

How to Make the Best of the Grass Crop.

When the question is settled in favor of cutting grass to feed cattle, there are two more that force themselves upon us and demand a settlement. The first is the time of cutting and the second the manner of curing. As to the time of cutting grass there is but little difference of opinion, a very large portion of the farmers being in favor of cutting early, as soon as the grass is in blossom; but as to the best methods of curing, or preserving, they are a great variety of opinions; while one party believes it best to spread and dry in the sun for two days, another party believes it should be cut after nine o'clock a. m., and put in the barn before three o'clock, p. m., the same day; and now a new party has stepped to the front, and declared that grass and other green crops can be preserved the best if cut and packed down entirely green, in a silo, without even drying the water out after a shower, and they prove their faith in it by their practice. While it is evident that grass can be cured, or preserved in these various ways, so that cattle will readily eat it, and thrive on it, it is not so clear as to which way is the best; this is to be regretted, for in a matter of so much importance it is very desirable that we should waste as little as possible, and settle down to the most economical and the most reliable, as well as the best way.

Reliable chemists tell us that grass dried in the sun, without being wet, preserves nearly, if not quite all of its nutriment, while if wet by a heavy shower it loses nearly one-third of its nutritious qualities; they also tell us that, when put into a silo green, it loses its sugar by fermentation, though the loss in this way is not as great as when wet by rain. From this it would seem, if one was sure of fair weather, he could keep more cattle on his grass cured by sunshine than by preserving in a silo, and that he could keep more by packing in a silo, than if he should get it caught in a rain. Some farmers succeed in getting the best hay by making it in the cock; after giving it a few hours' sun, it is raked up in heaps of about forty pounds each, and allowed to remain untouched the next day; but the third day, if the weather remains fair, it is recocked, and the fourth day the cocks are turned over in the morning, and got in soon after dinner. The objection to this way is that it is too much labor, and if there should be a storm it injures the outside, which would have to be spread and dried, but no common storm would injure the inside, unless it should come before it had been raked up twelve hours. Clover hay, made in this way, retains all of its leaves and is very sweet; the blossoms in the winter are very fragrant and hold their color remarkably well.

With the improvements which we now have, to cut, make and harvest our grass, we cannot stop to practice the old methods in use before the introduction of machinery, even though our hay may not be quite as good; but when we consider how quick we can cut and spread a five acre lot, and how easily and well it can be stirred and kept in the air to dry, and finally how easily it can be raked, loaded and housed, it appears very evident that with a little watching of the weather, there is a better chance to get our grass well cured under the old system of hand work.—*Massachusetts Ploughman.*

Salt and Ashes for Animals.

This subject has been frequently discussed hitherto, especially the use of salt for farm stock. That all domestic animals do better where they are constantly supplied with salt I am perfectly satisfied from experience and long observation. The only case where salt seems to do injury is where cattle have been long without it, and then on giving them all they are inclined to consume. I am willing to own that it is temporarily injurious, not because the article is of itself bad, but because of taking too much at one dose. The proper way to feed salt is to place it where the stock can go to it as they please and take what they are inclined to eat. Never mix it with their food, so that they are compelled to take it whether they wish it or not. More and better butter can be made from the milk of a cow when she has her free supply of salt than from one entirely deprived of it, or having an irregular supply, and it also takes less time to churn the cream. Nature requires salt as an aid in preserving health. It assists in digestion as well as in many other ways which I need not here mention. For cattle at pasture lumps may be laid in any convenient place where a board can be fixed to shelter from the rain and still allow the stock free access. At the barn the lumps can be placed under the shed or in some other convenient spot. But oftentimes stock seem to require an alkali as well, and that is most conveniently supplied in wood ashes, which horses, cattle, sheep and swine will greedily devour when they have an opportunity. These should also be supplied where the stock can have access to them as desired. The ashes should be from good sound wood and kept dry.

When desirable to keep cattle at pasture and there is no shed to shelter the ashes and salt, a convenient trough may be fastened between two posts, on top of which are fastened two planks or boards as a roof to shelter from rain. The posts should be long enough so that the trough may be eighteen or twenty inches above the ground, and there must be room above between it and the roof to allow of free access to the salt or ashes. This answers for all stock except sheep and swine, which can have the troughs lower. I believe

that if a constant supply of salt and ashes is provided where all kinds of stock can have access to them very much less disease would be known among farm stock; I have never known bots, colic or worms in horses where ashes and salt were thus furnished.—*Cor. Country Gentleman.*

Value of the Wren in Destroying Insects.

The observations I have been able to make during a residence of several years on a farm have convinced me that the common house wren is really one of our most valuable birds, not perhaps, from what they have done, but from the possibilities wrapped up in their diminutive bodies. They are quite as social as the purple martin or the bluebird, and greatly surpass either of these in the rapidity with which they increase. I began several years ago to provide them with nesting places in the vicinity of my buildings. Sometimes I fastened the skull of a horse or ox, or a small box, in a tree top. But latterly I have made it a practice every spring to obtain thirty or forty cigar boxes for this purpose. If the box is long and large, I put a partition across the middle, and make a hole through into each apartment. It is very seldom that these boxes are not occupied by one of these little families. In most instances two broods are annually reared in each nesting-place. One of my boxes last season turned out three broods of young wrens—six little hungry birds each time, or eighteen in all. I think a cigar box never before did better duty. The lamented Robert Kennicott stated that a single pair of wrens carried to their young about a thousand insects in a single day. Like all young, rapidly growing birds, they are known to be voracious eaters, living entirely upon insects. The point upon which most stress may be laid is this: That by providing them with nesting places in our gardens, orchards or grounds, and not allowing them to be caught by cats or scared away by mischievous boys, we may have scores, if not hundreds of them about us during most of the time in which insects are destructive. They undoubtedly return to the same localities year after year. Last season I had up about thirty of these nesting-boxes, and all but two or three, which were not favorably located, were occupied. My crop of wrens could scarcely have been less than one hundred and fifty, and the old birds filled the air with music when they were not on duty in building their nests or feeding their young. The coming spring I intend to put up at least a hundred of these nesting-boxes in my orchards and groves, and I have no doubt I shall be repaid a hundred thousand fold for the little labor it costs. As long as they come back so regularly every year and in constantly increasing numbers, and serve me so well, I shall do all in my power to protect and encourage them. And I am of the opinion that when one species of social, useful birds can be made to congregate in such unusual numbers, others will come also. But the hardness, sociability, love of the locality where it is reared, and wonderful fecundity of the little house wren, render it in my judgment, one of the most valuable of our insectivorous birds.—*Cor. American Naturalist.*

Method with Children.

Growing children require much sleep; and to rouse any child in the morning who has been up late the night before earlier than he would naturally have awakened is cruel. Yet this is often done because the breakfast hour is seven o'clock possibly, and every child is wanted in their place. The remedy lies in getting the child quietly into bed and asleep at an early hour in the evening. Naturally, children do awaken quite early in the morning. An infant is often stirring soon after day-break, and left to sleep when sleepy, and awaken when feeling like it. Most children are astir pretty early in the morning. Artificially, children are pretty much anything one permits them to be, and habits are sucked in about as unconsciously as air is breathed. It is a sort of recognition of this fact which I suspect induced fathers and mothers to insist upon a prompt appearance at the breakfast table, while a careless habit of neglecting known physiological laws on their part permits the child to waste far more nervous energy in the day than the night's sleep, all too short, has made up to him. Therefore, the child is peevish, ill-tempered, and all—but unbearable. Do pursue method with children by all means. The quiet, well-regulated inhabitants are far more effective in doing the ordinary work of the world than the anomalous brilliant characters who sometimes do good in spite of themselves as it were, and whose eccentricities can oftentimes be traced back to some peculiar bias in their early training, but let the method have a reasonable lapse—continuous nagging for trifling faults is ruinous to a child's disposition; and in this particular matter of getting a child up to breakfast if the rule were to be understood as "early to bed, early to rise," an occasional lapse could be tolerated and met with but a gentle rebuke.—*Christian at Work.*

—The production of maple sugar in Western Massachusetts this season has been very large. One man at Middlefield has produced 8,000 pounds. The aggregate yield of the Town of Chesterfield is estimated at 100,000 pounds, or fifty tons, worth at average rates about \$10,000.

—The Mikado of Japan has determined to become a patron of horse racing.

Avoiding Heat in Summer.

Farm-houses are rarely constructed with a view of convenience in doing work or to comfort during warm weather. They are cold in the winter and warm in summer. They are not supplied with water as they might be at small expense, have no means of drainage, no provision for storing ice, and no method of ventilation except through open doors and windows. The kitchen is generally so located that the fire kept in it will warm the entire house. As three hot meals are expected every day by the persons engaged in field work, and as the amount of washing and ironing to be done is very large, the fire is rarely allowed to die out in the kitchen stove or range. As a consequence, all the rooms in the house are kept hot by night as well as day. The odors of the various dishes being cooked also fill the entire dwelling. People often go from the city to the country during hot weather to find a cool place and get the advantage of pure air. They never find either in an ordinary farm-house. The air is impure not, it is true, from the odors rising from sewers and filthy alleys, but vapor coming from the cow-yards and the kitchen that forms a portion of the dwelling. In most cases the indoor laborers on a farm suffer more from the heat during the summer than the out-of-door laborers do. Various ways have been contrived to protect field laborers from the heat of the summer sun, but no invention has been perfected to ward off the heat of cooking stoves. The kitchens of most farm-houses are places of torment during the season of hot weather. They breed disease and death.

In Mexico and Central America houses have no chimneys. No fires are necessary to warm the dwellings, and the cooking and laundry work are done out of doors. In the Southern States the practice generally prevails of doing the cooking and ironing required for the family in a building at some distance from the dwelling-house, the two buildings being connected by a walk covered by a roof. By this arrangement the dwelling is not heated by the fires required to carry on operations in the kitchen and wash-room. It is also kept free from the odors rising from dishes being cooked and the vapors of the wash-tub. There is some trouble in bringing food from the cooking-house to the dining-room, but it is compensated for by the comfort gained. It would require but little expense to erect a building near the dwelling where all the cooking, washing and ironing could be done during the summer months. The walls could be made of rough boards. If ornamentation is desired it could be done by means of vines. The only expensive portion of the building would be the roof, which, of course, should be tight and provided with pouts for carrying off the water. A building of this kind would add very much to the comfort of every family living in the country. It would relieve the dwelling of a large amount of heat, noxious vapors and noise. It would render the labor of housekeeping easy. The building would be useful at other times of the year, when heavy work, like soap-making and canning fruit, is to be performed. During the cooler months of the year it would be convenient for men to use when conducting mechanical operations.

A large amount of discomfort may be saved during the summer months by the employment of oil-stoves for the preparation of light dishes for the table. The amount of heat produced by these stoves is small, and as the flame comes in immediate contact with the vessels in which water is boiled or dishes cooked, but little heat is diffused in the room. The fire in an oil stove is kindled and extinguished instantly, so that a room is not warmed by the heat produced before or after it is employed for cooking or laundry purposes. The use of ice during the summer saves a large amount of cooking. With an ice-box or refrigerator, meat, pastry, and many other articles prepared for the table may be kept several days in good condition. No person desires to eat food or to drink fluids that are of the same temperature as the surrounding air. To be grateful to the taste they must be considerably warmer or cooler, and it generally matters little in which condition they are. Tea is very insipid when it is the same temperature as the air in summer, but it is grateful to the taste when heated to a hundred degrees or cooled by means of ice. Much labor and discomfort are saved by the use of ice in the preservation and preparation of articles of food and drink. Arbors covered with twining and flowering vines and fitted up with seats do much to render the premises comfortable during the summer. They can be employed for setting the table in, or used when the inmates of the house are engaged in light work or in reading. Men also prefer an arbor to a reading room in the house when they are resting at noon or night.—*Chicago Times.*

—Mrs. Long, who lives between the Mission and San Roque Canyons, says the Santa Barbara (Cal.) Press, while milking her cows one evening not long since, was startled by a scream from her four-year-old daughter. On hastening to the spot she was almost paralyzed to see a large California lion with the child in its mouth, making toward an adjoining thicket. She followed, helplessly screaming, when the brute, taking fright at her cries, dropped the child, and fled to the mountains. Although severely bitten and bruised, the little one was not seriously injured.

—Two brothers named Bowen, plowing in a field near Clarksville, Ark., were instantly killed by lightning. Every bone in their body was broken.

On Shipboard from Gibraltar to Tangier.

I do not believe there is a dirtier little steamer in the world than the one that plies between Gibraltar and Morocco, and I am positive that since Noah's ark no vessel ever put to sea with a more variegated and incongruous lot of passengers than saluted my eyes as I stepped on board the *Sackal* one April afternoon. The instant I set foot on deck I had passed out of Europe. Here were the squalor and the glitter of the Orient—the solemn dusky faces that look out on the reader from the pages of the *Arabian Nights*, and the thousand and one disagreeable odors of which that fascinating chronicle makes no mention. Such a chattering in Spanish, Portuguese, Hebrew and Arabic! Such queer brown-legged figures in pointed hoods and yellow slippers! Though there were first and second class fares, there appeared to be no distinction in the matter of accommodation. From stem to stern the long narrow deck was crowded with Moors, Arabs, negroes, Jews and half-breeds, inextricably mixing themselves up with empty fruit crates, bamboo baskets and bales of merchandise. I speculated as to what would become of all that loose luggage if we were to encounter a blow outside; for this placid-looking summer sea has a way of lashing itself into an ungovernable rage without any perceptible provocation. In case of wet weather there was no shelter except a stiling cabin between-decks, where the thirsty were waited upon by a fezzed man carved out of ebony, who dispensed a thin sour wine from a goatskin, which he carried under his arm like a bagpipe. Not liking the look of the water-tank 'midships, I tested this wine early in the voyage, and came to the conclusion that death by thirst was not without its advantages.

The steamer had slipped her moorings, and was gliding out of the bay before I noticed the movement, so absorbed had I been in studying the costumes and manners of my fellow-voyagers. What a gayly-colored, shabby, picturesque crowd! It was as if some mad masquerade party had burst the bounds of a ball-room and run away to sea. Here was a Tangier merchant in sky-blue gaberdine, with a Persian shawl twisted around his waist, and a black velvet cap set on the back of his head; there a Moor, in snowy turban and feecy caftan, with a jewel-hilted, crescent-bladed knife at his girdle. Tall, slim Arabs, in dingy white robes like those worn by Dominicans, stalked up and down between the heaps of luggage, or leaned over the taffrail in the pitiless sunshine, gazing listlessly into the distance. Others stowed themselves among the freight, and went to sleep. If you seated yourself by chance on what appeared to be a bit of old sail, something stirred protestingly under you, and a bronze visage slowly unshelled itself from the hood of a bur-noose. Everywhere was some strange shape. In the bow of the vessel a fat negro from the Sudan sat cross-legged, counting his money, which he arranged in piles on a rug, the silver on one side and the copper on the other. He looked like a Hindoo idol, with his heavy-lidded orbs and baggy cheeks, the latter sagging almost down to the folds of flesh that marked his triple chin, those rings of the human oak. Near him, but not watching him, and evidently not caring for anything, stood a bare-headed, emaciated old man. His cranium, as polished and yellow as ancient ivory, was covered with a delicate tracery of blue veins, and resembled a geographical globe. At his girdle hung a leather pouch, apparently containing a few coins. Both this person and the negro, as well as the majority of their companions, were returning from a commercial visit to Gibraltar. The chief trade of Tangier and the outlying districts consists in supplying the English garrison and the cities of Cadiz and Lisbon with cattle, fowls, fruits and green stuff. I saw none of these people on the streets of Gibraltar, however. They probably hugged the water-front, where the markets are, and did not venture into the upper town. With their graceful dress they would not have been out of place among the Highland kilts and scarlet coats that light up the *Alameda* of a pleasant afternoon.

There were several Europeans aboard besides myself, if I may pass for a European—a Marseillaise gentleman about to join his wife, the guest of her brother, the French Consul at Tangier; an Italian gentleman traveling for pleasure (not that the other was not); a Dutch painter from Antwerp, with an amazing porcelain pipe; and last, but not least, a Briton, among whose luggage was a circular tin bath-tub, concerning which the Mohammedan mind had swamped itself in vain conjecture. Was it a piece of defensive armor—a shield, for example—or was it a gigantic frying-pan? These Christian dogs, they have such outlandish fashions! No Arab passed it without a curious glance, and at intervals quite a little crowd would gather about it. Now and then a Jew, who knew what the article was, though he had never used it, smiled superciliously.—*T. B. Aldrich, in Harper's Magazine.*

—“That milk is pretty blue, landlord.” “Don't understand it, sir; my cow is well fed, I milk her myself, and I don't put water in the milk.” “Well, the weather has been quite wet, and I reckon the cow needs shingling; that's about it.”—*Austin Siftings.*

—The English papers are lamenting that old hamlets and towns are passing out of existence, and the people rapidly emigrating to the great centers of industry—the cities.

HOME, FARM AND GARDEN.

—There is no forage crop equal to corn.

—Cut-worms are very poor climbers, and much of the damage they do to tomato plants may be avoided by making a compact mound about the plants as large as an inverted tea cup.

—Snow Cake.—Two cups of white sugar, one cup of butter, one cup of sweet milk, four cups of flour, three teaspoonfuls of baking powder and whites of eight eggs; flavor with lemon.

—The great advantage of all the improved breeds of live stock over the common or “scrub” sorts is that they convert a larger proportion of the food they consume into animal products and these usually of a better quality.

—Dr. Harlan reports that some years ago he “raised 500 bushels of potatoes to the acre by planting the sets on plowed and mellow ground, a foot apart, and covering them with straw from twelve to eighteen inches deep.”

—Somebody may not know that if she makes more pie-crust than she cares to use it will keep for a day or two. Sprinkle a little flour over it and set it in a cool place; it will be flaky and crisp without being rich; or you may make tarts of it, to be filled with jelly, jam or lemon custard.

—It is a not uncommon error to imagine that animals that eat but little are the most profitable; so long as an animal is capable of digesting and assimilating it, the greater the amount of food it consumes the more profitable are the returns; for the proportion of the food that goes to supply the waste of tissue and run the animal machinery is less when a large than when a small amount is eaten.

—Cream and Egg Toast.—Cheese crumbs; half pint of milk; two eggs; salt and pepper; butter; toasted bread. Put a cupful of cheese crumbs in the milk, and boil till melted; add the eggs, well-beaten, with butter and seasoning to taste; stir rapidly a few minutes, take from the fire—have ready the bread well toasted, and the slices cut in quarters; pour the cheese on, and serve at once, very hot. This is a nice relish for tea or lunch.

—To keep fresh eggs in good order through the summer, dip them in melted paraffine and place them on the small end in ordinary moist sand in a tight barrel. When the barrel is nearly full, fill up with sand and tie a sheet of packing-paper over the head of the barrel, and keep it in a cool place; or the eggs may be packed in a semi-liquid lime-wash. The paraffine is colorless and tasteless, and can be removed by dipping the eggs in warm water, and is by far the neatest and cleanest method.

—The profits of a small flock of sheep are usually very large, and probably no investment the farmer can make pays so large dividends. It may be claimed that a profit of fifty per cent. can be annually made, and exceptional instances are recorded of the wool and lambs at the end of the year paying the first cost. Sheep are the greatest success upon cheap lands, as it would be difficult to have an acre of \$100 land afford subsistence for sheep enough to make it pay, an argument that would apply as well to other stock, though no other stock pays so complete a double dividend as does a sheep with her fleece and lamb.

—Cream sauce for pudding.—To make a bowlful of cream sauce take a piece of butter the size of a small egg and beat it up with powdered sugar until it is a light cream. Then set it aside. Then into a small tin saucepan put a coupleful of water and add to it a teaspoonful of flour mixed in a little cold water. Cook this thoroughly until it is like thin starch. Then take up the butter and sugar mixture, and while you are beating it energetically let some one pour into it slowly and gradually the hot flour sauce. If the beating is not stopped for a moment the whole sauce will rise and be as sea froth. Flavor with vanilla. This is the best sauce made. Potato flour is sometimes used instead of wheat flour.

—Here is a recipe for coffee cake which is sure to please any one who is fond of coffee “as a beverage.” Take one cup of strong coffee, one cup of molasses, one cup of butter, one cup of sugar, one cup of raisins, and one of currants; four cups of flour, one nutmeg grated, one teaspoonful of cinnamon, half a teaspoonful of soda or saleratus, mix the butter, molasses and sugar together, stir the spices into the coffee, dissolve the soda, stir the flour and flour in by degrees, and lastly put in the fruit. Bake in a slow oven, butter the tin well, and unless you are sure your oven will not bake too hard, you had better put a paper in the bottom of the tin. This cake keeps well. With more fruit it makes a good fruit cake.—*Western Rural.*

A Tragedy of Sparrow Life.

A few days ago a pair of sparrows were seen carrying strings, hay and feathers into a small bird house on an old carpenter shop in the rear of 817 Broad street, Newark. To-day, persons going through the old burying ground, on which the shop fronts, can see the body of the female bird dangling from the box. In weaving her nest she got a piece of string wound about her neck. The other end of the cord she had woven into the nest, and when she fluttered out of the box and attempted to free herself, the cord strangled her. For several days after her death the male bird hovered over the body of his luckless mate with food in his mouth for her. He has not been seen since the storm.—*N. Y. Sun.*