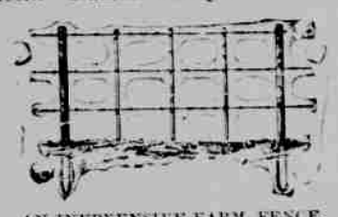
AGRICULTURAL TOPICS.

A FEW SUGGESTIONS FOR OUR RURAL READERS.

Cows Should Be Treated Kindly—A Safe Ash Bin and Sifter—The Value of Ensilage—About Seeding Wheat—General Farm Notes.

Wire Fence Stays.

Where fence posts are expensive it is an object to use as few as possible. On a Kansas farm the posts are placed four rods apart. For stays laths are wired to the barbed wire at every rod as shown in the illustration, a sketch of which has been sent by J. Meeir. Number nine plain annealed



AN INEPXENSIVE FARM FENCE.

wire is cut in six inch lengths and bent to the proper shape, over one side of a lath by hand. A boy holds the lath in place, the bent wire is quickly slipped around lath and wire, and grasped with a pair of pinchers, and with two or three turns they were solidly secured.—American Agriculturist.

How Honest Farmers Are Made.

The moment you can show the farmer that he can make money by being strictly honest, that moment he becomes an honest man, no matter how big a rascal he was before. He must begin by being honest to his land. The land will be sure to strike back. He must be honest to his stock; look how they return it to him, in better meat, better butter, better and more manure. He must be honest to his hoe: there is nothing in the world keeps a hoe so bright and cheerful as keeping it busy in hunting out weeds. He must be honest in his seed. He must give every foot of land its honest amount of labor. He must put up his crops for market in honest shape. He must ask an honest price and stick to it. He must be so honest himself that no dishonesty can live on his farm, and all the money that he gets will have that honest yellow glow the sign of thrift.

Morality on the farm is fully as important as anything else. Do you believe in head work? If so, don't let weeds belie you. Do you believe in big crops? If so, don't let your manure pile be bigger than your crib. Do you believe in honest measure? If so, don't let it get lop-sided except when you buy. Do you believe in fat stock? Don't let ribs give you contradiction. Do you believe in frequent settlements? If so, don't let the sheriff call on you to remind you of them. In fact, the morality on a farm is easily resolved into the old saw, "Do as you would be done by," or you will find yourself done. Don't be a prevaricator. Don't shirk a responsibility. Don't try to drive through a stump; better go around. The moral code is a sure one between you and your land and stock.—Germantown Telegraph.

Ensilage.

A writer upon this subject said he presumed he should be called an ensilage crank, but so long as he could produce 1,000 pounds of butter worth 25 cents per pound from one acre of ensilage, with other feed furnished, he was willing to be called a crank. That sounds very well, but in reality is no argument in favor of ensilage because of its indefiniteness. At first thought, the impression would be that the acre of ensilage had produced the thousand pounds of butter, but then upon reflection, the reader is left in the dark. There is no explanation of what the other feed is, nor how much in quantity; neither is there any intimation of what the cost of production was. Undoubtedly ensilage is all right and may be profitable to those producing milk and having a dairy large enough to warrant the expense of building a silo. But at the same time, from the tests made at different experiment stations, there is not a particle of evidence in favor of ensilage instead of the same fodder in a dry state. It must be remembered that in the case of ensilage, it is recommended that it be not planted too thickly, so that it may develop a better growth and also ears of grass. This all goes into the pit as a part of the ensilage fodder and is so fed, still further supplemented with other grass, and those using it are inclined to compare its effects with those of ordinary corn stover that has stood for the ripening and removal of all the grain. Cut your corn, dry the fodder and feed the combined product, and note the result before making the comparison with ensilage. This is a fair way to make comparisons.

Why Plowing Is Hard Work.

While the work done in plowing may not be greater, theoretically, than drawing a wagon by the same exertion of force, yet the plowing is really harder and expends more actual force, because of the dead weight moved. It is easier for a man to carry a load of any weight, twice as quickly, by spurts, with rests between, than in any given time with a constant movement. Let a man carry a bag of corn for five minutes, and then rest five minutes, and then repeat, and he will make better time than another man of equal strength who has twice the time allowed him. Equally, a horse may travel fifty miles every second day and last longer than he would if traveling twenty-five miles every day. And this is what makes the difference between plowing and drawing a wagon. Every little inequality in the ground and every spurt of the draft, is a rest for the horse, by which he is refreshed. But drawing a plow is a dead weight without any rest. The horses walk on yielding mellow ground.

Treat the Cows Kindly.

Cows are naturally of the mildest disposition of any four-legged animal upon the farm, and they should be treated kindly and not abused by the milkers and drivers. The practice of sender a dog after them and allowing him to rush them into the milk yard, exhausted and excited, is a practice that will cost each year from ten to twenty-five pounds of butter for every cow milked. Drive the cows leisurely to and from the pasture. If you are in a hurry let the driver make double quick time when he is going to and from the field not accompanied by the cows. The throwing of stones, sticks or other missiles should be forbidden, and the operation of milking should be done rapidly and with but little or no talking. Should a cow make a misstep or switch you unpleasantly during fly-time don't speak so sharply as to startle her. In many herds there are often one or more cows which only a certain member of the family can milk. This indicates very plainly that some one is mild-tempered, and understands the cow's disposition. A box located at some accessible point should contain at all times a supply of salt. If salt is fed in heroic doses once or twice each week, the cows will then gorge themselves, caused derangement of the digestive organs. Milk should not be applied to the teats to reduce the power required in milking, for it does not, but most certainly adds filth to the milk obtained, and in cold weather the wet teat will become cracked and sore. All cows with a domineering nature and sharp horns should be dehorned. Brass ferrules at the tips of the horns lessen the danger but do not prevent the pushing and bruising of other cows.

Combined Ash Bin and Sifter.

Many mysterious fires have been traced directly to the careless leaving of ashes containing live coals near some inflammable material, says an exchange. It is common practice to

COMBINED ASH BIN AND LIFTER.

set pails and other vessels containing ashes and live coals directly on the floor of some out-building. It is certainly very foolish to run all this risk when, for a few dollars, a good and safe receptacle for the ashes can be easily constructed. The engraving from a sketch by L. D. Snook shows a simple form, three feet wide, four feet long, two and a half feet above ground, and one foot below ground. It is made from brick laid in single tier with water lime. Where coal is used, there is great economy in sifting the ashes. Two iron or wooden bars can be placed cross-wise six inches below the top. Upon these rests a common ash riddle with handle projecting in front. By throwing the ashes on the sifter and closing the hinged cover, the coal is separated from the ashes without a cloud of dust. The handle is simply hooked to the sifter and unfastened when the sifter is emptied. Wood ashes need not be sifted, but may be safely thrown into the bin while hot. A cement floor will keep the ashes dry. Unleached wood ashes are an excellent fertilizer.

Horticultural Notes.

DO NOT cultivate so deep as to disturb the roots.

AN effective remedy for black knot is cutting off and burning.

MANY make a mistake in failing to spread out the roots evenly.

KEEPING the soil shaded aids materially in the storing of nitrogen.

TRANSPLANTING two or three times helps in the formation of fibrous roots.

IN growing berries for market, the best results are secured with a rich soil.

ALLOWING them to grow too thick is one cause of failure in growing root crops.

GENERALLY in transplanting it is best to set the plants down to the first leaf.

MULCHING newly set trees during hot, dry weather often saves them from dying.

MANY plants die because care is not taken to place the soil in close contact with the roots.

IT is rarely a good plan to allow a fruit tree agent to select the varieties of trees for the orchard.

ALLOWING moss or lichen to grow to the bark of the trees affords a hiding or harboring place for vermin.

THE grape can be readily propagated by layering and a good supply of plants be secured at a low cost.

The Vegetable Garden.

The value and importance of the vegetable garden to every farmer's family cannot be overestimated. As a source of supply of food in great abundance, it may be made almost unlimited in extent and variety. It is a duty that the farmer owes to his family to supply it with the greatest possible variety of everything in the vegetable line, so long as it can be done by little expenditures other than that of labor. To grow vegetables of the best quality requires a rich, sandy loam, provided with an abundance of active fertilizing material. The soil should receive a thorough pulverization as a preparatory seed bed, the planting carefully done and at intervals of time to secure a succession of crops. The cultivation should be so frequent as to prevent the growth of weeds, and to keep the soil loose and porous. None but good seeds should be employed and these can be produced of any of our advertisers of seeds. Some varieties will do better in one kind of soil than others, so it is a difficult matter to present a list adapted to all soils, but the observing planter will be able to determine what is best adapted to the requirements of his own case.

A General Purpose Hod.

Carrying things on the shoulder is something that cannot always be avoided. Make the work of carrying as easy as possible. The use of the hod leaves the hands almost free. One can go up and down stairs or ladders, and around corners with

a weight one could not carry in any other way. The hod when hung by the piece "B" on a stake, bench or wagon bed can be filled easily, and is easy to empty, and the weight comes where it is easy to carry. It is made of half-inch stuff for the sides and inch for the end; the handle is placed near the center. The piece "A" is hinged so as to cover the end to keep such things as apples, potatoes, etc., from rolling out. In carrying dirt it is not needed. We have used one to carry twenty to thirty wagon loads of dirt in and out of our green houses, and it filled the bill completely. It can also be used for other purposes where a load is to be carried on the shoulder.—Practical Farmer.

Feeding Skim Milk.

Quite a number of dairy farmers in the United States are trying the experiment of feeding the skim-milk, when sweet, back to the cows, and without exception, so far as we have heard, they are greatly pleased with the result. One thing we do know, and that is that the village cow that gets all the waste milk and slop from the kitchen can usually double the amount she gave when she was a country cow.—Hoard's Dairyman.

About Sowing Wheat.

The Ohio Agricultural Experiment Station has for several years been investigating such problems in wheat culture as the quantity of seed per acre, the depth of seeding, drilling versus broadcasting, the mixing of different varieties, cross drilling and the use of the roller press. The average results favor sowing at the rate of five to seven pecks per acre of thoroughly cleaned seed, and sowing this not to exceed two inches deep. In favorable seasons broadcast seeding has produced about as large a crop as drilling; but if the seeding season be hot and dry, drilling is likely to give the best results. No advantage has yet been discovered in the mixing of different varieties.—The Indiana Farmer.

Increase in Weight of Ducks.

The rapidity of growth of the Pekin duck is almost marvelous, and to one accustomed only to the keeping of the common puddle duck, the claims made in behalf of the Pekin are subject to doubt. Using ten ducklings for the experiment, we weighed them carefully. When just hatched, the ten ducklings, together, weighed exactly one pound. When one week old they weighed two and one-half pounds; at two weeks old they weighed four pounds, at three weeks, seven pounds; at four weeks, ten pounds; at five weeks, seventeen pounds; at six weeks twenty pounds, and at seven weeks, twenty-five pounds, or two and one-half pounds each. Some of them were short on weight, while some weighed three and one-fourth pounds each. At eight weeks the largest weighed four pounds each.

Miscellaneous Recipes.

GOOD COFFEE.—One tablespoonful of coffee for each person; mix with one egg and the film-like lining of the shell. Add a quarter of a cupful of cold water for each spoonful of coffee; boil twenty minutes. This makes strong, well flavored coffee.

MINT JULEP.—Put some sprays of quite young mint into a tumbler, say about ten or a dozen, with a tablespoonful of castor sugar, a tablespoonful of peach brandy and half a wine glass full of pale brandy; then fill the tumbler with pounded ice.

GREEN TOMATO PRESERVES.—Eight pounds of small green tomatoes; pierce each with a fork. Seven pounds of white sugar; the juice of five lemons; one ounce of ginger and mace mixed and tied in a thin muslin bag. Heat all together slowly and cook until the tomatoes are clear; take out with a perforated skimmer and boil the syrup thick, then add the fruit, fill into cans hot and seal. Very nice, indeed.

ONE EGG MAYONNAISE DRESSING.—Beat the yolk of one egg very light, and stir into one-fourth teaspoonful salt and as much cayenne as can be taken up on the point of a penknife; then add half cup olive oil, only a few drops at a time until half is used, then stir in the remainder more rapidly. As it thickens, slowly add a tablespoonful each of vinegar and lemon juice, lastly a small teacupful of whipped cream.

FRIED APPLES.—Fried apples make a nice relish with both roast and fried pork, and are generally very acceptable with other kinds of meats. Cut them unpeeled in slices of moderate thickness across the core. If very sour sprinkle them with a little sugar while frying. Fry to a nice brown in lard and butter, or in all butter if preferred. They may be used as a garnish, or be served in a dish by themselves, either is delicious.

Women's Clubs.

There is neither sense nor sentiment in the mass of comments which the newspaper press is making upon women's clubs. What ever may be the purpose with which some men resort to clubs, women have thus far organized only that they may converse on subjects of mutual interest; there are no gambling clubs, drinking clubs or even mere dining clubs in the feminine world. Such general organizations as women have formed are almost all in cities, where intelligent women, as a rule, know more members of their own sex than they can entertain, in women's customary way, without providing a rapid round of lunches, teas and parties. Until women's clubs were organized there were many intelligent and sympathetic women who were absolutely obliged to avoid increasing their list of acquaintances because acquaintanceship implied an extent of entertainment and "calling" to which time and money were inadequate. City men escaped this embarrassing situation by distinguishing between friends and acquaintances, meeting the latter at clubs, where chat without subsequent social responsibility is possible. At a club the man of modest income is the peer of the millionaire, if manners and intelligence are equal; a similar privilege and right should be conceded to the many thousand of women who have more sense and character than money. To many men the club is the only place at which they can meet others who in turn wish to meet them; neither business, social nor religious organizations answer the purpose so well. What is true of men in this respect is true also of women; "what's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander."

As to the jokes about supposed disagreements in women's clubs, they might be returned in kind by any one who is well acquainted in masculine club circles. An organization without friction has never been heard of on earth except when some descendant of Ananias lifted his voice. Church congregations are supposed to be the most unselfish of human societies, but even in these there are cliques, factions, and quarrels which make the righteous grieve. Besides, women as yet have little experience in the management of deliberative bodies; although it is impossible for them to quarrel more persistently than men in similar bodies, over matters of little consequence, they have yet much to learn through experience, both as to when to talk and when to keep silence; the same may truthfully be said about the highest deliberative bodies in the United States, the two Houses of Congress not excepted. Personal ambition being a fixed passion of human nature, some women in clubs, like some men, will determine to rule or ruin, and will sometimes keep their more conscientious sisters awake o' nights, but such troubles are merely incidental to all human communication. All right-minded men will be glad to have their wives' range of vision enlarged by wide acquaintance with the better members of their own sex, and they will, as a rule, be unable to find a better medium than a good club. The general feminine movement toward organization deserves, therefore, heartiest encouragement.—Godey's.

"This Way, Ma'am."

When a man gives one of those glib descriptions that are made up of yachting phrases and bits of foreign travel, he expects everybody to know just what he means, as, for instance, when Mr. Boggs met a friend of his wife's and asked why she didn't come to see them in their new home.

"I don't know the way," she said. "I'm not familiar with that part of the town."

"Oh, it's easy enough finding us. Take a car at the City Hall and get off at the intersection of Peace and Joy streets, turn two blocks due east, then two blocks south and it's the third house in the middle of the second block to you right. Why, it's as easy as boxing the compass."

"Just about," murmured the poor woman; "I'll find it all right," she added aloud.

And she will. She will cat-a-corner past latitudes and longitudes, and blaze her way with a question or two, and get there just the same. But if she tried the man's method of navigation she would bring up in an asylum.

Kentucky's Famous Moving Stone.

The "Moving Stone" at Lexington is one of the most remarkable freaks of nature in the State of Kentucky, the great caverns alone excepted. In the rear of the grounds attached to the home of the late Gov. Gilmer is a huge bowlder, standing alone on the edge of a stream. Resting directly upon this bowlder is another weighing at least twenty tons. This upper bowlder rests upon a stone pinnacle not more than two feet square, and evenly balanced that (although the slightest touch will cause it to rock to and fro) a hundred horses could not pull it from the socket. Geologists say that it must have been deposited in its present position in the time of the glacial epoch, and that the texture and composition of the bowlder argue in favor of the theory that it was transported from the Lake Superior region to its present resting place in a good field of ice long before there was a single human being on the face of the earth.—St. Louis Republic.

No Trees.

The Falkland Islands produce no trees, but they produce wood in a very remarkable shape. You will see scattered here and there singular clocks of what looks like weather-beaten, mossy, gray stones of various sizes. But if you attempt to roll over one of these rounded boulders you will find yourself unable to accomplish it. In fact the stone is tied down to the ground—tied down by the roots; or, in other words, it is not a stone, but a block of living wood.

How Hot is Boiling Water?

In answering this question an American would say, "Two hundred and twelve degrees;" a Frenchman, "One hundred degrees;" a German, "Eighty degrees." The American, with his English cousin, ascertains temperature by the Fahrenheit thermometer; the Frenchman by the Centigrade, and the German by the Reaumer. In these thermometers the boiling points are marked 212 degrees, 100 degrees, and 80 degrees respectively.

In point of fact, however, nothing is more variable than the temperature at which water boils. Indeed, there are places where eggs cannot be boiled in an open vessel, because the water, when it boils, in the open air, is not hot enough to cook them! Such places are easily reached by means of a balloon, or by climbing a high mountain.

The ebullition of water is affected by the pressure upon its surface. When the atmospheric pressure is diminished, as it is in ascending from the earth, water boils much more easily. In other words, less heat is required to make it boil. As a certain amount of heat is required to coagulate the albumen of the egg,—to "cook" it,—that portion of one's breakfast might have to be prepared in some other manner—say by baking or frying.

However, if oatmeal, or some similar substance, were mixed with the water, its point of ebullition could be raised sufficiently to boil the eggs, in spite of the latitude.

Other causes beside latitude may vary the boiling point of water. As is shown by the barometer, atmospheric pressure varies considerably with the weather. Hence, when the breakfast eggs are not boiled to our liking, we should remember that the trouble may be with the weather, and not with the cook.

Perhaps some of our younger readers have head how

The man in the South
Burnt his mouth,
Eating cold plum porridge;

but have they ever heard of the possibility of freezing one's fingers in boiling water?

To do this, the experimenter may need to cut off the finger, but no matter. Place it in a saucer of water beneath the bell-jar of an air-pump, and exhaust the air. When the presure is sufficiently reduced, the water will begin to boil, and will so continue until, its temperature being rapidly reduced by the vapor given off, it finally freezes.—Youth's Companion.

A Practical Illustration.

Uncle Silas was the best posted man on general topics in the village, and a hunter of renown as well. He also had a virago for a wife. Dear, dear, what a temper that woman had! She was the only thing on earth of which Uncle Silas was afraid.

One day a class of school children called on the old man. They were sent by their teacher to get some facts in natural history.

"We've come," said the spokesman of the class, "to ask you some questions, Uncle Silas, about the habits and customs of the wild cat."

Uncle Silas had been very glad to see them, as the broad smile on his face testified. But now he looked very much alarmed.

"H-u-s-h," he said with a cautious gesture, "who on arth sent ye here on such an errand?"

"Miss Knowles, our teacher," said the class in concert.

"Wall, she oughter know better. I ain't never hed anythin' to say about them thar critters sence—Oh, Lordy, thar she comes!"

And Uncle Silas lit out, as a tall woman armed with a broom, lit in.

"Think ye'r smart, do ye?" she screamed. "Wanter know about wild cats, hey? Got up a joke on the old man, but I'll teach yer to joke on facs. Take that home for yer pains."

Whack, whack, went the broom, and it did not fail in its aim, as two of the boys who were the last to get out could easily prove. And the class in natural history skipped the chapter on wild cats for something less exciting.

Weather.

Travelers are seldom without topics for complaint. If everything else fails they can at least fall back upon bad food and bad weather.

Mr. Elson, in his "European Reminiscences," mentions a man who declaimed against Pisa as the wettest of cities.

"Why," said he, "twenty years ago I left Pisa and it was raining. I come back, and it is raining still!"

Mr. Elson is sarcastic; but he is not beyond a little fault-finding on his own account. His great trouble was at Rotterdam.

"The weather reminded me of home," he says. "If ever a meteorological bureau is started in Holland, its reports will run about as follows: 'Cold and clear, followed by warm and rainy, interspersed with thundershowers, followed by light frosts, after which the weather will become changeable.'"

Philosophical.

According to Rogers, the poet Vernon was the person who invented the story about the lady being pulverized in India by a sunstroke. When he was dining there with a Hindoo, one of his host's wives was suddenly reduced to ashes, upon which the Hindoo rang the bell, and said to the attendant who answered it, "Bring fresh glasses, and sweep up your mistress."

WHEN you are young, Christmas is a long time coming, but after you are old, it comes around before you can get your presents ready.

Selecting Table Linen.

There is no economy in buying poor quality of linen for the table. The cheaper qualities become rough after the first laundering and soon fall into holes, while good linen improves in appearance after it has been washed a few times, is very durable and retains its beauty and smoothness until it is worn very thin. Even if it were not more economical it would well repay one to make a sacrifice in order to use good linen, for there is a refinement about it which adds much to the pleasure of a meal, and in the case of children has an actual educational value.

Unless one has unlimited means there is far more elegance in a fine quality of what might be called "standard" patterns than in some passing fancy that loses the beauty when it ceases to be a novelty. Fine forms which thickly cover the ground of the cloth or napkin are the best selections to make, as they wear more evenly, and are capable of taking a more brilliant gloss from the iron than large plain spaces. One can always find handsome patterns in the fern-leaf, the shamrock, or the clover leaf, and the designs are so artistic that they have the advantage of always being in fashion. Less showy but not less elegant, are designs of broken squares, and the dotted line is always to be found in fine qualities.

It is better to buy tablecloths by the yard and hem them, than to buy the set patterns with fringed edges. It is difficult to make the fringe look well after it has been laundered a few times, and the continuous pattern is more available for various uses than a limited design. Instead of the narrow hem formerly used, tablecloths now have a hem from one to three inches in depth, according to the use for which they are intended, and are frequently hemstitched, sometimes with a narrow line of embroidery above the hem, and sometimes with an embroidered monogram in the corner.

Napkins should invariably be hemmed, with the narrowest hem that can be made, and should always be sewed by hand. An initial or monogram in one corner, if daintily done, is a proper addition; but one should be chary about putting much needlework on a napkin, since it should please more by its elegant daintiness than by its elaborateness. For this reason it is well when purchasing large dinner-napkins to be careful not to get them too large. Anything over twenty-four inches square is superfluous and cumbersome. The larger sizes are found in the linen stores, but are not used so much as formerly, and the choicest patterns are more frequently found in medium sizes.

The Gospel of Clothes.

No one would presume to say that we Americans are not individual in our tastes. We are the very acme of all that is independent. We build our houses on plans of our own. If we jumble our architecture we are prepared to take the responsibility. But curiously, we make an exception to all this in whatever concerns dress. No prophet among us would presume to say of his own knowledge that fashions should be so or so. When it comes to a question of dress we set our faces toward the East as resolutely as any of the devout ever looked toward Mecca. This is true of men and women alike, but the burden of the truth falls more directly upon woman's dress because it is so much more varied.

To say that women are slaves to fashion would be trite; but it is always accorded that whatever the fashters they are worn gracefully. Women find it possible to effect an individuality in the most pronounced of imported designs, mainly because of the infinite variety of fabrics and colors. But it is remarkable with what truth to the imported models these variations are held in the main. The Russian blouse, charming in its effect on slender women, has just made the gamut of colors, silks, laces, silk cordings, and gold. Almost no waist robe has been without one.

It is peculiar that writers on physical development hold that American women have always leaned toward a conservative in dress, to the exclusion of every democratic sentiment. They have worn longer skirts and more of them whenever a breath of fashion dictated, and have lingered near the line of suffocation in the matter of tight gowns than the women of any other country. Clothes have been fact asserted a diabolical fitness, though specially designed to hamper and restrict exercise.—Godey's.

Restitution.

A builder in Advise, a village in Champaign, was arrested and taken to Chalons, where the judge of instruction commenced the conversation in the way usual to his calling by saying,—

"You are a thief and an assassin."

After this polite greeting, he went on to remark that a murder, accompanied by a theft had been committed in the neighborhood, and a stranger had given it as his opinion that the builder was the murderer.

The poor prisoner naturally grew indignant, and declared he was able to prove an alibi. But, of course, he was not believed, and every day for three days he was marched through Chalons and Avise with handcuffs upon his wrists. At the end of that time the judge of instruction said to him:

"We were wrong. Your innocence has been proved. You are free."

"Yes, disgraced and ruined," replied the poor builder. "Who do you think will employ me after so long me led through the streets handcuffed like a felon?"

The heart of the man was touched.

"True," he said, "we have done you an injury, my good man," and he pressed into the hand of the builder a ten-franc piece.