

The Farm and Fireside

Flowing—Autumn and Spring.

We frequently here the question put, will it pay to plow and sow in late autumn? Sometimes the inquiry is extended to the matter of cross plowing the same in the spring is referred to. I do not propose to lay down a law for these things, or to convince all who may read; yet a few words to the thoughtful may not prove devoid of interest.

It will be evident that circumstances will vary materially influence the result of plowing in autumn, and also that of cross-plowing an inverted sward in the spring. Such is the general character of the spring time, during which we have under preparation the land for the ensuing season's crops, that an excess of moisture (and consequently wet soil) exists, so that we have to lose some plowing time; and this is especially so with lands not well underdrained, or else overlying a thick stratum of gravel. By autumn plowing, the preparation can be greatly advanced, and less hurry and more care given to what is really necessary work at the time of plowing. If, however, a cross plowing be practiced instead of the single plowing, the amount of preparatory work is not diminished, and the question arises does the cross plowing tend to lessen the labor of tillage required to develop the crop? hold this general principle to be sound and fit to govern our practice in the main—that all possible cultivation anterior to planting is done at a saving of expense, because we can do the same more readily when the growing crop is not in the way. For instance, he who by use of plow and harrow or other implement, destroys the weeds or grass growing on the field or the crop is planted, can do so at less expense of labor than if he wait for the crop to get a start and then attempt it.

The argument may be presented that a cross plowing turns up so small quantity of sods that will readily grow, and especially if it should be rather moist weather. I have tried the various methods, and found each to have some attendant disadvantages, and it is only by a comparison of these that the more profitable way can be ascertained. If the working force a farmer has at his disposal is rather limited, he will find it expedient to do as much plowing in the autumn as he is able; and if the same is not done enough or thoroughly, sometimes impossible, then at all means, a cross plow in the spring; for a roughly turned sward left over the winter will make no small increase of labor necessary in the cultivation of the crop succeeding. I have even plowed another time after the cross plowing, when the season was unfavorable to the early development of the sward, and have found the result very satisfactory. But as such a system would involve an excess of labor, over which there is a substantial doubt as to its general profit, I will not urge it as expedient.

I have seen land that was plowed in autumn become so packed down by the spring rains that it was unusable for sowing without a cross plowing; the result was by no means satisfactory. A cross plowing in this case would make the difference between a fair profit and none at all. Last spring I chose to plant upon the inverted sod, plowed the autumn before, without a cross plowing, for the reason of the soil seeming so fine and mellow on the surface; and the result was not particularly satisfactory. I have seen late spring plowing handled as nicely and the crop tended with quite as little expense, as any other; yet as this cannot be done very generally, I would not deem it wise to adopt it as a system.

It is my conclusion, drawn from observation and experience, that autumn plowing is profitable; and that cross plowing in the spring is desirable in many cases, if not all; and that, as a system, it has advantages over every other. The measure can be drawn out at the late autumn or early winter, or even early spring, and spread thereon, and thus so much of the labor and preparation accomplished at a time when it interferes with no other crop labor, the real labor on the farm is more equally divided, and thereby better utilized which is a matter of no mean importance.

Let any one should say this simply refers to where a sward is to be plowed, let me add that I hold the practice to be most excellent and wise to adopt for mellow ground as well. If there is more danger of such land becoming packed rather than to handle nicely, then resort to the cross plowing; or, if the land is a narrow strip, a second plowing. If the land is rather level, or otherwise retains an excess of moisture, then plow in the autumn in quite sharp ridges, which will tend very much to preserve a mellowness.

One other advantage, perhaps of more importance than is generally estimated, arises from autumn plowing, and this is the opportunity of plowing a little deeper and turning up a new stratum of soil to the action of the winter; and then by plowing the fresh soil can be quite thoroughly incorporated with the older. It will pay so to do.—Correspondent of *Country Gentleman*.

Protection Against the Cabbage Worm.

The European cabbage-worm, *Pieris rapae*, recently introduced by way of Canada, which has proved so voracious and prolific, has become the terror of northern cabbage-growers, and threatens to traverse the country, unless checked by natural or other causes. Wherever the pest has reached, so far as heard from, very few if any remedies have been able to give relief to the gardener. The most noted success is that of P. T. Quinn, the market-garden reporter of the *New York Tribune*. He sends the following statement: On his return from California, last summer, he found his cabbages infested with worms, and that with total destruction. He went to work with his accustomed energy, experimenting, trying everything new and old promising resistance of the plagues, all to no purpose, until he hit upon the following: Twenty parts of superphosphate made of slush acid, 1 of carbolic powder, and 3 of unshelled lime, mixed well together and dusted thoroughly into the cabbages four times at intervals of four days. The result was the saving of 76,000 cabbages, and a loss of but five per cent. The worms would eat fresh lime with impunity, and carbolic powder would destroy cabbages and worms alike, but the ingredients in the proportion named, with the unsavory perfume of the superphosphate, either sickened or disgusted his swarming enemies.

—Horses yield more manure than most other animals from the amount of food consumed.

The Wandering Jew.

All over the Middle Ages we see a weird form of a man, downcast and grave, who, shunning, unseeing, must march on to the day of doom. The Wandering Jew, sometimes buried in Armenian convents or the deserts of Central Asia, in the burning plains of Africa or the snowy heights of the Caucasus, suddenly appears in the more civilized haunts of Europe, and tells, as an eye-witness, the sad story of the crucifixion, and his share in the continually cast upon the flaming city of Jerusalem under the Roman yoke; he had fought against Gauls Germans and Saracens; but no lance would enter his charmed body—no arrow pierce the heart that longed to be at rest. The wild elephant had crushed him under foot, venomous serpents and biting him, the hungry lion had torn him, but he could not die until Christ himself should return to judge the world. This legend filled the people with terror and emotion, and probably arose from some eloquent preacher who, personified the Jewish nation, scattered through the world, undestroyed by persecution, under the figure of a single man, Matthew Paris in the first historian who speaks of it; an Armenian bishop, visiting the monks at St. Albans, had conversed with the Jew about the year 1238, and from that time he appeared at intervals in several of the cities of Europe, dressed in the old Roman costume; much worn, with a long beard, naked feet, and a sad, melancholy expression. He refused to present himself but a few people, he gave to the poor. At Strasburg he appeared in 1580, and informed the magistrate that he had passed through the city two hundred years before which was verified by a reference to the city registers. The last time we hear of him is in the city of Brussels in 1674.

The Cant of Crispien.

The phrase "kicking for work" is common to all the purely mechanical branches. It is expressive. Man must absolutely kick his way through the world—or he kicked through it. Yet who but one of the initiated could comprehend a knight of the honorable and ancient order of St. Crispin, when, weary and worn, with his little bundle on his back, he walks into a shoe shop and "kicks for work"? The journeyman shoemaker saunters in, by very instinct singles out the "boss" of the establishment and proclaims:

Jour.—Is the clock in?
Boss.—He is.
Jour.—Any occasion?
Boss.—Are you a man's man or a woman's man?

Jour. (proudly)—I box the craft around from flank to heel-strap.
Boss.—Dance your kit and call in your jigger.

Jour. (laying down his bundle with an air of triumph, drawing out his leather purse, and turning to the apprentice)—Here Stag, shoe up your heel—run along and get us a pint!

When a shoemaker takes a drink he calls it putting on another "heel-strap." When he wants to borrow from a chum he says, "Shoppmate, finger in your paste horn." We heard one abuse his boarding house for giving him "nothing but slap-jacks for ball"—meaning pancakes for dessert.

Some may suppose that "cabbage" and "goose" alone distinguish the knights of the season. Their vocabulary is not so rich as that of their cousin-german, the shoemaker, yet it must not be imagined they care for nothing but cabbage. A journeyman tailor "kicks for a job" by inquiring if the "crook" (cutler) is in; and, being answered in the affirmative, wants to know "how's trade?" He don't have to call in his jigger, as he generally has it in his hand, and is perhaps somewhat already bitten by it, which, when he goes in. A tailor seldom dies—he merely "chucks out."

Modes of Salvation.

The usual salutation at Cairo is, "How do you sweat?" a dry hot skin being sure indication of a destructive ephemeral fever. Greenlanders have none, and laugh at the idea of one being superior to another.

Islanders, near the Philippines, take a person's hand or foot, and rub it over their cheeks.

Laplappers apply their nose against the person they salute very strongly.

In the Stratus of the South, they raise the left foot of the person addressed, pass it gently over the right leg, and thence to the face.

The inhabitants of the Philippine bend very low, placing their hands on their cheeks, and raise one foot into the air with the knee bent.

The Dutch, who are considered as great, have a morning salutation, common among all classes, "Smaakeley ketten." "May you eat a hearty dinner." Another is, "Hoe waart u?" "How do you sail?" adopted, no doubt, in the early periods of the Republic, when they were all navigators and fishermen.

Some authors have been observed in contrasting the haughty Spaniard with the frivolous Frenchman, that the proud steady gait and inflexible solemnity of the former were expressed in his mode of salutation, "Comie esta?" "how do you stand?" while the "Comment vous portez vous?" "how do you carry yourself?" was equally expressive of the gay motion and incessant action of the latter.

In some parts of Africa, a young woman, an intended bride, brings a little water in a calabash, and kneeling down before her lover, desires him to wash his hands. When he has done this, the girl, with a tear of joy sparkling in her eyes, drinks the water. This is considered the greatest proof she can give him of her fidelity and affection.

An Ethiopian takes the robe of another and ties it about him, so as to leave him almost naked.

The Japanese takes off a slipper, and the people of Armenia their sandals, in the street, and their stockings in the house when they salute.

Two Negro Kings on the coast of Africa salute by snapping the middle finger three times.

The inhabitants of Carthage, when they show particular attachment, open a vein and present their blood to the friend as a beverage.

If the Chinese meet after a long separation, they fall upon their knees, and their faces to the earth two or three times, and use many other affected modes. They have also a kind of ritual, or academy of bows, by which they regulate the number of bows, genuflections, and words to be spoken on certain occasions. Ambassadors practice these ceremonies forty days before they appear in court. The common salutation in the southern provinces of China, among the lower order, is "Wa-fan?" "have you eaten your rice?" In Oshahite they rub their noses together.

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