AGRICULTURAL NEWS

THINGS PERTAINING TO THE FARM AND HOME.

How the Ground Should Be Made Ready for Corn—Grafting New Tops on Old Trees—Bushing Peas Is No Longer Necessary.

Getting Ready for Corn.

The corn crop is the most important one in spring, and it is a crop that is perhaps grown everywhere in this country where farming is practiced, as it is almost indispensable. Its value is not alone in its grain, but also in the fodder, and the cultivation required clears the land and destroys weeds. The most important part of corn growing, next to good seed, is the preparation of the ground. Leaving out the fact that manure is essential, or its place must be supplied by fertilizers, the most successful crops are not secured so frequently from cultivation of the growing stalks as when the seed bed is given the most attention. Corn is a semi-tropical plant, and delights in a warm soil. Its roots feed near the surface, forming a complete network, and the plants are also gross feeders, appropriating any kind of manure that may be applied, providing such plant food can be rendered soluble before harvest.

When sod land is plowed in the spring it is not an easy matter to make the soil as fine as it should be for corn, but since the introduction of the disk harrow the work can be better performed. Sod land should be plowed in the fall and cross-plowed in the spring. The plowing should be deep, as the after-cultivation of the crop should be shallow. By deep plowing of the land not only will the top roots of the grubs go deeper, but the soil will absorb more moisture after each rain—a very important matter with corn. After the land is plowed it must be harrowed down until it is as fine as it is possible to make it, and there need be no fear of using the harrow too much. The object of so doing is to have the land free from lumps and more finely divided to admit warmth and better absorb moisture, as well as to present larger feeding surfaces to the young plants, the warmth and moisture insuring germination and the fine soil increasing not only the number of rootlets but also their capacity of feeding, which gives the plants an early start and greater vigor for withstanding drouth should it occur.

As the roots of corn feed near the surface the cultivation should be shallow, just sufficient to kill the young weeds and grass and to provide a loose top soil as a covering or mulch. Those who go into the corn field and run the cultivator deep into the soil often damage the plants in dry seasons by cutting roots which cannot be spared, and to avoid this it should be the object never to allow weeds to grow until such work becomes necessary. Plant plenty of seed and pull out all plants not required, and cultivate the crop lightly after each rain, and until the cultivator or horse hoe can no longer be used. The practice of cultivating a certain number of times and leaving the crop to mature is not a safe one to follow. The rule should be to keep the top soil loose, with shallow cultivation, and as frequently as may be necessary. Wheat growers who formerly drilled in their seed after light plowing found out that the preparation of the seed bed largely increased the yield, and the same applied to the corn crop will add largely to the number of bushels per acre. Work that is carefully done now will save loss of time and labor after the plants have started.—Philadelphia Record.

New Tops on Old Trees.

It often happens that fruit on large trees is worthless, and it becomes an important object to change the top by grafting or budding it with some better variety. In this case, instead of cutting off large branches and grafting them at once, it is better to prune the top in part, which will cause an emission of vigorous shoots. These are then budded or grafted with ease and success. And, as the grafts gradually extend by growth, the remainder of the top may, by successive excisions, be entirely removed. Where trees are not too old, and the ground is kept cultivated, good-sized trees are thus obtained much sooner than by setting out young ones. To give a well-shaped head to such newly-formed trees, and to prevent the branches from shooting upward in a close body near the center of the tree, the old horizontal boughs should be allowed to extend to a distance in each direction, while the upright ones should be lopped. The following judicious mode of renewing the old tops of trees formerly regarded as worthless, was given by the late Geo. Olmstead, of Hartford, Conn.: He commenced grafting six years ago last spring. He began on the top, and grafted one-third of the tree each year. It, therefore, required three years to complete the entire heads of the trees. I like this method better than any I have tried for grafting large trees, he says, as it gives the grafts good opportunity to get well started. Cutting off and grafting the top first gives the grafts there the best possible chance, while the necessary reduction of the top throws the sap into the remaining side branches, which fits them well for grafting the following year; and the third year, the lowest branches being made ready in the same way, may be grafted successfully.—Farmer's Voice.

Bushing Peas.

The old notion that peas should be bushed when planted in gardens is going out of date. It is better to plant only the dwarf varieties, which will do very well without brush. It is a harbor for weeds, as it prevents hoeing close to the vines, and after the peas are off, it often prevents plowing the weeds under, as should always be done, both to prevent the weeds seeding and to save them from robbing the soil of fertility that the pea roots have created. Even the large or medium varieties may be grown without bushes if the peas are put rather thickly in the rows. They will fall down and smother the weeds, and then turn up and bear nearly as good a crop as if the vines had been bushed in the regular fashion.

Two Horse Corn Cultivators.

The Western farmer has almost universally discarded the single-horse cultivator. Instead of this he uses one with a division in the middle which straddles the hill as does also the team. There can be no doubt that this close work to the hill, if a skillful hand guides the cultivator, does good work and will reach closer to the corn than can a cultivator going once in a row and drawn by a single horse. But the difficulty comes when the corn grows too high to be thus cultivated, and this is the time when many Eastern farmers claim that cultivation does most good. All the early cultivation develops a large amount of plant food, and this necessarily results in a rampant crop of weeds so soon as the cultivation is suspended. Western corn fields are usually laid by so early in the season that there is ample time for many weeds to ripen their seeds before the corn is off. It is this that makes Western farms so badly overrun by weeds that the yield of all crops is greatly lessened as compared with what the soil might produce. The two-horse cultivator stirs the ground deeper than is generally done with a single horse. But in this also the single cultivator has the advantage. By cultivating shallow a single horse can go over as much land in a day as can two horses, as the cultivators are usually set. The shallow cultivation keeps the soil more moist, as every time it is turned deeply some fresh, damp soil is brought to the surface to be dried out.—Exchange.

Rolling Places for Fowls.

One of the first jobs to be done in spring is to plow a small piece near the hen house in a dry place for the fowls to use to roll themselves in. Nothing more tends to keep fowls healthy and free from vermin than a dust bath. Most fowls will get that some way, and if it is not otherwise provided they will make for the garden as soon as let out, choosing the carefully prepared beds and hills where the garden seeds are planted. It is well in preparing a rolling place to harrow in some grain—either oats or barley will do—for the purpose of setting them to work. Very little of this will escape them and grow, but what will furnish green feed, which all fowls need a little of every day to do their best.

Pruning Quince Trees.

Part of the lack of success in growing the quince is owing to the lack of pruning which this tree receives. Very often its pruning is entirely neglected. The tree is much more certain to be productive if trained to a single stem and its weaker shoots are cut out every spring where they grow too close together. A well-pruned quince tree, with its mass of pink and white blossoms, is a beautiful sight in spring, and when covered with golden fruit in fall is still more beautiful.

Shallow Culture for Corn.

The effect of severe root pruning of corn late in the season is to check its growth at the time it most needs all the plant food that its full supply of roots can furnish. Early in the season the cultivator may be run more deeply between the rows for the first time, but after this has loosened the soil all further cultivation should be near the surface. The better way is to thoroughly cultivate the soil before the corn is planted, which will secure cultivation of the surface where the hill is to be, and which cannot be cultivated when the corn has grown a few inches high.

Farm Notes.

The Mississippi station says the corn worm, or bud worm, is identical with the cotton boll worm, and that crushing the first brood in the young stalk prevents four more broods.

Bear in mind that going into an apple orchard with a saw to cut off the limbs is not the way to prune. Such work should not be given over to one who is not experienced.

When tomatoes grow largely to vine the best fertilizer to apply is one containing very little nitrogen and a larger proportion of potash and phosphoric acid. It is claimed that excessive growth of vine or branches indicates a fair proportion of nitrogen, especially when the leaves are a deep green.

Experiments at the New York Experiment Station in the feeding of ensilage to cows shows a large increase in milk production due to its use, and that it is also an economical food. It also increases the percentage of butter fat in some cases, and in no instance did the proportion of butter fat decrease with any of the cows.

At the Iowa station it was found that lambs of the mutton breeds have made larger gains in weight per 1,000 pounds than 2-year-old steers. This is a valuable experiment and very favorable to the keeping of sheep for mutton, instead of for wool. There is nothing on the farm that pays as well as early lambs and fat wethers of the large mutton breeds.

This country ships an enormous amount of pork abroad, yet there is a good market here for leaner pork. It has been demonstrated that a hog with a large proportion of lean meat can be produced just as economically as one that is excessively fat by feeding more nitrogenous rations. Not only will the leaner hog attain as heavy weight as one fed for better quality and command a higher price.

An Objection to Good Roads.

Chief Consul Scherer of Tennessee, tells of a farmer who gave him a severe reprimand for advocating good roads. His objection to the modern highways was based upon the novel argument that the mud road was more economical. "Why," said he, "I can drive my mules the year round without shoes in the dirt, but on these blamed stone roads it costs me thirty-six dollars per year for shoeing."

Wheelmen Working for Good Roads.

That the bicycle has made every bicyclist an enthusiastic, energetic and indefatigable advocate of good roads is a fact of which the importance is demonstrated by the other fact that at last the American farmer is beginning to substitute for "good roads cost money," the refrain he has sung so long, another equally true—"Bad roads cost more money than good ones." This is a really marvelous triumph, and the part which the bicycle has had in winning it makes one regret that there is no satisfactory way of showing public gratitude to a creature who is, after all, only a combination of steel and rubber.—New York Times.

Good Work Spreading.

The road congress at the Atlanta exposition declared Massachusetts to be at the head of the list in the new movement for good roads that is begun among the different States, the standing being determined by the amount of money appropriated for road construction combined with the systematization of its use, says the Boston Courier. The conditions giving to Massachusetts the lead in the matter were, the State highway commission, the system under which road building is progressing and the liberality of the financial provision for the work. On all three points this State was readily admitted to take the lead.

The fact that this most interesting and important subject has seriously engaged the attention of a body like the organized exposition of industry and improvement held at Atlanta contains the sure promise of the rapid spread of its influence among all the States of the Union, and incites the sanguine hope that the day is not far off when roadbuilding will become a subject of engrossing interest in all parts of our common country.

COMMONLY CALLED A ROAD.
(From Good Roads.)

The local productions of a country may be abundant, but unless the means of transporting them at the right time to the waiting markets are prepared they might as well be nonexistent. We may, it is true, have an oversupply of railroads, but they are fed and sustained by the ordinary roads that are virtually a part of the foundation of civilized communities. Good roads are a matter of public policy. Therefore their construction and maintenance belong to the State as sovereign over all common interests within its borders. This much being conceded, the problem afterward becomes one mainly of detail, in which a system of construction and of expenditure shall be the purpose of the whole people. No country can justly claim to be advanced in civilization whose means of intercommunication are not at least parallel with its increasing material prosperity.

Curious Coincidences.

"Speaking of curious coincidences of our everyday life, two little things happened a short time ago that are perhaps worthy of repeating," said an insurance man to a New York Tribune writer. "My wife had long wished for an olive fork. We had used a table fork, and had then substituted a pair of candy tongs, but neither proved to be the right thing. A few evenings before Christmas my wife asked me to buy an olive fork, but I wasn't overburdened with money at the time, and so, much against my will, I was obliged to ask her to wait a little. As I was about to step into the office building the next morning I saw directly in front of me a small jeweler's box and inside it there lay the identical fork my wife wanted. I sent a note to the jeweler telling him the owner could have it by calling at my house. No one ever came, and at present it is in active service on my dining-room table.

"Some time before this a young girl who had become engaged to a chum of mine, wanted a small chased gold ring in lieu of a solitaire diamond. In our quest we entered a shop, and in one of the cases we saw a pretty ring. When we looked at it we noticed in the inside some engraved initials, which proved to be those of my chum and his affianced. The salesman said that the ring had been ordered several months previous, but had never been called for. My friend never told the incident to his betrothed until after their marriage. Curious instances of coincidences, were they not?"

One of His Awful Experiences.

"Awful experiences? Yes," said the tramp, as he sat at a Holland street kitchen table on Thursday forenoon and cut into the second piece of custard pie.

"I was sleeping soundly in a box car out in Iowa one night last summer, and the wind was blowing like thunder across the plains. Suddenly that car got loose—the brakes broke or suthin' and it began to crawl along out of the siding and onto the main track. It was nuts for me. I thought the wind would not blow me far and so I kept on. I stood in the door and saw the houses and fences go by faster and faster, till all of a sudden I realized I was going too fast to get off, and no way of stopping it. Half an hour after we—the car and I—dashed through a little station and I had just time to see the telegraph operator run out and look after us and then run back to telegraph down the line to clear the track. We were going more than a mile a minute, and my hair was standing on end. Forty miles down the line we went through another station, and on a siding I caught sight of an engine with steam up, and a man with a rope on the cowcatcher. That engine chased us twenty miles down the track. The man with the rope threw it around the brake wheel on top of our car and gradually stopped it, while all the time the wind was blowing a gale.

"We had just got headed back towards the depot when an express train showed up where we should have met it kerchunk—that's good pie." And he took another piece.—Lewiston Journal.

Captured a Shark.

"One afternoon, when we were in the Indian Ocean," said the Captain, "I noticed a shark swimming round the ship, and I didn't like it a bit. You know the superstition to the effect that a following shark presages the death of one of the ship's company. He sailed round us all the next day, and the next after that, and I determined to catch him and quell my uneasiness. We baited a hook, and after a short time captured and killed him. Then we cut him up. Do you know what we found in that shark's inside? No? Well, a newspaper, unopened, and it will surprise you, as it did me, when I tell you that it was addressed to me."

A shout of great laughter went up from the Captain's audience, who winked at each other unblushingly. He, however, took all the bantering in good part, and when the jeers were ended he said:

"Now, gentlemen, I'll tell you how it happened. I found that my children had been skylarking the day before in the cabin. They found among the mass of reading that had been brought aboard some unopened newspapers addressed to me. They had been throwing these newspapers at each other, and one of them went out of the porthole. The shark saw it, of course, and gobbled it down; and that was how it happened. Now, gentlemen, judge for yourselves the truth of my story."—London Answers.

This Cat One Point Ahead.

The most unusual trip that a cat ever made voluntarily was made by a Dunellen, N. J., cat recently. When the early morning train, on the Central Railroad, was standing at Dunellen a large white cat, which was chased by a dog, ran under one of the cars and jumped upon the truck near the king bolt, close under the car floor.

The train was soon started and the cat still remained there. When the train was ready to start back from Jersey City at 5 o'clock in the afternoon, Charles Dodwell, the conductor, who brings it back to Dunellen, saw the cat still on the trucks, and thought if she was enjoying the ride he would not ask for her ticket.

She came home in the same seat. When the train arrived in Dunellen the cat jumped from her perch and scampered off.—New York Herald.

Sea Soup.

The discovery that the sea is a vast brek of microscopic creatures explains how fish thrive in deep sea water where there are neither vegetable growths nor animal forms visible to the naked eye.

This puzzled students of fishes for a long time and they formed many curious theories. Great shoals of herring at certain times leave the coastwise waters and disappear in the apparently foodless waste of the sea, yet they return fat. Certain kinds of whales thrive under the same conditions.

This was a mystery until it was recently settled beyond reasonable doubt that both whales and herring are able to subsist on the miscroscopic organisms which swarm even in the waters of midocean.

The sea is in fact a great nutritious soup and the fishes are in it and like it.

Wire Finer than Human Hair.

The finest wire made in this country comes from a wire manufactory at Taunton, Mass. This metal cobweb of minute diameter is exactly the 1-500th part of an inch in thickness—much finer than human hair. Ordinary wire, even though of small diameter, is drawn through holes in steel plates, but on account of the wear such plates cannot be used in making the hair wire. The Taunton factory mentioned uses drilled diamonds for that purpose. These queer diamond dies are made by a woman of New York City.

For every dollar a man actually catches, three or four others nibble at his bait and get away.

When a man expresses his real sentiments on any subject, he does not wish to be quoted.

OLDEST OBELISK IN THE WORLD.

Constructed Thousands of Years Ago and Still Standing.

The oldest of all the obelisks is the beautiful one of rosy granite which stands alone among the green fields on the banks of the Nile not far from Cairo. It is the gravestone of a great city which has vanished and left only this relic behind. That city was Bethshemes of scriptures, the famous, On, which is memorable to all Bible readers as the residence of the priest of On, Potipherah, whose daughter, Asenath, Joseph married. The Greeks called it Heliopolis, the city of the sun, because there the worship of the sun had its chief center and its most sacred shrine. It was the seat of the most ancient university of the world, to which youthful students came from all parts of the world to learn the occult wisdom which the priests of On alone could teach.

Thales, Solon, Eudoxus, Pythagoras and Plato all studied there; perhaps Moses, too. It was also the birthplace of the sacred literature of Egypt, where were written on papyrus leaves the original chapters of the oldest book in the world, generally known as "The Book of the Dead," giving a most striking account of the conflicts and triumphs of the life after death, a whole copy of fragments of which every Egyptian, rich or poor, wished to have buried with him in his coffin, and portions of which are found inscribed on every mummy case and on the walls of every tomb.

In front of one of the principal temples of the sun, in this magnificent city, stood, along with a companion long since destroyed, the solitary obelisk which we now behold on the spot. It alone has survived the wreck of all the glory of the place. It was constructed by Usertesen I., who is supposed to have reigned 2800 B. C., and has outlived all the dynastic changes of the land, and still stands where it originally stood nearly forty-seven centuries ago. What appears of its shaft above ground is sixty-eight feet in height, but its base is buried in the mud of the Nile, and year after year the inundation of the river deposits its film of soil around its foot and buries it still deeper in its sacred grave.—Pall Mall Gazette.

Two Young Travelers.

Among the passengers on board the steamer Rhynland yesterday were two little children, a boy and a girl, who were traveling alone to different points in Ohio. The boy was George Gough, 9 years old, a bright, sturdy little fellow, who, owing to the serious illness of his mother, had been sent from Harrington (England) to be cared for by his "Uncle Jack," at Hammondville, Jefferson County, Ohio, until his mother again leaves the hospital. The boy was well clothed and very sedate. He was the proud possessor of $2.50 pocket money, and appeared to feel rich.

The girl, in marked contrast to the boy, was as wild as she was pretty, a curly, fairhaired, 8-year-old, Mabel Blaney, of Walsall, England, who was going to join her mother at 272 West Sixth street, Cincinnati. Both children had become great friends while crossing and were familiar with almost all the passengers. The boy took his place by Chief Inspector Hughes' desk, and as the immigrants filed in front he would correctly give the name of almost every one. Each and every one of the passengers had a kindly farewell for the little lad.

On the pier the children feasted on such delicacies as were to be purchased at the lunch counter and drank copious drafts of soda water with evident relish. They rushed hither and thither, the girl always in the lead, and varied their delight by occasional quarrels.

As soon as the majority of passengers had left the pier the two children were provided with railroad tickets, provisions for the journey, and, after being duly tagged with the full directions as to destination, they were turned over to the railroad company's representative, their friends being duly notified by telegraph of their coming.—Philadelphia Enquirer.

Old War-Time Vehicles.

Of the means of locomotion in Maine in pioneer days a Kennebec gentleman says: "Before the revolution there was not a four-wheeled vehicle in Maine. In 1762 two-wheeled vehicles were first seen in Portland, but they were used only on gala days. They excited about as much wonder as flying machines would now. Augusta had its first four-wheeled vehicle in 1800. People traveled on foot or on horseback in summer and used rude sleds in winter. Women had side-saddles or pillions for seats, being the men's saddles, and no considerable journey was made by them except in that way. Horse blocks for mounting and dismounting were a necessity and were found at nearly every man's door. Grain was carried to mill on the farmer's back or the horse's back, and it was a common thing to see a small boy perched atop of several bags of grain on the back of the family horse 'going to mill.' All not crippled were great pedestrians, and women thought as little of walking miles then as they do of furlongs now."—Lewiston Journal.

Presidential Election of 1796.

In 1796 there was a small host of candidates when it became certain that Washington would not accept. Jefferson came within three votes of tieing Adams for the presidency, and thus was elected vice president. Burr received thirty votes and George Clinton seven. It is noteworthy that it became Adams' duty to announce his own election. His term proved as rugged as his character, and, though Washington's two terms had been generally accepted as a precedent, there was a powerful determination for an exception. Though the constitution still provided that the vote should be solely cast for president, Charles C. Pinckney was now associated with Adams as candidate for vice president, and Aaron Burr similarly named with Jefferson. Events were destined to prove shortly the weakness of such an understanding. Jefferson and Burr each received seventy-three votes, Adams sixty-five, and Pinckney sixty-four, and thus the election was thrown into the House. There ensued that memorable contest, where the federalists supported Burr, if without his consent, yet equally without his prohibition, which terminated on the thirty-sixth ballot in the choice of Jefferson.

Pinckney, it may be said, was a South Carolinian of elegance and education, who was successively chief justice, secretary of state and of war, and for many years the president general of the Cincinnati. He was unpopular on account of strong British proclivities.

Before the next session an amendment was adopted that persons voted for for president and vice president should be designated and chosen separately.—New York Times.

The Library Corner

Sardou is now 64 years old; wrinkled and half bald, but in his elastic step and brilliant eye as youthful as a boy. He is said to have earned $1,000,000 from his plays. Yet his first play was a dire failure.

Rudyard Kipling was asked recently whether he enjoyed writing poetry or prose most. He remarked that the pleasure of creating a poem was the highest intellectual delight he had ever experienced.

At an auction sale at Sotheby's in London the first edition (1770) of Goldsmith's "Deserted Village," uncut, sold for £45, and will go to America; and the first edition of Milton's "Paradise Lost" (1667) realized £85.

The young poets of Paris have elected as successor to Paul Verlaine in poetical sovereignity Stephane Mallarme, translator of poems of Poe and author of "L'Apres-Midi d'un Faune," whose portrait by Whistler is a masterpiece.

It is said that Swinburne has a memory almost as wide-reaching as Macaulay had. Burne-Jones says that upon one occasion the poet recited verbatim several pages of Milton's prose, which he had read but once, and that twenty years before.

Maurice Maeterlinck is about to marry a young French woman, the sister of Maurice Leblanc, a celebrated Parisian journalist. M. Maeterlinck is now preparing a volume of essays on English literature, dealing chiefly with the English symbolists.

One of the amazing literary successes of the century is Spurgeon's sermons. The Westminster Gazette says that 2,396 of these sermons have been printed and sold and that the sum total of the sales reaches nearly 100,000,000, an average of about 35,000 copies per annum.

William Black, the novel writer, is also a portrait painter, an enthusiastic botanist and an all-around sportsman.

The most prolific writer in Russia is said to be Mme. Irma Fedossova, a peasant of the Province of Petrossawodsk, who has given to the world more than 10,000 poems. How good they are is not related.

Jacques La Lorraine, a Parisian writer of the Decadent school, has opened a cobbler's shop in the Latin quarter. He has tried for fifteen years to live by literature, but he could not make it go. Now, at 35, he has opened a shop, hired a cobbler, and set about learning the trade. He is said to be doing a lively business.

A Dentist's Parrot.

A parrot owned by Dr. C. M. Gill, which had an interesting history, died recently. It was about 50 years old and was purchased by the doctor's father.

Dr. Gill is a dentist, and he says that often when he had a patient in the chair Polly would laugh and call out "kick up old Harry!" If the person happened to cry out with pain Polly would do likewise. Many patients did not like this, supposing it was some person who was mocking them and when told it was a parrot they would hardly believe it.

The most annoyance caused by the parrot, Dr. Gill says, was to the congregation of Sharp Street Colored Methodist Episcopal Church which adjoins his house. On a bright Sunday morning Poll would be hung out on the side of the house, and if it happened that a preacher with a stentorian voice was in the pulpit, as soon as he would begin to preach Polly would shout and yell at him. If an orator of milder delivery was holding forth Poll would continually interrupt him by shouting "Amen."

Poll was not a large parrot, and a person would not think he was only 6 or 7 years old instead of 50. He was of a bright green color with a red topnot.—Baltimore Sun.

Turpentine.

Turpentine varnishes are prepared by dissolving the softer resins, such as common resin, mastic, etc., in the best commercial oil of turpentine. They are mostly lighter in color than oil varnishes; they dry quickly, but the surface of dry varnish produced is less durable than that obtained with oil varnishes.

Wheat in Manitoba.

Canadian Pacific officials estimate that there are still 8,000,000 or 9,000,000 bushels of wheat in Manitoba, much of which is still controlled by farmers. The price is also fair, compared with recent experience in the grain market.