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RURAL TOPICS

LIVE STOCK IMPROVEMENTS.

It is a noticeable fact at all the great stock yards of the country that the quality offered in the market is steadily improving. In the past dozen or more years this fact has been very noticeable by all the stock yard buyers. The greatest improvement has appeared in the beef cattle and mutton sheep from the western and southern ranches. The great number of pure bred sires sent to these sections in the past 20 years has had a most marked influence in this betterment of quality now coming to the stock yards and packers. The grading up is also going on in the central agricultural states. It has come to be well known that good grade animals sell in the markets at an average of two dollars on the hundred higher than the common, and all observation has taught live stock feeders that the same amount of feed only is required to finish both, while the common ones feed fall much below in weight as well as quality that of the high grades. The International State and county fairs and live stock shows have had a marked influence for good in the direction of the use of better blood in breeding. The agricultural colleges and experiment stations have also had an excellent influence in this direction, and last but not least, the agricultural press has carried the gospel of better breeding to every section of the country, by the publication of the station reports and the numerous examples of noted breeders and feeders as well as the facts from the markets, and the crucial tests at the butcher's block giving the per cent of the high priced meat, and no odds how dull some people may be, they wear their way into conscious apprehension of the facts and they go to improving their herds and flocks. "Iron sharpeneth iron, so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend," and so that is the way the world gets on to better things.—Indiana Farmer.

LOCUSTS AND CATALPAS.
Experience has taught me that trees will do better when cultivated than when not cultivated. They do not do well in sod, and they ought not to be crowded so closely that each tree cannot have a fair chance, but as to exactly how much space each tree should have there is quite a difference in opinion, however. I have had best success with trees that had about 75 square feet of space, as this gives them enough room to develop into fair-sized posts and by the time they begin to be crowded they can be thinned out and they will be ready for use. This harvest of posts should be begun when they are from seven to ten years old, as the trees will be practically the same size. It has been the practice quite general among farmers who were growing posts to plant the trees about equal distance apart each way, 6x6 or 7x7 feet, as a matter of convenience, and in order to keep up cultivation as long as possible, I would advise planting them at least 8x8 feet, then the cultivation can be kept up for several years, which, I have learned, will greatly assist them in making a quick growth. The best growth depends upon the soil, however, and other matters also. The locust grows much faster the first year in poor soil than the catalpa does, but the catalpa will soon overtake it. The locust would be very profitable for growing posts if it were not affected by the borers, but they must be watched or they will ruin them. The catalpa needs comparatively rich soil, and yet I have had them do very well in soils that were not quite so rich; but in general, I would advise planting of catalpa in fairly rich soil, and the locust on the poorer soils, as my experience has been that locust will grow and thrive better on thin land than the catalpa.—R. B. Rushing in the Indiana Farmer.

THE SHEEP AS A CIVILIZER.
A speaker at a farmers' meeting eulogized the little animal with the golden horn in the following interesting strain:

"Sheep are always the advance guard to attack new and undeveloped territory. The first sheep and the first Negro slaves that placed foot on what is now the United States of America, were landed from the same fleet at St. Augustine, September 8, 1565, 330 years ago. From that day to this the sheep has been the most universal live agent of the settlers in subduing the country and maintaining its productiveness; and whenever they have neglected them, sterility exists as a monument to their folly."—Weekly Witness.

ONE ADVANTAGE OF FALL CALVES.
One advantage of having calves come in the Fall is that during this season of the year there is usually more time on the farm to attend to the cattle, calves are more economically raised, since by the time the Spring grass shoots up they are ready for it, and are in good condition the next winter to begin the duties of maternity.—Weekly Witness.

SEPARATE THE EWES.
Never allow a ewe to run with the flock. When this is permitted and twins are born, the first born wanders away and becomes mixed with the flock before the mother has a chance to own it, and the chances are that later she will refuse to have anything to do with it.—Farmers Home Journal.

DEFY THE COMBINE.
The man who has two or three good cows and a bunch of Plymouth Rocks can defy the meat combine or any other combine. The cow and the hen have paid for more luxuries for farm homes than the corn crops, and at the same time taken care of the grocery bills.—Indiana Farmer.

Russia's Tea Drinkers.
Russia is China's best customer for her tea, buying yearly about five pounds of it to this country's one; but this country buys about four pounds to the United Kingdom's three. China shipped 30,126,432 pounds of tea to the United States last year, and 3,806,400 pounds to the Philippines. "Russia takes nearly all her purchases in the form of brick tea and tea-tablets," notes Ernest Vollmer, American counsel at Tsingtau: "The United States does not take an ounce of this class of goods, but confines its purchases to black and green teas in bulk."

Strength of Socialists.
The Socialist party polled almost as large a popular vote in 1904 as the other three minor parties combined. In 1900 the Prohibitionists had distanced all the other trailing organizations, polling 209,062 votes to 92,142 for the Socialists, 50,000 for the Populists and 33,375 for the Socialist Laborites. But in 1904 the Socialist ticket got 482,159 votes to 250,550 for the Prohibition, 113,259 for the Populist and 33,622 for the Socialist Labor.—New York Tribune.

FARM NOTES.
If a hen lays an egg a week the year through, it will just pay for her feed and every extra egg will yield a profit.
If you want to get a good catch of clover next season, give the fields

which are to be sown, a good coating of manure.

If you sin against your stock, be sure your sin will find you out in reduced profits.

No sensible man would take chances on breeding poor, starved animals, nor should he think of using immature and shrunken grain for seed.

The hog pasture should be gotten in better shape by sowing grass over badly rooted places, and the fence should be mended so that the young pigs do not break out.

A pumpkin cut in halves and placed before the fowls will soon be nothing but rind. A good way is to stick them on nails in the walls of the house, as the fowls will get desirable exercise in jumping a few inches to reach them.

Mite traps are being used successfully by some. They are so arranged that when the mites seek seclusion after their nightly feast they are trapped.

The team should be fed the heaviest meal in the evening, for they have more time then to enjoy it.

There is enough back-breaking work to do without using the scoop shovel to unload grain. Put in a portable dump elevator. The team will do the rest, and it will take a few minutes to crib a big load of corn.

TO RID POULTRY-HOUSES OF LICE.
Turn out the fowls some days and close all the cracks in the house except the door. Take a kettle of live coals, and pace on the ground in the centre of the house, but if there is a wood floor, lay a flat stone under the kettle. Throw a half pound or a pound of sulphur on the coals, and shut the door. If the house is left closed for a few hours it is safe to conclude that no lice or mites will be found therein after the operation. The sulphur cure is the best method of riding poultry houses of pests, but if the house is not tight it will not prove satisfactory. Clean the house as well as can be done, mix whitewash with fresh lime, mix in a liberal supply of sulphur, after which throw sulphur into all the cracks. Apply kerosene oil to all the roosts, and burn off the outer surface. Air the house thoroughly.—Weekly Witness.

"What part of the chicken will you have, Mr. Hallroom?" "Some of the meat, please."—Life.

Patience—That Miss Bellow is going to slug Patrice—Oh, is she? What shall we talk about?—The Tatler.

Prospective Country Boarder—Is the water you have here healthy? Landlady—Yes, sir. We use only well water.—Boston Transcript.

Mrs. Heupack—You were talking in your sleep last night, Henry. Mr. Heupack—I beg your pardon, my dear, for having interrupted you.—Stray Stories.

Silliness—What do you consider is the proper time for a man to marry? Cynicus—Oh, I suppose when he hasn't anything else to worry him.—Philadelphia Record.

Departing Guest—We've had a simply delightful time! Hostess—I'm so glad. At the same time I regret that the storm kept all our best people away.—Brooklyn Life.

Mrs. Bacon—This paper says that a man's hair turns gray about five years earlier than a woman's. Mr. Bacon—That is because a man wears his hair all the time.—Yonkers Statesman.

Elderly Uncle—Spent your entire patrimony, have you, Archibald? Gone through everything? Sons-in-law—Yes, uncle, everything, but the bankruptcy court.—Chicago Tribune.

Faddist Visitor—Are you allowed in this prison any exercise beneficial for your health? Convict—Oh, yes, ma'am. By advice of my counsel I have been skipping the rope.—Baltimore American.

"Do you play any instrument, Mr. Jump?" "Yes, I'm a cornetist." "And your sister?" "She's a pianist." "Does your mother play?" "She's a zitherist." "And your father?" "He's a postmist."—

"If I were you," said the old bachelor to the bachelorette, "I'd either run or know why." "Well," was the reply, "as I already know why, I suppose that's half the battle."—Atlanta Constitution.

Dawson—The facial features plainly indicate character and disposition. In selecting your wife were you governed by her chin? Spaulow—No; but I have been ever since we were married.—Boston Globe.

"Have you," asked the Judge of a recently convicted man, "anything to offer the court before sentence is passed?" "No, your honor," replied the prisoner, "my lawyer took my last cent."—The Reporter.

Niece—Uncle, they say that there are more marriages of blondes than of brunettes. Why is it, I wonder? Uncle Singleton (a confirmed bachelor)—H'm! Naturally, the light-headed ones go first.—The Mirror.

Country Editor (out West)—This has been a lucky day for me. Faithful Wife—Has some one been in to pay a subscription? Editor—Well, no, wasn't as lucky as that; but I was shot at and missed.—New York Week.

"And do you like newspaper men?" he asked the little maid in a most condescending tone of voice. "I don't know," she replied, artlessly; "the only one I know is the one who brings our paper every morning."—Lippincott's Magazine.

Farmer Barker—I want to get a present to take home to my wife on the farm. Elegant Clerk—How would she like a pie knife? Farmer Barker—Good land, young man! Ain't you never been told you mustn't cut pie with no knife?—New York Times.

The little girl was very fond of pleasant days, and at the close of a heavy rainstorm petitioned in her prayer for fine weather; when the next morning the sun shone bright and clear she became jubilant, and told her prayer to her grandmother, who said: "Well, dear, why can't you pray tonight that it may be warmer to-morrow so that grandma's rheumatism will be better?" "All right, I will," was the quick response; and that night as she knelt she said: "O Lord, please make it hot for grandma."—

Grubb—I hear your last novel has already appeared in its sixth edition. How did you manage to become so phenomenally popular? Scrubb—Very simple. I put a "personal" in the papers saying that I was looking for a wife who is something like the heroine of my novel. Within two days the first edition was sold out.—Tit-Bits.

"Why, that's a regular little printing press, isn't it?" remarked the visitor. "Yes," replied Mrs. Poppley, "Willie's uncle gave it to him on his birthday." "What a complete little thing! It's self-inking, isn't it?" "I don't know; but Willie is."

"Now, Pat, would you sooner lose your money or your life?" "Why, no, I'd lose my money; I'd never lose my life for me old age."

The University Stylist.
This editorial from the weekly paper of Missouri University shows what higher education does for lucid writers: "Sometimes during the year there arise certain occasions whose circumstances are peculiar in that all of them force the onlooker to the same conclusion. That is, a person is not enabled to consider the various phases of such questions, and then announce it as his belief that the matter has two sides, and that as such is the case he intends keeping the affair off his mind as much as possible. On the contrary, this type of situation can allow of but one option, for the reason that every motive exists for adopting one course as right, and decrying the other as wrong."

Both Alike.
"How do you like this weather?" "Most disagreeable."
"And how's your husband?"
"Much the same, thanks."—Milwaukee Sentinel.



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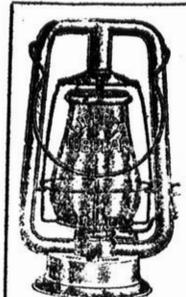
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One of the queer things about a woman's sense of humor is that she is apt to take herself seriously. Morality is broader than it used to be, but human nature hasn't spread any.