

THE TEST OF THE NATIONAL WELFARE IS THE INTELLIGENCE AND PROSPERITY OF THE FARMER.

Every farmer in his annual experience discovers something of value. Write it and send it to the "Agricultural Editor of the Democrat, Bellefonte, Penn'a," that other farmers may have the benefit of it. Let communications be timely, and be sure that they are brief and well pointed.

The State fair of Florida is announced to open to-day, and continue until Tuesday next. It would be rather wintry for a State fair in this country about now.

The cattle plague, to which we made allusion last week, seems to be assuming formidable proportions, and commands the attention of all interested in the prosperity of the country. On another page we copy from the Philadelphia Times an article on the subject which will prove interesting to all cattle owners.

PRICKLY COMFREY as a forage crop, and the system of "ensilage" for preserving it and all other forage crops in a green or "canned" state for winter feeding, are novelties which are just now attracting a great deal of attention from leading, progressive farmers. Ensilage consists in cutting fine and packing in air-tight pits, all forage crops in a green state, and seems to be looked upon with great favor by those who have experimented with it. Mr. R. J. Dodge, of the American Institute Farmers' Club, says that "no part of agriculture possesses the interest for farmers that it does. It will add at once largely to the size of every farm, and without more fencing, stone-picking or weed-destroying."

The grangers are manifesting a great interest in legislative matters this winter. They are now circulating for signatures, through the machinery of their order, a large number of petitions for the enactment of new laws, having a direct bearing upon the material prosperity of the farming community. Among the legislation asked for we find the following:

- To facilitate the formation of co-operative associations.
Adding State Grange representation to the State Board of Agriculture.
Requiring railroad companies to erect fences and cattle-guards.
Requiring all commercial manure to be accompanied by printed analyses.
To prevent the changing of school books oftener than once in five years.
For the reduction of official salaries.

We are indebted to Commissioner of Agriculture Le Duc for copies of his annual report for 1878, and special report No. 10, upon the condition of crops and live stock for January, 1879.

The annual report is brief, and mainly devoted to a review of the work of the various divisions in the way of chemical experiments and analyses looking toward the increased production of sugar, and the distribution of seeds and plants. In the matter of the distribution of seeds the Commissioner rises up in defence of his policy of sending seeds to farmers directly from the department, without the intervention of Congressmen, claiming that only in this way can intelligent reports upon experiments attending the introduction of new varieties of seeds be obtained. Under the head of "Immediate Necessities of the Department, beyond the appropriations usually made for its ordinary workings," the commissioner asks for the additional sum of from eighty-five to one hundred thousand dollars, besides "an experimental farm of one thousand acres of ground in the neighborhood of Washington, and five experimental stations in different sections of the country." The statistical portion of the report is entirely devoted to the "imports, exports, cost and consumption" of ten, coffee and sugar for the past eighty-eight years.

From the special report on the condition of crops we learn that the average price in this state on December was as follows: corn, 48c; wheat, 97c; rye, 84c; oats, 27c; barley, 80c; buckwheat, 55c; potatoes, 70c; tobacco, 10c; and hay, \$8.06. The average prices for farm stock through-

out the State, in January, 1879, were for horses, \$85.80; mules, \$97.50; milch cows, \$29.26; sheep, \$3.27; and hogs, \$8.98. There is no tabulated statement of the condition of the wheat crops now in the ground, but, judging from the correspondence, there seems to be a decline in this State, as compared with the crop of 1878 at the same date last year.

We are under obligations to Senator Wallace for a copy of the speech lately made in the United States Senate by Hon. H. G. Davis, of West Virginia, on the subject of agriculture. Our limited space will prevent us from publishing the speech entire, but we make room for Mr. Davis' resolution, and the first paragraph or two of the very able remarks with which he advocated its adoption:

Whereas agriculture is the foundation of nearly all our wealth and it is mainly through the exportation of its products that we are paying off our large indebtedness, foreign and domestic, and have the present large balance of trade in our favor, and

Whereas although about one-half of the people of this country are engaged in agricultural pursuits and all other interests are dependent upon this, our leading and most important interest, commercial and otherwise, yet but little has been done by the General Government to promote agriculture, while other less general and important interests have been largely aided; therefore,

Resolved by the Senate, (the House of Representatives concurring,) That the committee on agriculture of the respective Houses be, and they are hereby instructed to consider generally the subject of agriculture, and report, by bill or otherwise, what can or ought to be done by the General Government to better advance, encourage, and foster agricultural interests, and that said committee shall have the power to send for persons and papers.

Mr. President, in inviting the attention of the Senate to this resolution and asking its passage, I feel that there is no subject of more importance and more moment to the country, none around which so many interests cluster and in which so many center, as American agriculture.

It is a subject so broad, so national, so universal, so non-partisan, so non-sectional, so far-reaching in its effects and important in its results, that it should at once command the patient attention of all, and in its consideration party feeling and party passion should have no voice.

The country has been, and is weighed down with a heavy national, State, municipal, and individual debt, held at home and abroad, the interest and principal of which must be paid; business has been, and is, depressed; commerce languishes; confidence is destroyed; almost numberless remedies and suggestions have been proposed to bring relief and restore prosperity, but, in the prolonged stagnation, most all have failed and are distrusted.

This resolution is not brought forward as a panacea for all our ills and the only safe road out of our troubles, but it is claimed that for what has been done in the past to bring relief, and for whatever of light and hope there is ahead of us, the country is mainly indebted to agriculture; and if anything can be done to stimulate and better promote this great national interest, the greatest of all, it will not only continue largely to aid in bringing relief and restore prosperity, but remain a lasting and substantial benefit to the country in the future.

Writing Farmers.

From the Rural New Yorker. It is rather a favorite "skit" at farmers who write for the papers to say that they don't practice what they preach, and that thus they frequently disappoint those who visit them by the slovenly appearance of their premises, the ill-kept condition of their live-stock, and the weediness and light returns of their crops. This charge has a small substratum of truth to rest upon; and yet a pretty wide acquaintance with writing farmers enables us to declare that the foundation for such ill-natured charges is much less than is asserted by men who may be good farmers, but who are so selfish that they not only won't do good and communicate, themselves, but enjoy "sitting in the seat of the scorners" wagging their hard heads, and comforting their little souls by exaggerating the defects of their neighbors.

So far as there is truth in the gossip of such men about "writing farmers," the explanation is not at all difficult, nor is it greatly to be discredited of those who are so criticised. There is a limit to the working ability of every man and woman. So much can be done in a day, and then the night cometh, and rest must be taken. The hard-headed and hard-hearted human animal, be he farmer or what not, who devotes all his efforts to his own selfish advancement and cares nothing for the good of others, no doubt has a shade of advantage in mere money-making over his neighbor who is willing to devote a part of his time to the general good—and such is the practice of agricultural writers, as a rule. Certainly there is no branch of literary effort where labor yields so poor a return

as in agricultural writing. As yet, so little does the average farmer and his family care for improvement in their own business that, little as they read any way, nine-tenths of what they do read is the mere news, gossip and scandal of the day, or the blood-and-thunder and cheap sentiment of the dime novel and the story paper. Few men ever earn a dollar by writing upon agriculture.

But in still other ways is the generous-hearted citizen at a disadvantage with the hard-heads in a rural community. Not only will he sacrifice his time and strength by his writing, if he writes, but he is the one upon whom his merciless critics are sure to shirk off all the useful, but peculiarly unprofitable work of the neighborhood. Both in public and church affairs the thrifty boor and his griping helpmeet are "too busy" to lend a hand; but neighbor Good-Heart and sister Charity are delegated by a unanimous vote—and a sneering laugh in the sleeve—to do the "thank-you" jobs for the common good. They do them cheerfully, and "great will be their reward in heaven," but on earth it is probable that Good-Heart's farm and Charity's household will suffer in comparison with those of the pious and patriotic neighbors who profit by their exertions, only to "say all manner of evil against them falsely."

Why We should Underdrain.

From Prof. ALLEN'S Essay before the Pennsylvania Board of Agriculture

In all undrained, retentive soils there is what may be called a water-table line, ranging in depth from six to eighteen inches. Here at this point is a constant source of cold. From this water-table moisture will ascend by attraction to the surface. Evaporation, as before stated, is a cooling process. Here, then, we have two causes operating conjointly to produce cold, the very thing we do not want, but its opposite heat. How shall this be destroyed? Evidently by breaking the union of these two forces. If we can get the water of attraction below the depth to which evaporation operates, then the connection is broken.

Soils properly drained, pass this water by slow degrees to a much lower level, and thence by drains, outward. The moisture needed for the soil to perfect growth, is obtained from the warm waters from the clouds. And as these waters pass downward through the canal-pores or openings, the warm atmospheric air fills the places thus emptied.

All waters falling upon a field in the form of rain or snow, belong, of right, to that field, and ought never to be allowed to pass over it, but downward and through it. Water running over the surface of the ground is always carrying away the very ingredients most needed, and in the best form for the nourishment of plants. *

Fields drained to a depth of three and a half or four feet, at distances varying from thirty to forty feet, will have in two or three years after draining, a capacity for taking nearly all waters falling in rain or snow. * * * Let me mention some of the most obvious results arising from draining. 1. It carries off stagnant water, and furnishes an escape for excessive rainfalls. 2. It prevents the ascent of water from below by capillary attraction. 3. Water passing downward through the soil opens the way for fresh air laden with oxygen, which is so essential to hasten the decomposition of minerals in the soil. 4. Soils after draining become more open and pliable, and are thus more easily worked. Stubborn clay soils are almost entirely changed. 5. Soils become warmer by taking off the water, and thus advance or hasten the growing crop, bringing about an earlier harvest, and in effect producing a change of climate. 6. It enables the farmer in a wet season, both for spring and fall seeding, to put in an earlier crop. 7. It increases the depth of cultivated soil. 8. In wet soils, wood ashes, bones and many other ingredients that might act as fertilizers, lie dormant and are lost. Taking off this excessive moisture, these elements are changed and rendered effective.

Change of Seed.

From the Rural New Yorker. If not already done, it is none too soon to look out for good seed for the crops of the year. The farmer may be a good one. He may have saved his own seed for many years in succession. He may have continued to improve it. This is all right and proper, but a change will be a benefit, or rather he will gain a large percentage in the yield by obtaining seed of the same variety he now raises, and then mixing it with the seed kept for years on his own place. The advantage of this mixture will not be apparent until the second year. It will be less and less apparent for several years after. These are not the outcome of guesswork or theory. They are the result of many experiments made for ten or twelve years by Charles Darwin. Professor Beal has also lately made some experiments in the same direction, showing a great advantage in mixing seeds of the same variety grown in different places. He promises to furnish us the result in a few weeks.

Food for Fowls.

"If hens are rightly cared for they should pay from 200 to 300 per cent. profit as layers. They must not be stinted as to space, nor too many kept together. If confined allow at least a square rod to each fowl. Let the floor of the hen house be of dry earth with a box of dirt and ashes for their sand bath. Keep their quarters clean by removing their droppings at least three times a week. Buckwheat and wheat are the best grains, although for variety other grains must be given. Give cooked food in various ways every day. Mush is excellent, as also fresh meat and scraps from the kitchen. Two or three times a week give fresh bones and ground bones, with gravel and broken oyster shells always within reach. Apples, cabbage, turnips and onions, raw or cooked, will be relished.

Kill the Old Sheep.

It is folly to keep old sheep. They should be turned off to the butcher while they are in their prime. It does not take half as much to fatten them then. When they get old and thin in order to put them in condition to slaughter the whole superstructure must be rebuilt. Four sets of lambs are all a ewe should bear; this will bring her to five years, and this is an age when with little extra care she will round up to a fine and full carcass. Exceptions may be made when the breed is scarce, and the blood is more desirable than anything else.

Mr. JOHN M. BAILEY writes from Billerica, Mass., to The American Cultivator, that he had no idea how much valuable manure he was losing until he cemented his barn cellar bottom and carted in dry loam and muck (at the rate of one or two loads a day) to absorb all the liquids from his cattle, horses and pigs.

GIVE your cow every day water slightly warm and slightly salted, in which bran has been stirred at the rate of one quart to two gallons of water. You will find, if you have not tried this daily practice, that your cow will give 25 per cent. more milk.

HENS are egg-making machines, and they will turn out just as many eggs in winter as in summer, if they have proper care.

EXPERIENCE is a good commodity to buy, if it is not too costly. The best farmer is likely to be he who buys plenty of it, but at a low cost.

In all farm crops the finest has not only the best market and the highest price, but there are buyers always seeking the best.

Harry K. Hicks, Hardware.

Advertisement for Harry K. Hicks, Hardware, located at Allegheny Street, Bellefonte, Pa. The ad lists various hardware items such as paints, stoves, and saddlery, and mentions that they are sold at bottom prices.

Advertisement for The Patriot newspaper, published in 1879. It offers subscription rates for individuals and clubs, and mentions that the paper is sent by mail to clubs at the following rates: \$6.00 per copy per year to a club of five, \$5.50 per copy per year to a club of ten, \$5.00 per copy per year to a club of twenty, \$4.50 per copy per year to a club of fifty, and \$4.00 per copy per year to a club of one hundred.

Advertisement for Wilson, McFarlane & Co., Dealers in Stoves and Ranges, Paints, Oils, Glass, Rakes, Forks, Cradles & Scythes. They are the sole agents for Johnson's Kalsomine.

Advertisement for Bellefonte & Snow Shoe, listing various routes and schedules for the railroad.

Advertisement for Bald Eagle Valley Railroad, listing various routes and schedules for the railroad.

Advertisement for Pennsylvania Railroad, listing various routes and schedules for the railroad.

Advertisement for Harper Brothers, listing various goods and services offered, including bottom prices, bottom prices, and various types of goods.

Advertisement for The Scientific Record, listing various scientific and technical information, including patents and trade marks.

Advertisement for Great Reduction, Economy is Wealth, listing various sewing machines and their prices.

Advertisement for Harper Brothers, listing various goods and services offered, including country produce and various types of goods.

Advertisement for Centre County Banking Company, listing various banking services and interest rates.