

FARM AND GARDEN.

MATTERS OF INTEREST TO AGRICULTURISTS.

Some Up-to-date Hints About Cultivation of the Soil and Yields Thereof—Horticulture, Viticulture and Floriculture.

SOME years ago Helriegel and Wilfarth demonstrated that by the use of the legumes the supply of nitrogen could be increased to almost any desired extent and that wherever the clovers, alfalfa beans or peas of any variety can be grown there is no need of soil exhaustion so far as nitrogen is concerned. It is now beginning, however, to creep into the heads of the scientists that the restorative powers of the legumes is due not merely to the supply of nitrogen but the restoration of humus to the soil, and investigations are now proceeding in that line which promise to be exceedingly interesting. By humus we mean the vegetable mold which exists to a greater or less extent in all soils but is more abundant in all new soils, whether forest or prairie. It has been observed by the common, every day farmer who pretends to no knowledge of science, soils decline in fertility in proportion as this vegetable mold is exhausted. It is exhausted quite rapidly not merely by the removal of crops but by chemical action which is the result of cultivation, hence the soil that seems to be rich in vegetable matter turns out in a few years to be a clay bed which produces little or nothing. The Minnesota agricultural experiment station has been taking a prominent part in these investigations and has found that when a fertilizer containing nitrogen, potash and phosphoric acid, or any one of these altogether or alone there was in no case an increase of over three bushels of wheat or two bushels of flax per acre, and on moderately new soils, and that where soils had been cropped for twenty years the largest increase was four bushels per acre while the decline between these soils in their best condition and worn out condition was fifteen bushels per acre. It is therefore clear from this and other results that the decline in soil fertility is not due merely to the removal of the elements essential to fertility but to some other cause. That cause is to a very great extent the lack of humus or vegetable matter, and it is quite probable that the results of clovering, which in our experience adds from fifteen to twenty-five bushels of corn per acre to worn out soil, is due not merely to the nitrogen stored in the soil but to the material from which humus is made in the form of the roots of the clover. This accounts also for the lasting effects of barnyard manure which contains not merely these essential elements of fertility but adds humus to the soil.—Wallaces' Farmer.

Killing Weeds.

Weeds are easily killed just when they begin to grow. If the ground is then stirred they will be very readily put out of the way. When those little tender white roots which they first put out are turned up to the light and sun, they soon vanish. But once allowed them to get a good hold upon the soil and it is quite a different thing to remove them. Let the harrow for instance stir the surface of a corn field just when the weeds are starting, and they will be destroyed in myriads. But let the harrowing be delayed for two or three weeks and comparatively few of the weeds will be killed with one harrowing. In growing a crop of mangels, if the edges of the raised drill are hoed down just as soon as the mangels appear, this work may be quickly done without disturbing the mangels, but once let those weeds get firmly rooted and the difficulty of the work will be greatly increased. The rootlets from the weeds will intertwine around those of the mangels, so that when the former are being uprooted the latter may also be pulled out. The true plan is to so arrange that the roots of the weeds will not make any considerable headway before they are destroyed. Then the work is easily done, and the farmer should be careful not to grow more of a crop than he can take care of in good form. This is particularly true of crops that require summer cultivation.—Ex.

The Root Crop.

Mangels, sugar beets and carrots, when properly stored, may be kept until late spring the following season, but the former should not be exposed to the early frosts of autumn or they will not keep so well. Our machines for saving these crops are not by any means what we want at the present time. The standing objection to the growing of field roots is the labor involved; but think of the offset to this labor in the streams of milk which the roots generate, and in the beneficial influence which they exert on the health of the cattle. Unnecessary labor may in a sense be grievous, but not so the labor involved in growing field roots. For nearly 6,000 years men have found that it is not such a bad thing, after all, for a man to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow, and growing field roots has a more salutary influence even on the health of a lazy man than the consumption of the roots has upon the health of the cattle to which they are fed.—Ex.

Protecting Evergreens from Drouth.

The Wisconsin Horticultural society bulletin publishes an article by J. C. Plumb on "Protecting Evergreens from Drouth." It is as follows:

The premature death of so many of our evergreens in lawn and hedges, in southern Wisconsin, is truly alarming. In my home village are many trees which have hitherto flourished and attained their ten to thirty feet, without any show of weakness, but which in the last year have lost their foliage never to return, and the evergreen hedges, miles of which we have planted and furnished in that vicinity, are now many of them dying out in spots, or show a weakness that precludes death, and I am looking for a larger death rate to show among the evergreen trees than ever, with the coming spring and summer. With a view to avert further losses in this line I have been looking up the facts and seeking a remedy. It is plain enough that the primary cause of this death is the want of rainfall during summer and autumn, as has been the case during the last two years. Copious and seasonable watering would have saved most of them without doubt. But prevention is better than cure. Artificial watering is generally costly and often a difficult process. So we find it best to avoid the cause by conditions of planting and growth. Our annual rainfall is all sufficient for our needs in this direction, if it can be conserved, or reserved, for time of need. In this line we find three ways available, namely: First, culture; second, mulching; third, protection from robber plants. The first two methods named we all understand and practice with all successful cultivations, but the last remedy we have failed to appreciate. Our evergreens are being robbed of the last vestige of water in the soil by deciduous trees, of which the white soft maple is most destructive, the butternut and European larch following close. In fact any tree the roots of which feed on the surface will rob the evergreens. We find the hemlock and balsam fir most sensitive to the robber roots, and the arbutus vitex least so; so that under the same conditions the latter is holding its own with little show of weakness from the drouth. Now since no surface mulch or culture will answer fully in our case, we have found it necessary to cut down, or severely root prune, these deciduous trees where they encroached upon the evergreens. In one case where a beautiful hemlock hedge was showing the first symptoms of death, we took up the intervening plank walk and cut off the maple roots by digging a two foot trench between the hedge and the trees. Again we have dug a similar trench around single trees to cut off the robber roots. In

every case the effect was soon shown by the renewed vigor of our evergreens. But as this must be repeated every few years, it is a question why not put in a permanent concrete wall between, or dispense altogether with the fast growing deciduous trees? I am of the opinion that we have too many of these rapid growing maples, and the sooner they are dispensed with the better for our beautiful evergreens. I have for many years been in the practice of cutting the surface roots of grass and shrubs around our lawn trees by showing the spade its full depth in a circular cut as far from the base of the tree as its branches project, and the same treatment for the rose bed, or any of the choice plants which are bordered by grass, and in all cases with excellent and immediate effect. Of the miles of evergreen hedges we have planted but few will be left at the end of another series of dry years, unless protection is afforded same from robber roots of more vigorous trees.

TALMAGE'S SERMON.

"A SHADOW ON THE HARVEST FIELD," SUNDAY'S SUBJECT.

"And When the Child Was Grown, It Fell on a Day That He Went Out to His Father to the Reapers."—Second Kings 4:18, 19, 20.

HERE is at least one happy home in Shunem. To the luxuriance and splendor of a great house had been given the advent of a child. Even when the Angel of Life brings a new soul to the poor man's hut a star of joy shines over the manger. Infancy, with its helplessness and innocence, had passed away. Days of boyhood had come—days of laughter and frolic, days of sunshine and promise, days of strange questions and curiosity and quick development. I suppose among all the treasures of that house, the brightest was the boy. One day there is the shout of reapers heard afield. A boy's heart always bounds at the sound of sickle or scythe. No sooner have the harvesters cut a swath across the field than the lad joins them, and the swarthy reapers feel young again as they look down at that lad, as bright and beautiful as was Ruth in the harvest fields of Bethlehem gleaming after the reapers. But the sun was too hot for him. Congestion of the brain seized on him. I see the swarthy laborers drop their sickles; and they rush out to see what is the matter, and they fan him as they try to cool his brow; but all is of no avail. In the instant of consciousness, he puts his hands against his temples and cries out: "My head! my head!" And the father said: "Carry him to his mother," just as any father would have said; for our hand is too rough, and our voice is too harsh, and our foot is too loud to doctor a sick child, if there be in our home a gentler voice and a gentler hand and a stiller footstep. But all of no avail. While the reapers of Shunem were busy in the field, there came a stronger reaper that way, with keener scythe and for a richer harvest. He reaped only one sheaf, but O what a golden sheaf was that! I do not want to know any more about that heart-breaking scene than what I see in just this one pathetic sentence: "He sat on her knees till noon and then died." Though hundreds of years have passed away since that boy skipped to the harvest-field and then was brought home and died on his mother's lap, the story still thrills us. Indeed, childhood has a charm always and everywhere. I shall now speak to you of childhood; its beauty, its susceptibility to impression, its power over the parental heart, and its blissful transition from earth to heaven.

The child's beauty does not depend upon form or feature or complexion or apparel. That destitute one that you saw on the street, bruised with unkindness and in rags, has a charm about her, even under her destitution. You have forgotten a great many persons whom you have met, of finely-cut features and with erect posture and with faultless complexion, while you will always remember the poor girl who, on a cold, moonlight night, as you were passing late home, in her thin shawl and barefoot on the pavement, put out her hand and said: "Please give me a penny." Ah! how often we have walked on and said: "Oh, that is nothing but street vagabondism;" but after we got a block or two on, we stopped and said: "Ah, that is not right;" and we passed up that same way and dropped a mite into that suffering hand, as though it were not a matter of second thought, so ashamed were we of our hard-heartedness. With what admiration we all look upon a group of children on the play-ground or in the school, and we clap our hands almost involuntarily and say: "How beautiful! All stiffness and dignity are gone, and your shout is heard with theirs and you trundle their hoop, and fly their kite, and strike their ball, and all your weariness and anxiety are gone as when a child you bounded over the play-ground yourself. That father who stands rigid and unsympathetic amid the sportfulness of children, ought never to have been tempted out of a crusty and unredeemable solitariness. The waters leap down the rocks, but they have not the graceful step of childhood. The morning comes out of the gates of the east, throwing its silver on the lake and its gold on the towers and its fire on the cloud; but it is not so bright and beautiful as the morning of life! There is no light like that which is kindled in a child's eye, no color like that which blooms on a child's cheek, no music like the sound of a child's voice. Its face in the poorest picture redeems any imperfection in art. When we are weary with toil, their little hands pull the burdens off our back. Oh, what a dull, stale mean world this would be without the sportfulness of children. When I find people that do not like children, I immediately doubt their moral and Christian character. But when the grace of God comes upon a child, how unspeakably attractive. When Samuel begins to pray, and Timothy begins to read the Scriptures, and Joseph shows himself invulnerable to temptation—how beautiful the scene! I know that parents sometimes get nervous when their children become pious, because they have the idea that good children always die. The strange questions about God and eternity and the dead, excite apprehension in the parental mind rather than congratulation. Indeed, there are some people that seem mark-

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FOR WOMEN ONLY.

The dainty, pretty, and generally becoming fancy waists appear to be just as popular as ever.

The latest hats are charmingly light and bewitching, with their brims encircled by full box-platings of the finest tulle.

The tan shoe is not as popular as it was last summer, and when worn it is of a dark russet shade.

Among the newest fancies of fashion are the bright green belts of alligator skin.

Every variety of flower that nature has produced, and many others, which must have originated in the fertile brain of the flower maker, are in conspicuous evidence, and flower bonnets are shown among the newest hats.

Straw hats with rows of plaited tulle around the brim are among the prettiest fancies, and the platings are sometimes wide enough to stand up around the crown with a twist of velvet or ribbons between.

Vails which are designed to enhance the loveliest complexion and improve a poor one are made of black Russian net, spotted with chenille, and lined with the thinnest pink tulle.

The closely fitting sleeve is fast gaining in popularity, and in this material, such as chiffon, net and muslin, it is often arranged in puffs, with insertions of lace between, with narrow black velvet ribbon drawn through the lace.

The skirts of heavy cotton and linen gowns are made without any lining, and five yards is considered ample fulness at the bottom, unless they have the broad box-plait effect in front, which some prefer.

A most sensible fashion is the one of making street gowns to clear the ground, and some of them are even shorter in the back than in front, so the skirt which trails even a little bit is altogether out of fashion.

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ed for heaven. This world is too poor a garden for them to bloom in. The hues of heaven are in the petals. There is something about their forehead that makes you think that the hand of Christ has been on it, saying: "Let this one come to Me, and let it come to Me soon." While that one tarried in the house, you felt there was an angel in the room, and you thought that every sickness would be the last; and when, finally, the winds of death did scatter the leaves, you were no more surprised than to see a star come out above the cloud on a dark night; for you had often said to your companion: "My dear, we shall never raise that child." But I scout the idea that good children always die. Samuel the pious boy, became Samuel the great prophet. Christian Timothy became a minister at Ephesus. Young Daniel, consecrated to God, became prime minister of all the realm, and there are in hundreds of the schools and families of this country to-day, children who love God and keep his commandments, and who are to be foremost among the Christians and the philanthropists and the reformers of the next century. The grace of God never kills any one. A child will be more apt to grow up with religion than it will be apt to grow up without it. Length of days is promised to the righteous. The religion of Christ does not cramp the chest or curve the spine or weaken the nerves. There are no malarials floating up from the river of life. The religion of Christ throws over the heart and life of a child a supernatural beauty. "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."

I pass on to consider the susceptibility of childhood. Men pride themselves on their unchangeability. They will make an elaborate argument to prove that they think now just as they did twenty years ago. It is charged to frailty or fraud when a man changes his sentiments in politics or in religion, and it is this determination of soul that so often drives back the Gospel from a man's heart. It is so hard to make avarice charitable, and fraud honest, and pride humble, and scepticism Christian. The sword of God's truth seems to glance off from those mailed warriors, and the helmet seems battle-proof against God's battle-ax. But childhood; how susceptible to example and to instruction! You are not surprised at the record: "Abraham begat Isaac and Isaac begat Jacob;" for when religion starts in a family, it is apt to go all through. Jezebel a murderer, you are not surprised to find her son Jehoram attempting assassination. Oh, what a responsibility upon the parent and the teacher! The musician touches the keys, and the response of those keys is away off amid the pipes and the chords, and you wonder at the distance between the key and the chord. And so it is in life; if you touch a child, the results will come back from manhood or old age, telling just the tune played, whether the dirge of a great sorrow or the anthem of a great joy. The word that the Sabbath School teacher will this afternoon whisper in the ear of the class, will be echoed back from everlasting ages of light or darkness. The home and the school decide the republic or the despotism; the barbarism or the civilization; the upbuilding of an empire, or the overthrowing it. Higher than parliament or congress are the school and the family, and the sound of a child's foot may mean more than the tramp of a host. What, then, are you doing for the purpose of bringing your children into the kingdom of God? If they are so susceptible, and if this is the very best time to act upon their eternal interests, what are you doing by way of right impulsion? There were some harvesters in the fields of Scotland one hot day; and Hannah Lemond was helping them to gather the hay. She laid her babe under a tree. While she was busy in the field, there was a flutter of wings in the air, and a golden eagle clutched the swaddling band of the babe, and flew away with it to the mountain eyrie. All the harvesters and Hannah Lemond started for the cliffs. It was two miles before they came to the foot of the cliffs. Getting there, who dared to mount the cliff? No human foot had ever trod it. There were sailors there who had gone up the mast in the day of terrible tempest; they did not dare risk it. Hannah Lemond sat there for awhile and looked up and saw the eagle in the eyrie, and then she leaped to her feet, and she started up where no human foot had ever trod, crag above crag, catching hold of this root or that root, until she reached the eyrie and caught her babe, the eagle swooping in ferocious all around about her. Fastening the child to her back, she started for her friends and for home. O, what a dizzy descent! sliding from this crag to that crag, catching by that vine and by that root, coming down further and further, to the most dangerous pass, where she found a great and some kids. She said: "Now I'll follow the goat; the goat will know just which is the safest way down;" and she was led by the animal down to the plain. When she got there, all the people cried: "Thank God, thank God!" her strength not giving way until the rescue was effected. And they cried: "Stand back, now. Give her air!" O, if a woman will do that for the physical life of her child, what will you do for the eternal life of your boy and your girl? Let it not be told in the great day of eternity that Hannah Lemond put forth more exertion for the saving of the physical life of her child than you, O parent, have ever put forth for the eternal life of your little one. God help you.

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