

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.

There is a difference between "salting the butter" and buttering the salt which the makers of some of the butter found in the markets fail to distinguish. At the late dairy exhibition in Massachusetts, the premium lots, according to the statements, averaged six ounces of salt to every ten pounds of butter; the range was from four to nine ounces, indicating the general tendency toward a fresher article. The time of an ounce to a pound has passed.

The best and most complete reports of the markets for agricultural products which come under our observation are those furnished by Land and Home. A part of its creed is that "profitable farming depends as much on selling as on producing," and that "a crop well grown is only half way to market," and its market reports are made to help the producer over the other and worse half. As representing the business side of agriculture it should be in the hands of every farmer who has for sale a bushel of wheat or corn, a beef, a sheep, or a horse, butter, cheese or eggs, cotton, wool, sugar, tobacco, fruit or produce of any kind.

The last exhibition of the State Agricultural Society was a great success in every sense of the word, and its managers, as well as the public generally, attribute this to the fact of its having been held in the Permanent Exhibition building at Philadelphia. This justifies the authorities in the action taken on Friday, the 9th instant, in fixing upon the same place for the next fall's exhibition. The work of organizing the coming fair commenced on Monday of last week, and it is proposed to make it, in point of exhibits, the largest ever held in the State. We are glad to note this early exhibition of energy upon the part of the officers of the society, and predict for them a success which shall entirely eclipse that of last year.

We are in receipt of an appreciative note from a lady, thanking us for the good advice which has appeared in the DEMOCRAT from time to time, relative to the winter care and feeding of chickens. The writer heartily approves of our suggestions, and finds her reason for so doing in the fact that the half dozen hens which she keeps as pets were as unproductive during the early part of the winter as the average farmer's hen could be; but since she began the rational system of feeding advised by the DEMOCRAT, she has been rewarded daily by a full complement of eggs—generally five, sometimes six, and on no day less than four, the weekly average being thirty-two. This is a good record, but no better than can be made by any flock which has the same intelligent care. Our correspondent thinks "it pays to keep hens." So do we, provided they are well cared for; otherwise they had better go to the pot.

We have heretofore called the attention of our readers to the prominent position given to matters pertaining to agriculture by Scribner's Magazine. The series of articles by Rev. E. P. Roe, under the title of "Success with Small Fruits," is alone worth the subscription price. The January number, besides, the third of this series, has in "Topics of the Time," a paper on British and American Farming and another on From Country to City, which have special interest to country livers. A note just received from the publishers tells us that "no less than three farmers will contribute articles on out-door topics in the Midwinter (Feb.) number. The papers are, the fourth of Rev. E. P. Roe's series on "Success with Small Fruits," devoted this month wholly to a Southern Strawberry Farm; a bright, chatty paper

on "New England Fences," by Rowland C. Robinson; and an exceedingly interesting collection of miscellanies, by John Burroughs, under the caption, "Notes of a Walker." Additional topics of a similar interest will deal with "Flour from Chestnuts," "New Fruit Press," "The Mechanical Extraction of Cream," and (in a paper on John Bright) with the famous Corn Laws of England.

We have just opened, January 15, the pit in which we had buried our Sugar Beets, for stock feed, and are delighted as well as somewhat surprised to find them in excellent order. The unusual dryness of last season prevented them from making as large growth as they should, and we were tempted to leave them in the ground as long as possible, that they might have the advantage of the pleasant, open fall for additional growth. By so doing we were caught by the first sharp frosts, and that part of the beets which grew above the ground was frozen solid. We immediately raised and pitted them with considerable care, but without very strong hopes of saving them. The result is much better than we anticipated. The ground seems to have "drawn out the frost," and the beets came out as crisp, plump and fresh as any we ever put away in the best of order.

At the same time we opened the trench in which we had stored our latest and greenest celery, and find it in an equally satisfactory condition. When placed in the trench it had scarcely begun to blanch, but it comes out in beautiful order—as short of grain, creamy in color, and nutty in flavor as any epicure could wish.

"Self-Insurance for Farmers." In the local columns of our issue of the 8th inst. we reported the election of new officers of the Centre County Mutual Fire Insurance Company, and gave a brief statement showing the marked propriety of the organization. As apropos we quote entire number two of a series of papers under the above title, now running in our most excellent and esteemed contemporary, Land and Home:

In co-operative insurance among farmers, the Grange and the farmer's club may be powerful auxiliaries to the work, as through them the farmers become intimately acquainted with each other, and therefore know who, and what, the men are whom they select for managers, for in those organizations their executive capacity will be shown. Starting in the Grange, this co-operative insurance plan will challenge public confidence from the beginning. This confidence alone can secure wide enough patronage to make the enterprise a paying one. With \$1,500,000 to \$2,000,000 at risk, the annual rate of loss on \$1,000 will not, under ordinary circumstances, exceed eighteen cents. At this rate the farmer who insures \$5,000 worth of property, pays \$4 a year by the co-operative system, while under the incorporated insurance company system it would cost at least \$15, as the rate is not less than \$3 on \$1,000, yearly. A small territory is desirable, as much time and money will thus be saved which would otherwise be expended by the manager in traveling.

By a recent report published in the Insurance Age, it is shown that in nineteen States the profit on a business of \$477,000,000, all of which has been done since 1868, is 7 per cent., which the Age calls "beggarly." It does not refer to the princely salaries which stock-holders or their relatives have drawn during this time, nor does it make special mention of the unprecedented losses in the cities of Boston and Chicago a few years since, or of the late general depression in business. All things considered, isn't 7 per cent. profit a good showing? How much have the insurance companies lost on farm property during this time? A glance at this same report shows that in States where the percentage of farmers is the largest, the ratio of losses is the smallest, except in Illinois. The price of insurance should be governed by the laws that govern the price of potatoes. He would be an insane farmer who goes from Orange county into New York city to buy his vegetables. High-priced insurance in a city may be a necessity; in the country it is an absurdity. All the expense of accumulating vast sums of money for possible losses would be avoided by the farmers. The club room is quite as good place to figure in, or to pay a premium in, as a morocco-upholstered and mahogany wainscoted office.

The Lenox, Mass., town authorities are furnishing barbed wire to fence places on the highway where the snow has always drifted in the lee of common fences.

The Soiling System. THE DEMOCRAT has steadily and persistently advocated the soiling system of feeding cattle as being one of the practical answers to the question of "How to make the farm pay." We believe that its general adoption is but a question of time and that those who first practice will fare best. An Ohio correspondent of the Practical Farmer uses the following vigorous language upon the subject:

I have just been considering the advisability of adopting the soiling system in the older settled States, where fencing material is getting scarce and every possible means have to be resorted to, to keep up the fertility of the soil. Why should the farmers of Ohio pay tens of thousands of dollars of taxes every year for land they get no use of—the fence rows? And why still add tens of thousands of dollars to this amount for building fences that could very profitably be dispensed with? Why have the cattle tramp over our fields the greater part of the year to nip the grass out by the roots, and tramp them solid and cloddy, thus rendering them unfit for cultivation or mowing? And why not keep on making manure in abundance all summer and thus avoid the expense of artificial fertilizers to keep back soil deterioration? Will a hundred of your readers—practical farmers, who are situated as we, in Eastern Ohio—are—respond to the foregoing queries, and especially those who have adopted the soiling system, in Logan and other counties?

We are taking steps to adopt the soiling system, but are single-handed and alone—having to take the front rank in this enterprise, and hope, we can stir up the ire of the sluggish, land-wasting, fence-building farmers, sufficiently by this article, to wake them into a thorough discussion of this momentous matter. We wish to gain all the information relative to the subject we possibly can, and especially are we anxious to learn all about the possibility of soiling sheep whether they will thrive under such management or not.

Let Waldo and other big guas set aside the "barrel" for a few weeks and give the soiling system a lift—or a kick if you are a mind to—and keep in view the successful management of the forty-acre farm of Mr. Wm. Crozier under this system. Let's have another fight! Give an account of your agricultural sins! Waste no longer the Lord's land and money in this reckless and unbecoming manner.

Care of Chimney and Ashes.

There having been fault found with the kitchen stove, and not remedying it by cleaning the stove and pipe, I knew the trouble must be in the chimney, which had not been cleaned out for four years. To-day being rainy, I thought I would burn it out. There had been so much soot accumulated that it made a very hot fire, but by giving it only a little draft, the work was safely performed. Although the day was calm, it roared like an engine, and red hot embers fell hissing upon the wet roof, showing the terrible result that would have followed had the chimney taken fire on a dry and windy day. Chimneys that are in constant use should be cleaned every year. If there are two funnels into it, the fire should be started at the upper one, and the lower one be kept closed until the soot is well done smoking, else fire and smoke will fill the rooms. If the chimney chances to take fire on a day when it is not safe to let it burn out, closing the front draft and throwing a handful of fine salt upon the fire in the stove will check it at once.

I recently learned a lesson about handling ashes. I took up a half-bushel of ashes made by burning a brush heap two days before. I thought all must be safe, and so put them into a barrel. In three hours the barrel was blazing, but I was fortunately near and extinguished it. Although it was at a safe distance from the buildings it gave me a start that I shall not soon forget.

A New Cow Fastener.

A humane man has invented an improved mode of confining cows without stanchions or stalls. He uses small posts 4x6 inches, set up where the stanchions would be, 3 feet 2 inches from centre to centre. On the inside of these posts, 14 inches above the door, a 5-8 staple 12 inches long, is driven into each post. A 1-4 cable chain, stretching from staple to staple, with a ring on each end, slides up and down on the staples, has a ring in the middle into which the cow is to be fastened. A leather strap, 1 1/2 inches wide, with a strong breast-strap slipped on, is placed around the cow's neck, and riveted on with three small copper rivets. The cow is brought between the two posts and the snap fastened to the ring in the middle of the chain, which holds the cow in the centre between the two posts, but the slack of the chain and the chain slipping back and forth upon the neck enables the cow to move forward and backward to turn her head and she may lick or scratch herself from shoulder to rump. And when she lays down, it may be in the natural position, with her head upon her shoulder. The cow carries the strap upon her neck, and it is not as much work to fasten her as with a rope.

The Education a Farmer Needs. A PRACTICAL VIEW OF THE SUBJECT BY THE PRACTICAL MAN WHO EDITS THE PRACTICAL FARMER.

We have just been reading a long article, in an old exchange, on the subject indicated above. The writer tries to show that the farmer ought to be a thorough botanist, geologist, chemist, and all the other "ists," in order to be successful in his business. We frequently see articles of a similar nature in print, and they exercise a bad influence. Intelligent farmers who read these articles know that it is not so, and they become disgusted with the kind of "book farming" that insists upon such an ultimatum. Only visionary theorists write in this way. No practical man does it. Any man with common sense knows that it is utterly impossible for one to become thorough in all the sciences in one short life, and if it were possible, it is not necessary to success in farming. Let specialists attend to these sciences, master them in all their details, and show how they may be practically applied to agriculture. Then, if the farmer has education and intelligence enough to so apply them, to take advantage of every fact that the scientific specialist has shown can be utilized, he will get along better and make a great deal more money than he would if he had to spend his time in scientific research. Education is a good thing; we are in favor of it every time, but we don't like to see it tossed about like a foot ball by men who hardly know what the word means.

Hints for Stock Keepers.

Keep Teats Dry.—In the case of late (or early) calves and foals, a warm stall or box should be secured, if the dam is allowed to do the nursing. In the same way the hands should be kept dry in milking cows in the cold season, and the filthy practice of dipping the hands in the milk cannot be too strongly condemned. Wetting of the teats means evaporation, chilling, inflammation, chapping; followed by trouble in milking, a habit of kicking, or holding up the milk, loss of teats, or even loss of a quarter.

Vermin.—Unless the stock is kept in good condition and cleanly, vermin are far more liable to accumulate in winter than in summer. This is not only the case in reference to hen lice (Acari), which swarm in dirty hen-roosts, and by their attacks on birds and quadrupeds worry their victims out of all growth and improvement; but certain other acari (Dermatophagi) attacking the legs of horses, cattle, and sheep, often suspend active operations, ascend upon the hairs and give rise to no irritation during the warm season; and it is only on the return of winter that they return to the skin and produce their characteristic form of mange. The closer and the filthier the barn, the more troublesome will be these pests; while cleanliness and a wash with a weak solution of tobacco will usually put a period to their ravages. So it is with lice and ringworm, which increase in proportion to the closeness and uncleanness of the buildings and poor condition of the animals. Animals with the least vitality usually harbor the greatest number of parasites, which speedily undermine what remaining vigor of constitution is left.

Poverty.—Finally, care in the winter months secures prompt and satisfactory improvement when first returned to grass in the spring, and obviates those risks that attend on the sudden plethora which usually follows, when thin animals, capable of rapid improvement, are turned from a spare and innoxious diet to a rich, succulent, and abundant pasturage. Excessive plethora suddenly induced is incomparably more dangerous than high condition constantly maintained.

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