most people. The climate of Alaska is, of course, cold, and its summers are short, but it has the same latitude as Sweden, and moreover its climate is much like that of Saskatchewan and Manitoba, in the provinces of Canada, and these latter are well known to offer large possibilities to agriculture. Indeed, the development of the interior of the great country of Alaska has already begun, and it seems to be suggesting itself as a place for homesteads and a place that may perhaps be attractive to immigrants, as offering great facilities for agriculture. Oats, barley, rye and grass grow luxuriantly in the short summers and produce large crops. Cattle can be raised without much difficulty, though they have to be housed and fed during the winter. Vast areas of cultivable land there are in the interior, waiting only for railroad connections to open them up for service. Already they are cultivated as much as the local markets will warrant, but until there can be developed a market out side of the immediate locality by the entrance of railroads, the development of agriculture in these rich lands will be out of the question. Much of the land is now covered with forests, but as soon as it is cleared and the summer sun has an opportunity of melting the soil, it proves itself to be rich and fertile, and in the second season yields very satisfactory sized crops.

Alum Mining in Turkey.

One of the old industries of Turkey is alum mining, which has been carried on actively in the province of Sivas for more than 300 years. Near the village of Gonyk there is a plentiful supply of the raw material. The operations there have so far been primitive and only the face of the hillsides has been dug out according to a writer in "The Argonaut."

The alum bearing rock is brightly colored, usually with a pinkish or red tinge, and the waste from the Gonyk workings, flows down to a small stream along the roadside, to whose waters it gives pinkish white opaque color, incidentally killing all the brook trout that happens to venture into the stained waters from the higher part of the stream.

The rock or ore is first roasted and then broken into small pieces which are very light because the chemical elements have burned out. The broken rock is then placed in open pits and allowed to be exposed to the rain and weather for a whole winter, during which time it becomes something like slaked lime, crumbling easily and finely granulated. In this state it is boiled with water in a large caldron, the stone and waste matter being gradually taken out as it is stirred.

Having been sufficiently boiled, the liquid, now almost clear, is placed in cooling tanks made of masonry. In the course of a few days the alum crystallizes around the sides of these tanks varying from six to nine inches. It is then ready to be broken into smaller pieces and sent to market.

The small portion of alum that sinks to the bottom of the tanks is boiled a second time and yields a superior quality.

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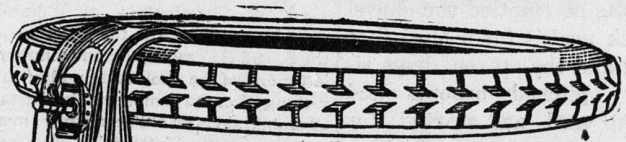
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