

Talks With the Farmer.

USEFUL SUGGESTIONS ON MANY AGRICULTURAL SUBJECTS.

Only the surface of the earth is cultivated and used for growing crops, and the food of plants is derived according to the depth to which the plow reaches. Nevertheless, there is untold wealth beneath the surface, and which is just as valuable as that nearer the top, if it could be reached and made available for crops. The vast stores of mineral matter in the lower, or subsoil, portions are insoluble, but are capable of being rendered available if not too far down in the earth. If the farmer can bring some of this mineral matter to the surface he will, of course, really add nothing to his land, but he will draw on a deposit which is remaining idle, and which should be put to some use, instead of remaining dormant. The plow cannot reach it, nor can he remove the top soil and grow his crops in the next layer. The wealth beneath his feet is as great as that in the mines, and must be reached in the same manner, or it will avail him nothing. Yet it is not difficult to secure a large portion of it if he will use the proper agents of nature for so doing. Of the principal substances—nitrogen, phosphoric acid and potash—the first is mostly derived from the air, though it exists in the soil also, but the phosphoric acid and potash, being inorganic substances, must come from the soil. When a crop of clover is grown on the land the roots extend to a great depth, exert a chemical effort down in the sub-soil and store mineral matter in the plants. The nitrogen is mostly derived from the air, either in the form of ammonia or nitric acid, or by the use of free nitrogen of the atmosphere, but the mineral matter comes from below. That the clover plant, though highly nitrogenous, does not derive but a portion of its nitrogen from the soil, has been demonstrated by the fact that applications of nitrogenous fertilizers exert but little influence upon such a crop, while mineral fertilizers rapidly promote its growth. The conclusion is reached, therefore, that if mineral matter is lacking in the upper soil, the roots of the plants, which penetrate to a great depth, bring it up from below, and deposit it in the plants. When a crop is plowed under this mineral matter is transferred to the surface.

It is in the storage of nitrogen to the land that clover is so valuable, however, and an application of mineral fertilizers enables it to appropriate a larger proportion of nitrogen by increasing the weight of the stalks and leaves. But, when it is considered that the clover works from the air and from below the surface, its value as a renovator of the soil cannot well be estimated, unless the capacity of the soil itself is understood. Clover is not alone a source for obtaining such results, as nearly all plants can be of service to some extent, but clover is considered superior to all others. The farmer, while buying fertilizers and applying manures, should also use the natural agents at his command for drawing upon the air and the lower store houses down below the soil, and thus add fertility to his farm and increase his profits.

Early Spring Work.

When applying manure, the kind of soil upon which it is spread should be considered. Some soils require an application of mineral fertilizer, being deficient in some particular form of plant food which may not be in abundance in the manure. For that reason, farmers who understand how to judiciously select fertilizers will be able to avoid waste of plant food by the use of the proper ingredients required for their soils, and every farmer should be familiar with the details pertaining to the needs of his soil.

March and April are excellent months for the sows to farrow. If the young pigs are kept in a warm place, so as not to allow them to be chilled, they will grow very rapidly by the time they are weaned, and have warm weather before them. The spring pigs that are carefully attended to, so as to start off well, will be nearly as large at the end of the year as the pigs that are farrowed in the fall.

Seed should be covered. It is true that clover seed, sown on the snow and allowed to remain on the surface of the ground, grows and makes a good stand sometimes, but it is safe to claim that the large portion of the seed never germinates and is lost. If grass seed is to be sown on lawns the surface should be scratched with a harrow, seeded and rolled.

The wheat field should be rolled after a heavy frost, so as to press the plants into the soil if they have been thrown up. Where a field is somewhat damp from insufficient drainage, and heavy frosts occur, the plants are liable to be thrown up until their roots are exposed. The roller should be put on the field as soon as the condition of the ground will permit.

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MISCELLANEOUS.

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Wasn't Taking Chances.

WHY THE OLD COLORED MAN PROPOSED TO LEAVE THE PLANTATION.

While the Colonel and I were enjoying our cigars after dinner an old colored man approached, with his hat in his hand, and, on being asked what was wanted, he replied:

"Kurnel Taylor, I'ze gwine to quit de plantashun an' go to town."

"Anything wrong, Moses?" asked the Colouel.

"Not zactly wrong, kurnel, but—" "Speak right up, Moses. Don't I pay you fair wages?"

"Yes, sah."

"Don't you have plenty to eat?" "Yes, sah."

"Haven't you got a good cornhusk bed to sleep on?" "Yes, sah."

"And I don't work you too hard?" "No, sah."

"Then what's the trouble?" "Waal, kurnel, you has dun gone an' set a spring gun in de meathouse."

"Yes, but I must keep my bacon from being stolen, you know. That spring gun won't hurt you."

"Yo's got two acres of watermillions, an' yo's gwine to put poison into all de big melons as fast as dey git ripe."

"I may put jalap in, Moses, to make the thieves sick. If I didn't do something, every melon would walk off, you know."

"An' dey say, Kurnel Taylor, dat yo' am gwine to count the pigs an' chickens an' ducks an' geese twice a day arter this," continued the old man.

"Yes, I may do that, as some of them are apt to wander away."

"An' dey tells me dat de dawgs am gwine to be turned loose to guard de yams an' sweet co'n at night, an' a line of b'artraps set all about de cotton gin an' de milk house."

"Perhaps so, Moses, but how can that affect you?"

"How it gwine to affect me? I can't zactly splain to yo', kurnel, how de pomposity of all sich prejudice am gwine to git me shot by dat gun, etched in one of dem traps or made sick on one of dem millyons; but, when I lay down at night an' think it all ober, my variegated opinion am to de affeck dat de sooner I git fo'teen miles from dis plantashun de quicker I kin draw a long breff without jumpin' two feet an' feelin' dat suthin has bit!"—*Pittsburg Post.*

Diagnosis by Telephone.

The beneficent uses of the telephone are not as yet fully understood. The other night young Snythe awoke about 3 a. m. with an excruciating pain in his stomach. The more he squirmed the worse he grew. Finally the terrible thought flashed upon him that he had been poisoned. In a moment he dashed out of bed, down stairs to the telephone, and demanded to be switched on to his physician's number without delay.

"For Heaven's sake, doctor, come at once! I'm poisoned!"

The M. D., who had also crawled out of bed to answer the summons, growled back, "What makes you think so?"

"Frightful pain—awful cramps—inside's on fire—hurry up, or I'm a dead man!"

"Humph! Does—er—does your stomach make any noise?"

"Yes; kinder growls—must be arsenic, or something."

"Growls, eh? Just put the 'phone against the pit of your stomach. Ah! I thought so—you've been to the French hospital fete this evening, haven't you?"

"Yes, sir."

"Exactly. You're suffering from a general fermentation of lemonade, crab salad, fruit cake, pickled oysters, and Roman punch. You're all right. Just take a little peppermint and ginger, then go to bed, and grin it through."—*Sun Francisco Examiner.*

Hardly to be Expected.

The tramp had solicited a contribution from a well-dressed man on the street and had received a nickel. He looked at it askance and mumbled a very poor "Thank you, sir."

"What's the matter with you?" inquired the donor.

"Nothink much, sir."

"Well, what are you mumbling about? Didn't I give you some money?"

"Yes, sir; a nickel."

"You ought to be thankful for it, then."

"Oh, I am," said the tramp, sarcastically; "but when a man with a 25-cent thirst upon him runs up ag'in a nickel you don't expect him to waller in enthusiasm, do you?"

Smart—Whatever induced your uncle to marry the widow of a man who was hanged?

Simpson—He has been married to widows before, and said he was tired of having the virtues of former husbands flung in his face.—*Sheffield Telegraph.*