

GOOD ROADS

Cost of Bad Roads.
According to statistics collected by the office of road inquiry of the Department of Agriculture, the amount of loss each year by bad roads of the country is almost beyond belief.

Some 10,000 letters of inquiry were sent to intelligent and reliable farmers throughout the country, and returns were obtained from about 1,200 counties, giving the average length of haul in miles from farms to markets and shipping points, the average weight of load hauled and the average length per ton for the whole length of the haul.

Summarized, it appears that the general average length of haul is twelve miles; the weight of load for two horses 2,000 pounds, and the average cost per ton per mile 25 cents, or \$3 for the entire load.

Allowing conservative estimates for tonnage of all kinds carried over public roads, the aggregate expense of this transportation is figured at \$946,414,600 per annum. Those in a position to judge, calculate that two-thirds, or nearly \$631,000,000, could be saved if the roads were in reasonably good condition. At \$1,000 per mile a very good road can be constructed, and if an amount equaling the savings of one year were applied to improving highways, 157,000 miles of road in this country could be put in condition.

The effect of this would be a permanent improvement, and an exchange says not only would the farmer be astonished in the sudden reduction in his road tax, but he would also wonder at the remarkable falling off in the cost of transportation. He would also find that he required fewer horses and less feed for them. He could make two trips to market a day instead of one, when ability to get his goods there at a time when high prices are ruling is a matter of great consequence.

Farmers are beginning to apply a little simple arithmetic to some of these matters, and it is not too much to expect that in the near future we shall see a decided revolution in the condition of our rural highways.

Dorner's Plan for Good Roads.

At the Rock River Chautauqua at Dixon, Ill., Mr. Otto Dorner of Milwaukee, chairman of the improvement committee of the National League of American Wheelmen, delivered an address on "How Shall We Obtain Better Roads?" He said, in part:

"Road building in the United States has been left entirely in the hands of the farmers and in charge of the local town authorities. These local authorities, as a rule, have no knowledge of road building, and fifty years of experience has shown a great deal of labor wasted, and our roads today are no better than they were twenty and thirty years ago. A radical improvement in the system itself must be made.

"The League of American Wheelmen has been the subject of much criticism on account of its agitation for better highways. We have been accused of selfishness in the matter. It is believed by many that the wheelmen expect farmers to load themselves up with taxes to build roads for the convenience of bicycle riders. No greater mistake could be made. We of the League of American Wheelmen who are engaged in this agitation for better roads feel that the farmer today bears his full share of public taxation. We feel that a mistake has been made in the past in expending farmers' money to pay for building roads and in leaving the entire responsibility for our roads in their hands. It is claimed that in the State of New York every farmer is obliged to build roads for eight persons out of the State population. Why should not the other seven contribute to their cost? While good roads would save the farmers immense amounts in hauling products, this saving would indirectly benefit the whole population. Neither is the farmer the only one who travels the country highways. Country merchants, doctors and professional men, peddlers, pleasure-seekers and, last but not least, the wheelmen, would be directly benefited by good roads. It is unjust, therefore, that the farmers should pay for building these roads. I am glad of an opportunity to say to a gathering of farmers that the League of American Wheelmen proposes to help them in bringing about a proper division of the cost of good roads.

"The League of American Wheelmen believes that many of our country roads should be built by State aid; that a part of the cost of good roads should be paid out of the State tax, which would be levied upon all property and all classes of people alike, so that every taxpayer should contribute a proportionate amount, according to the amount of property he owns. We propose that the States shall help to build roads and divide their total cost between the people of the locality who are most directly benefited, the adjoining property-owners whose land rises in value as a result of the improvement, and the State as representing the entire population. This has been adopted in practice with great success in New Jersey, in Connecticut, in Rhode Island, in Pennsylvania, and, in a modified form, in Massachusetts. New Jersey has become famous for the fine roads she has built. These were constructed by a State-aid system, and the towns and counties are glad to pay their share of the cost of these roads so long as the State pays its part. The country owners in New Jersey are overwhelmed with petitions from the State authorities with petitions

to assist in the improvement of local roads, and the Legislature cannot appropriate funds for the purpose sufficient to meet the demands from the farmers."

WILL MAKE POSTMARKS LEGIBLE

Improvement in the Manner of Stamping Letters Shortly to Be Made.

There is not so much reason now as formerly for complaint about the illegibility of postmarks, for in all the larger offices hand stamps have given place to machines that produce beautifully clear impressions. Letters will arrive frequently, however, that bear only meaningless smudges instead of a place name and date, while a much greater number reach their destination marked in such a way that only by the exercise of great ingenuity and the waste of occasionally valuable time can the place and day of mailing be deciphered. And it is always the letter about which some question arises that fails to carry the desired information. The depravity of inanimate objects takes good care to illustrate itself in every such instance, and the result is innumerable trials of patience and temper. It is pleasing to learn, therefore, that the new first assistant postmaster general announces the determination of reforming the whole system of making these useful, or potentially useful, marks, and that the little offices must do as good work in this respect as the big ones. "Legible postmarking," he says in a recent letter of instructions, "is of the greatest importance to the public as evidence before the courts, in business transactions conducted through the mails, and in fixing responsibility when mail matter has been improperly handled by postmasters and other postal employees. The frequency of complaints in regard to defective postmarking makes it necessary for the department to adopt severe measures to remedy the trouble. Much of the postmarking, especially that at the smaller offices, is a reflection upon the postal service. The figures of the stamp must be carefully adjusted at the beginning of each day, and then a clear impression must be made in a book especially kept for the purpose, so as to afford evidence of the discharge of this important duty." It might be of assistance in the accomplishment of this small but important reform if everybody who receives an illegible postmarked letter would make a complaint to the proper bureau of the postoffice department.—New York Times.

A Brave Frenchman.

One of the heroes of the Paris fire is a journeyman plumber named Piquet. When the conflagration was raging, he dashed in and out among the flames, always returning with a woman or child in his arms, and must have saved over twenty lives during the hour in which he worked. His face was enveloped in wet linen, and the last time he rushed into the flames a gentleman put a coat around him. He returned with a human form enveloped in a dress which was burning. As he laid it on the ground, a charred foot remained in his hand. It was then that Piquet had to stop, so he proceeded to the workshop where he was employed. When his comrades piled him with questions about his burned face and scorched hair, he tried to give evasive answers, but the master insisted on knowing what had happened. Then the brave man, overwhelmed with emotion at the scene he had witnessed, burst into a paroxysm of weeping. Piquet is to be given the Cross of the Legion of Honor.

Freaks of Razors.

The finest grades of razors are so delicate that even the famous Damascus sword blades cannot equal them in texture. It is not generally known that the grain of a Swedish razor is so sensitive that its general direction is changed after a short service. When you buy a fine razor, the grains run from the upper end of the outer point in a diagonal direction toward the handle. Constant stropping will twist the steel until the grain appears to be straight up and down. Subsequent use will drag the grain outward from the edge, so that after steady use for several months the fiber of the steel occupies a position exactly the reverse of that which it did on the day of purchase. If you leave the razor alone for a month or two, and take it up, you will find that the grain has assumed its first position. The operation can be repeated until the steel is worn through to the back.

Japs Changing.

Some astonishing changes in the physical type of men as a result of intercourse with foreigners have been pointed out by M. Albert Gaudard to the French Ethnographic Society. The Japanese, who, since the revolution of 1868, have been rapidly adopting European modes of life, are losing the eccentricity of their eyes and the prominence of their cheek bones, while recently born children have less flattened noses than their ancestors, with a skin not so yellow. Europeans settling in Japan, on the other hand, gradually lose the rosy color of their skin and tend to acquire an eccentricity in the eye. Another instance is reported by Adhemar Leclere, who has observed in Cambodia a striking change in his countrymen, the French residents soon beginning to acquire the type and the gait of the natives.

The Modern Dramatic Critic.

First Nighter—The man who writes the dramatic criticisms for your paper does not know a good play from a bad one.

Editor—I know it, but what can we do? He is the only man on the staff who is tall enough to see over the bonnets.—Tid-Bits.

No many people love authority that it is always easy to find an umpire at a ball game.

WOMAN'S REALM

DOMESTIC LIFE.

HOUSEKEEPING has its trials, no doubt; but systematic work, and a determination not to fret over little things, will go far toward lightening them. Every woman should make it the aim and purpose of her life to attain perfection in her home. A day for mending, a day for washing, another for ironing, for sewing, and so on, and at once the work becomes simplified and less of a hardship. "Oh, dear me, to-morrow is washing day! How I hate it!" This is a common saying, and there is nothing very wrong about it, for no one will assert that washing is an agreeable pastime. Yet it must be done, so it is worse than useless to fret over it; as a consequence every sensible woman should determine to look on the bright side of the washtub and soapbuds. Make a few good rules and keep them. Determine not to put the whole house in disorder and to make everyone else miserable, because the clothes must be washed, the bread baked, etc. Suppose dinner is to be served at a certain hour, and dear husband forgets all about it and arrives in the best of humor when everything is cold. Don't cry and scold, but make the best of it. He will enjoy his cold meat if hot words are not served with it. We all know women who are constantly finding fault with something or other, and who are never happy unless there is something to scold about. But every such little worry, every harsh word, every disagreeable look, makes life harder, and but deepens the lines of trouble about the eyes and mouth. There are plenty of real troubles to be met with, without allowing household cares to become a source of torment.

For a Garden Fete



There is no better chance to show a beautiful gown in all its daintiness and grace than at a garden party. The girl among the sunflowers wears a costume of golden brown, ivory and yellow. The skirt is accordion plaited silk of the first mentioned color; the corsage is soft and ivory satin, with yoke of net and impements of lace over canary-colored satin. Yellow ribbon and amber buckles further decorate the bodice, and the hat, a broad, picture affair, is trimmed with folds of yellow chiffon.

Barpins.

Until the year 1878 hairpins were brought to this country from England or France. There are now several large factories in the United States that turn out an article equal, if not superior, to the best finished foreign made pin. The trade is such a large one that it takes 50,000 packages, each containing from twelve to twenty pins, to supply the wholesale demand daily in New York. The machinery used is of a delicate and intricate character, as the small prices at which the pins are at present sold necessitate the most rapid and cheapest process. The wire is made expressly for the purpose, and is put up in large coils, which are placed on reels. The end of the wire is put into a clamp, which carries it to a machine while straightening it. There it runs through a machine which cuts, bends and, by a delicate and instantaneous process, sharpens the pins. These machines will turn out from 300 to 350 hairpins every minute. The most difficult part of the work is the enamelling, which is done by dipping the pin in a preparation and baking it in an oven. Here is where the most constant attention is required, as the pin must be perfectly smooth and the enamel have a faultless finish. The slightest particles of dust cause imperfections and roughness.

Making Lemon Flavr.

An old housekeeper says it is by far the best plan to make one's own lemon flavoring for cakes and puddings. Before cutting a lemon to extract the juice, wash and wipe it with a soft cloth; then grate off all the delicate yellow skin, not taking any of the white bitter part. Place the grated peel in a wide-mouthed bottle and cover it thickly with granulated sugar. Keep the bottle tightly corked. The sugar becomes saturated with the oil from the peel, and when used in place of extracts gives a most delicious flavor.

Marriage Customs in Alaska.

Wooling and wedding in Alaska among the natives are interesting and peculiar rites. When a young man is of a suitable age to marry, his mother, his aunt or his sister looks up a wife for him. He seldom marries a woman younger than himself; she is much older, and sometimes is double his age, and even more. She is selected from a family whose position equals his or is even higher. When a suitable woman is found the young man is asked how

many blankets and animal skins he is willing to pay for her. When that important question is settled a feast is arranged at the home of the bride, and the friends of both families are invited. When the company is assembled the woman's people extol the greatness of their family. The young man's marriage gifts are spread out where they will make a fine show, and then his family sound their praises. The ceremony lasts from one to two days, and finally the young bridegroom takes his wife to his own abode.

Cured by Divorce.

After a San Diego man procured a divorce from his wife the other day, he went home and found her there. She asked him to sit down to dinner, after which she asked him how he liked the new arrangement. "First-rate," he replied, "but I can't understand it." "Oh, that's all right," said she; "we can live this way in contentment. The other way we quarrel. Now, then, suppose you remain me as housekeeper? Twenty dollars per month and board is all I ask." This struck the ex-husband favorably, and the bargain was closed on the spot. The couple have not had a sign of trouble since, although they were in hot water for thirty-two years, fretting under the marital yoke. They dare not quarrel much now, for fear one will leave the other in a lurch. He must have his meals cooked, and she must have a place to stay. Together they are happy now, and the bargain promises to last to the end.—Tribune.

Getting a Good Photo-rash.

A local authority on photography says: "A well-imparted patchy appearance to the face. Gloves make the hands appear much larger than they are in reality. It is unwise to wear a new dress; it always falls in backward folds. Whenever possible, it is money well spent to drive to the photographer's. A feather boa or a face veil has a wonderfully softening effect on the features. Generally speaking, the head and shoulders take a far prettier picture than a full length portrait. Above all, if you want your own picture to have a natural expression you must forget where you are. Unless there is any urgent reason for it, it is a great mistake to be photographed if you are either out of health or in low spirits. A just-the-mode-of-the-moment style of costume or coiffure will 'date' the photograph, and soon make it look out of fashion. A white dress, or one that takes 'white,' gives a ghastly effect, and one far from becoming, unless the sitter is young and pretty."

Box Instead of Basket.

The best scheme for a picnic or lunch basket is to have no basket at all, but to substitute it by a number of boxes—shoe boxes, if not too large—strapped together with a slaw strap. These are easily carried, and can be thrown aside when lunch is over. Line the boxes with alled paper, and let one contain sandwiches, another cake, another cups, napkins and such necessities. They can thus be kept fresh and opened as desired, and altogether are an improvement on the basket, where things start in compartments and finish in confusion.



A teaspoonful of aromatic syrup of rhubarb given every three hours is a good remedy for hives in children. Cinnamon bark is said to be an excellent remedy for toothache. Let the children chew the pleasant-tasting wood if they want it rather than resort to the injurious clove oil or other strong medicines to destroy the sensibility of the teeth and the lining of the stomach at one and the same time.

The baby in his second summer requires more variety in food than his bottle can supply, but the diet must be carefully selected and simple. Watch the effect of the new food offered and choose the one proved best by the results. Broths with rice boiled in them; rice flour gruel and thoroughly cooked meat; and then, occasionally, a soft-boiled egg or a little milk toast.

A nursery table is an excellent substitute for baby's dressing basket. Get a well-made pine table, provided with a commodious drawer; paint it with white enamel and cut down the legs so it will stand twelve or fifteen inches from the floor. At this height it makes a safe support for the child's bath-tub; if a chair is lowered in proportion mamma or nurse may give the morning bath seated. The drawer, which will be divided into compartments, will hold brushes, sponges, powder, soap and all the necessary adjuncts to baby's toilet.

Home Notes.

The wife has troubles of her own, remember.

We did it, wife and I, made the money, if any has been made.

Make the best of your surroundings. Nothing is gained by fretting.

The telephone in the country greatly lightens the life of the women and children.

The church has no stronger supporters than the women and children of our rural homes.

Encourage the child to assert its individuality and independence, within limits, of course.

TOPICS FOR FARMERS

A DEPARTMENT PREPARED FOR OUR RURAL FRIENDS.

Sow the Kind of Wheat that is Best Adapted to the Soil—Advice About Clipping Horses—Removing the Corn Tassels.

Selecting Seed Wheat.

It is found that a change of feed, even that from an adjoining farm, is an advantage. Wheat grown upon strong limestone soils in a cool climate has more vitality and will yield more to the acre than when sown in a warmer climate. For this reason a change of seed every few years is desirable. If home-grown seed is to be used, select the very best, and then run it through the mill several times to get only the largest and most perfect grains. There are two leading varieties of wheat, the white and the red. The white wheats make the best quality of flour. They require a good soil, thorough preparation of the ground and early seeding. The usual yield is from twenty-five to thirty bushels to the acre. The red wheats are more hardy and are most in demand. The leading kinds are Fultz, Mediterranean and Fuleaster. Our leading wheat growers sow mostly the Fultz and the red Mediterranean. The Fultz has a short, stiff straw, that stands up well. The improved Mediterranean is a very valuable wheat, especially for rich clay soils that have recently been lined. On such soils crops have been grown the past season averaging forty bushels to the acre, upon fields of twenty acres in extent. The editor would advise each farmer to sow that wheat that best suits his soil. Have plump, clean seed; seed six pecks to the acre, and take the month of August to get the wheat ground in proper condition for drilling early in September.—The American.

Clipping the Horse.

It might be thought that clipping would have a tendency to increase the risk of colds and chest diseases in the horse. Such, however, is not the case; on the contrary, it reduces the probability of such affections. The greatest sufferers are those that, after a hard day's work, are brought into the stable wet with perspiration or from rain, and having a heavy coat of hair, take a considerable time to dry, notwithstanding careful dressing, a performance which is too generally neglected. To thoroughly dry a horse in such condition is too hard work to please most groomers, consequently the horse gets a chill, and his respiratory organs become affected. A clipped horse is readily dried, and when afterwards clothed, passes the night comfortably, and is not so liable to "catch cold" as the horse that rests in a coat damp, if not sodden, with perspiration or rain. Clipped horses should always be well clothed when not at work, and especial care should be taken to preserve the temperature of the skin for the first few days after they have undergone the operation of having their natural hairy covering reduced by the clipper.—Portland Transcript.

Removing Corn Tassels.

We have never believed that it would pay to detassel corn in order to save the plant vigor and strength required to perfect the male blossom. It would in the first place involve too much labor, and we could never see that the stalks from which tassels had been removed were any more prolific than others. What used to be known as "topping corn," which means cutting off all above the ear, is a certain injury to the crop. It used to be done to let the sun reach the ear. For the ear needed all the foliage that the stalk was deprived of in order to perfect its grain. Besides, it has long been recognized that these thin topplings of corn have far less sweetness and nutrition than has the larger part of the stalk below them. At cutting time the richest part of the stalk will be the middle, and as close to the ear as possible. Give a cow a cornstalk and she will always begin in the middle, eating both ways till she comes to less nutrition, and ending out the butt and top ends as not suited to her taste.—Exchange.

Fear Blight.

Pear blight is one of those plant diseases that has been exhaustively studied and its exact nature fully demonstrated, and yet it has left us precisely where we were before as respects remedial measures. In a word, the only remedy when blight has stricken a branch is to cut well below the affected part and burn it; if the whole tree seems affected, to dig it out and burn it. I am not aware that any specific applications are of any use except as they may promote a more uniform and healthy development of the tree, thus giving it greater resistance and making it less susceptible to the attack of the blight bacterium. Particularly should undue stimulation of rank fertilizers be avoided, since they induce extraordinary growth which is liable to be soft and spongy, and often unseasonable, leading into fall when the tree should be hardening the season's growth. The Seckel pear has the reputation of being one of the most resistant varieties, but it is not proof by any means, as your correspondent has testified.

Blight varies somewhat in different years. The reasons for this are unknown, but appear to be due to more favorable weather conditions some seasons than others. Discouraging as pear culture is, owing to the insidious character of blight, it will pay to watch trees carefully for the first appearance of disease, to cultivate, prune and care for them systematically.—Germantown Telegraph.

Oats and Peas for Soiling.

Excepting clover there is no better soiling crop than a mixture of oats and peas cut green. It can be sown much

earlier than corn, and will be in condition long before corn is ready to cut for green fodder. The pea vines also make a better ration than green corn at its best, as they supply the nitrogenous element in which corn is deficient. But as the main soiling crop corn will always have the preference, as more can be grown of it per acre than of the peas and oats. By sowing successively until the middle of May, oats and peas can be kept in best condition for soiling until corn fodder has got into tassel. But the latest sown oats and peas should all be used for green fodder as the excess of nitrogen in the soil will make the late oats rust and the late peas mildew so that they cannot be saved for grain. But if there is more of them than can be fed green, the corn and peas make excellent sludge if put up just as the grain is beginning to form.—Cultivator.

Alfalfa Replacing Corn.

It is not likely that alfalfa, the clover which has succeeded so well in California, will ever become plentiful in the East. Our wet winters will rot the roots or at least decrease their vigor. On very dry sandy or gravelly soil it might succeed here. But it seems to be especially adapted to hot and dry climates, and hence its success in the arid regions of the far West. As its root often goes several feet deep it is likely to change the character of the climate, for wherever alfalfa roots have gone water will also go. The alfalfa retains its greenness during the severest droughts. Of course it must be all the time evaporating moisture, and this also will have some effect in changing the climate. Hence in localities too dry for corn, alfalfa is taking its place as a feed for all kinds of stock. It is at the same time fitting the soil for growing corn and other crops.—American Cultivator.

Winter Carnations.

If carnations are wanted for winter blooming in the dwelling or greenhouse, they must be carefully cultivated now. Plants raised from cuttings this spring must have the flower buds nipped off as soon as they show themselves. Follow this treatment all through the summer. Keep the earth around the plants loose, mellow and free from weeds. By fall strong, stout, stocky plants will be had, and, with proper management, a handsome display of choice flowers may be had all through the winter. The last of September they should be potted, taking a large mass of earth up with the roots. After they are nicely potted water freely and set the pots in a partially shaded place until they finally recover. The earth must be kept moist, but not wet, in the pots. They thrive best in a cool temperature—from forty-five to fifty degrees. They grow nicely in a well-protected cold frame.—The American.

Alsike Clover.

It is no wonder that alsike clover so often proves a disappointment to farmers who sow it, thinking that it will, like other clover, at least remain in the ground two full years. Alsike clover seeds, with its first crop. Then, unless the clover has been cut before it fairly got into blossom, the root will not sprout again, and the farmer is left with a bare stubble the remainder of the summer. Some permanent grass should always be sown with alsike clover. Timothy is one of the best, as it is a patient grass, growing a little beneath the clover early in the season, and then shooting up quickly and coming into leaf when the ground is cleared off for it to do so. The alsike roots, being dead, begin at once to decay in the soil. They are so rich in plant food that timothy sown with alsike always makes a better sod, and will last longer than when it is grown alone.

Wearing Lambs.

It is not always safe to separate the ewes and lambs suddenly, especially in warm weather, when any unusual condition in the ewe may lead to unexpected trouble. The rule must be a close oversight of the flock, one by one, and the drafting off of those ewes whose lambs may be safely separated from them permanently.—Sheep Breeder.

Farm Notes.

If weeds are annual they will soon disappear if not allowed to produce seeds; if they are perennial, keep them cut down so as to prevent them from making leaves. Leaves are the breathing organs of plants, and to frequently cut down the plants as fast as they begin to grow will soon put an end to them.

Currying the horses when they have become dry after their return from the day's work relieves them of itching due to attacks of insects and opens the pores of the skin. If they are well rubbed down and also given a brisk brushing they will feel better and also be in better condition for work the next day.

Four times as much can be produced on an acre by the use of wheel hoes and other hand implements than by the ordinary cultivation with horse power, as the hand implements will allow of growing the plants closer in the rows, and the rows need not be more than twelve inches apart, but in so doing the crop must be supplied with an abundance of plant food and carefully attended to.

In Michigan a law is in force which requires all orchards infested with injurious insects to be sprayed or disinfected. This law is enforced by three commissioners in each township, who are appointed on petition of ten freeholders. If the owner refuses to do the work the commissioners can do it and tax costs against him. Thus far the law works well, and its justness is recognized. No man has a right to grow weeds or breed insects to destroy his neighbor's crops or fruit.