

Sheep on the Farm.

THEY ARE EXCELLENT FERTILIZERS OF THE SOIL.

It seems to me there are but few evils which can overtake a man without means greater than that of being doomed to till a piece of land from which the elements of fertility are all or nearly all gone. That is what some of the young men are coming to, unless the land robbing system so prevalent here is stopped. It should be the great concern of every farmer to maintain the fertility of the soil. He cannot do so under existing conditions without keeping live stock upon his farm, and sheep are the most serviceable in maintaining fertility. The droppings from sheep are in an excellent condition to fertilize. They are distributed somewhat evenly over the land, as sheep are incessant rovers while engaged in pasturing. And as they move to and fro they not only distribute droppings evenly, but they tread much of the same into the ground. Now we know that the higher ground is invariably more in need of enrichment than that which is lower. More of the droppings is left upon those higher lands than upon those which are lower, and as a result such distribution tends to secure more uniformity in the crops when the lands are again tilled.

Fertility can be accumulated on land when it is pastured by sheep. Suppose, for instance, that a crop of rye is growing upon the field, and that the rye is pastured with sheep. That field is richer near the surface after the pasturing than it was before the rye was sown, for the deep roots of the rye have brought up plant food from the subsoil.

This food the rye has turned into vegetation above the surface of the ground by the growth which it has produced, and the sheep have turned the vegetation into fertility, which has been deposited near the surface of the ground. Now, suppose after the rye has been eaten off that a crop of corn is made to follow and is sown broadcast, or suppose that a crop of millet or rape is grown after the rye, and that this crop, whatever it may be, is again pastured, a second application of fertility has been made. Fertility has been brought up from the subsoil and deposited near the surface. If the crop eaten off is clover the gain in fertility is still greater, for clover gathers some of its fertility from the air, and what is thus gathered is stored in the soil.

Sheep remain on pasture much of the year. They only require to be confined during the season when the snow covers the ground, consequently they are distributing fertility during all the season while they are not confined to the yards. The droppings of horses, cattle and swine have to be drawn to a far greater extent than those of sheep, and this means that the handling of these involves much more labor relatively. Again, when the droppings of horses and cattle are deposited in the pastures they fall in heaps, and do not enrich the land as do the droppings of sheep. When sheep are confined the droppings may easily be saved and utilized in fine form. When the pens and yards are kept well littered, as they ought to be, the solids and liquids are both saved. The trampling of the sheep prevents loss from over quick fermentation of the manure. But one danger must be carefully guarded against. The manure is somewhat lacking in moisture, and there is in consequence some danger from fire-fang, more especially with that part of the manure which is under cover. Of course fire-fang would soon destroy its value. It is well, therefore, to draw and apply it at intervals to avoid this danger.

Nothing has been said about the rich character of the sheep manure. It is a fact that it is rich in all the essential elements of plant food, more so than almost any kind of manure made upon the farm. Of course its richness will vary with the kind of food given and with the age of the animal, but in any case it is rich. It has been observed by practical men that the keeping of sheep and the growing of good crops go together. So invariably is this the rule that it cannot be accidental. And in estimating the profits from sheep industry this factor should be taken into account. I have met with men who tell me that since they have gone into keeping sheep they are able to reap 25 per cent. more from their grain fields than their neighbors can get, who till their lands with equal care.

Every farmer should keep a book in which to paste agricultural scraps. Every one in reading a paper will see a number of things which he will wish to remember. He will see suggestions, the value of which he will want to be governed by in future operations, and yet, after reading he will throw it down and will probably never see it again. In such a case all the valuable articles will be lost. To prevent such a loss every reader should clip from the paper such articles as he desires to preserve, and paste them in a scrap book. At the end of the year it will be interesting and valuable,

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A Humorist's Earth.

ONE OF THE LATE BILL NYE'S HUMOROUSLY SCIENTIFIC ARTICLES.

The earth is that body in the solar system which most of my readers now reside upon, and which some of them, I regret to say, modestly desire to own and control, forgetting that the earth if the Lord's, and the fullness thereof. Some men do not care who owns the earth, so long as they get the fullness. The earth is 500,000,000 years of age, according to Prof. Proctor, but she doesn't look it to me. The Duke of Argyll maintains that she is 10,000,000 years old last August, but what does an ordinary duke know about these things? So far as I am concerned I will put Proctor's memory against that of any low priced duke that I have ever seen.

Newton claimed that the earth would gradually dry up and become porous, and that water would at last become a curiosity. Many believe this and are rapidly preparing their systems, by a rigid course of treatment, so that they can live for years without the use of water internally or externally. Other scientists who have sat up nights to monkey with the solar system, and thereby shattered their nervous systems, claim that the earth is getting top-heavy at the north pole, and that one of these days while we are thinking of something else, the great weight of accumulated ice, snow and the vast accumulation of second-hand arctic relief expeditions, will jerk the earth out of its present position with so much spontaneity, and in such an extremely forthwith manner, that many people will be permanently strabismussed and much bric a brac will be for sale at a great sacrifice. This may or may not be true. I have not been up in the arctic regions to investigate its truth or falsity, though there seems to be a growing sentiment throughout the country in favor of my going. A great many people during the past year have written me and given me their consent. If I could take about twenty good, picked men and go up there for the summer instead of bringing back twenty picked men I wouldn't mind the trip, and I feel that we really ought to have a larger colony on ice in that region than we now have.

The earth is composed of land and water. Some of the water has large chunks of ice in it. The earth revolves around its own axle once in twenty-four hours, though it seems to revolve faster than that and to wobble a good deal during the holidays. Nothing tickles the earth more than to confuse a man when he is coming home late at night, and then to rise up suddenly and hit him in the back with a town lot. People who think there is no fun or relaxation among the heavenly bodies certainly have not studied their habits. Even the moon is a humorist. A friend of mine who was returning late at night from a regular meeting of the Society for the amelioration of the Hot Scotch, said that the earth rose up suddenly in front of him and hit him with a right of way, and as he was about to rise up again he was stunned by a terrific blow between the shoulder blades with an old land grant that he thought had lapsed years ago. When he staggered to his feet he found that the moon, in order to add to his confusion, had gone down in front of him and risen again behind him, with her thumb to her nose. So I say, without fear of successful contradiction, that if you do not think that planets and orbs and one thing and another have fun on the quiet you are grossly ignorant of their habits.

A Nice Sort of a Pa.

There is a saloon-keeper in Tennessee who is something of a humorist. His entire family was in court the other day, and one of his daughters was a witness against her father. She told this mildly interesting story:

"Pa was sitting in his saloon, feeling lonely. He went into the barn, and putting a halter on his horse, brought him into the house, saying he wanted the animal to eat supper with him. Pa made me set a plate for the horse. Then he took hold of the horse's front legs and lifted them up on the table. We all sat down to supper and the horse began to eat. Pa picked up a mug of beer and began to laugh and throw both hands in the air. The mug hit the horse on the nose. The beast pulled his feet down, dragging the tablecloth and upsetting the table. The horse backed up and sat squarely on a red-hot stove. This burned his tail so the animal kicked the stove over and ran out of the door. I screamed, and pa threw a lamp at me. The house came near catching fire, and a policeman came in. Pa has been arrested 108 times."—Atlanta Constitution.

Dangerous Dick.—Ye to! me yer father kept a clothin' store before he died, an' now I find out that he was hung fer hoss stealing.

Arizona Abe (indignantly)—I never said he kept a clothin' store; I said he was in the clothes line when he died. That's what they hung him with.