AGRICULTURAL

FALL CARE OF MEADOWS.

The most important crop in this country is the grass crop, and this is divided into pastures and meadows. It is also the most neglected and abused crop, writes C. P. Goodrich. This is especially true of meadows. They are abused in early spring and they are abused in the fall and early winter to such an extent that on many farms the yield of hay is reduced one-half from what it would have been had the meadows been properly cared for. A Timothy meadow, if well set with grass, should and would produce good crops of hay for several successive years—four or five at least—if it is properly cared for. As all farmers know, there is at the root of each stalk of Timothy a small bulb something in appearance like a diminutive onion. After the hay is cut other little bulbs form beside the old ones which die. These new bulbs are the ones from which the next year's crop of hay will grow. There is a very light aftermath from Timothy and this grows up from these new roots on bulbs as they are forming and growing, and they are close to the surface of the ground. It is important that this aftermath and root development should be allowed to proceed to the fullest extent possible in the fall, for without a good root development in the fall there cannot be a good crop. Keeping down the growth of aftermath kept cropped or clipped off close in the fall, the root growth will be light and the consequences as stated. The worst of consequences follow pasturing with stock in the fall, for in addition to keeping down the growth of aftermath the roots or bulbs are injured by the tramping of the stock. This pasturing of meadows in the fall, which is quite a common practice, is most wasteful and ruinous. For the sake of a few days' or perhaps weeks' pasturing in the fall the farmer, maybe unknowingly, sacrifices half of his next year's hay crop, and instead of getting two tons of hay to the acre as he ought to he gets scarcely one ton, and then complains that his meadows "run out so quick."

Another fact is quite often lost sight of. A crop of hay, especially Timothy hay, is exhaustive to the soil to a greater or less extent. Most grasses, we do not include clover in this, draw their nourishment from near the surface of the ground, and unless something is done to replace what is taken away the inevitable result will be a diminished crop each year. The meadow needs an occasional dressing of manure as much as any other part of the farm. Fall is the time to haul out the manure that has accumulated about the yards during the summer, and it should be spread evenly over the meadows. It will be a good winter protection to the roots of the grass, and the rains of winter and spring will wash out the fertility of the manure and deposit it in the surface soil just where the grass roots want it to feed on. There is no place where we can put manure where it will bring as large a return as on grass land. We not only largely increase the crop of grass, but correspondingly increase the root growth so that when the sod is plowed up for another crop there is a larger amount of humus made from the decayed roots in the soil. We have been in the habit of hauling more manure on the grass lands than on any other part of the farm. We haul it from in fall, in winter, in fact, at any time except in early spring when the ground is soft and in summer when the crop of hay is growing. That which is hauled out in the late fall and winter is harrowed over early in the spring with a fine-tooth harrow and made fine and mixed with the surface soil to some extent. What we have said in regard to Timothy is equally applicable to meadows of other kinds of cultivated grasses. It will also apply to clover if for any reason it becomes necessary to keep it over the second winter, though as a rule we do not approve of trying to keep clover but one season. Then, of course, it can be pastured in the fall after the mowed crop has been taken off.

THE MOLTING SEASON.

To read the articles of some writers on the above subject, one could very readily form the impression that the molting season was an exceedingly critical period in a fowl's life. Perhaps to a certain extent it is, says a writer in Country Gentleman, but the writer questions if it is as serious as we are sometimes led to suppose. The poultryman is told that he must be on hand with "condition powders," a "warm mash" once or twice a day, "green ground bone" "bone meal" and "deodorized blood meal," and a variety of other "stimulators." All this may be necessary to the fancier who confines his stock the year round; but to the average farmer it is sometimes a little confusing, to say the least. Of the different combinations mentioned above, and others which can be considered under the same head, the writer would select one, viz., green ground bone not because it is necessary, but it is useful not only during molting, but any other season of the year. Green ground bone is excellent for laying or molting hen, the fatting fowl or the growing chick. At the time of year when molting begins, the hatching season is practically over; hence as the breeding yards are of no more use, they can be very readily broken up. If the course is followed and the males and females are separated less trouble will be experienced, and in the end it will prove the best for both sexes. Some poultrymen follow the principle of keeping their yards mated the year round. Such a course requires much extra care and is far more exhaustive to the stock.

During the early part of July, having set all the eggs we cared to, we broke up all of our yards, shutting up the males which we desired to retain and disposing of the others, and gave the hens free range over the farm, with the exception of a few valuable ones which we retained in a yard by themselves. This not only reduces the labor in caring for them to about a quarter, but saves feed and gives more room and time to attend to the growing youngsters. For the past year or two, we have made it a practice to sow a small patch of buckwheat or millet somewhere near the farm buildings, especially for the poultry to harvest for themselves. It is not only a money and labor-saver on our part, but gives the poultry something to do at all hours of the day, thereby serving to retain them from crops more valuable. Last season we had a small plat of millet at some distance from the barn. Just after it was cut, heavy rains came on and it was caught in the swath. The ground being level and rather low, we were never able to haul it, or at any rate not before it was seriously damaged. The writer had a flock of about thirty-five turkeys that got what the bad weather would not allow us to get. The writer never had a flock fatten better or easier. Had the domestic fowls been able to reach it, our returns would have been even better.

HOW TO KEEP THE CHURN.

It is particularly trying during extremely hot weather to keep a wooden churn, which is used not more than twice a week, from shrinking somewhat about the corners, where the staves which compose the sides are joined to the bottom. Of course the churn may be left in the cellar, but that means many a weary tug up and down on churning days unless the churning is done there. In the latter case mold is apt to collect upon any wooden utensil in an ordinary cellar. To keep water in the churn requires constant care lest it be forgotten, for it should be changed every day. A better way is to hook the churn to the standard, bottom side up, where a barrel churn is used, and pour water around the inside of the chime, covering the outside of the churn bottom, which will be sufficient to keep the wood from shrinking by reason of becoming too dry.

Origin of Table Utensils.

The use of the fork dates back only to the seventeenth century. The old Greeks, although their civilization was much advanced, ate with their fingers, as gracefully as possible. Plutarch mentions the rules to be followed when eating with the fingers, and this is one of the most interesting passages in his description of antique customs. In the middle ages people still ate with their fingers. It is true enough that ablutions took place before and after a meal, but, still, that custom was anything but clean. Each of the guests at a dinner was first offered a basin and a pitcher of water, and it was bad form to help one's self to any of the viands before having carefully washed hands and face.

Goldsmiths finally invented forks but at first they were objects of luxury, and were used only at times when they might just as well have been done without. The first mention of forks is made in a document dated 1300, which says that Pierre Gaveston, the favorite of Edward II., possessed three "furchestes," forks, for eating pears, cheese and sandwiches. It was more than 300 years later before forks were used for fish and meat.

About the second decade of the seventeenth century a picture of the Royal Prince of France shows that he carried a case containing a knife, a spoon and what looks very much like a fork. Glasses and drinking cups were first made of wood or tin. In the fifteenth century Venice manufactured the wonderful glassware which replaced on the table of the "Seigneurs" the heavy oaken or metal cups formerly used. Egg cups were not known previous to the fifteenth century, and even in the sixteenth century they were rather scarce and had no distinct name. They were described as "an article in which to place and hold an egg," or "a silver thing to place an egg in."

Salt cellars also date from the fifteenth century. Goldsmiths excelled in making artistic salt cellars, and the one modeled for King Francis I. of France by Benvenuto Cellini was a wonderful work of art. People in general did not know the use of salt cellars and even among wealthy families it was the custom to break a piece of bread and to place the salt for each individual upon the bread.

THE AMEER OF AFGHANISTAN.

An Autocratic Ruler Who Is Governed by the Will of His People.

The ameer of Afghanistan, who was at first suspected of complicity with the Indian border troubles, but whose innocence is now well established is one of the most autocratic monarchs in the world. Not the czar of Russia nor the sultan of Turkey is more absolute in authority. Yet he is, or makes himself curiously subject to the will of the people in some respects. A few years ago he greatly desired to visit England and other European countries, and the British government was anxious that he should do so. But he did not venture to do so without the consent of his people. So he took a plebiscitum on the subject. He sent a proclamation to every village in his empire telling what he wanted to do, and explaining the advantages that would accrue to him and to the empire from such a tour, and asking the people to take a vote on the subject and let him know the result. So the question was submitted to universal suffrage. After a few weeks the returns were all in and were counted, and it was found that a considerable majority of the people were opposed to his leaving the country. He was disappointed, but acquiesced in the will of the people and stayed at home, sending his second son to England in his place.

THE HOME

THE LINEN CLOSET.

Many housewives view with pride their well-filled linen chests and closets. Towels, bed and table linen form quite an important item among the general household supplies, and considerable care and attention is required to keep it all in neat order. A closet or chest of drawers devoted especially to the linen is a necessity, if everything is to be nicely kept, and great care needs to be taken to close it against flies and dust. The smooth piles of tablecloths, napkins, sheets, pillow cases, towels, and possibly soft fleecy blankets, and new quilts, all clean and sweet smelling, exhibit care and thrift on the part of the housewife.

The nicest linen and that which needs the most careful selection is for the table. Table cloths should be long enough to reach at least fourteen inches over each end of the table. Handsome cloths with a dozen napkins to match come in lengths of from two yards to two and one-half and longer. Some housekeepers prefer to buy the cloths by the yard, but then one cannot always procure napkins to match. The best table linen should be hemmed by hand, and the particular woman does the same with all her linen and towels which need it.

The ravellings of new linen, as that from napkins, should be carefully saved and used for darning when the cloths show signs of wear. If mending is attended to just as soon as the tiniest hole shows, or a place wears thin, it will be found that the article wears much longer. Cotton thread should never be used in mending linen. A needle with a long eye will receive the linen ravellings without trouble, and is far better than the ordinary small-eyed needle. In order to bring out the beauty in linen it should be ironed quite damp on the right side with a hot iron. And to secure that desired stiffness the iron should be run over it until the linen is perfectly dry. Fold the tablecloths down the center lengthwise once, then press and roll. Do not fold, for that will crease them. Fold napkins in thirds, so that the center of the napkin will be the center of the square when folded. A well ironed tablecloth will look fresh much longer than one poorly done.

The housewife who wishes to be careful of the tablecloths has a goodly supply of carving and tray cloths. Some of these may be very plain, simply hem-stitched pieces of linen, and others may be handsomely embroidered, just as suits the fancy.

A goodly supply of nice bed linen is necessary in the well-regulated household. The very least that one can get along with for each bed are three sheets and four pillow slips. This allows of but one clean sheet and clean pillow slips once a week. In case of sickness this would be wholly inadequate. The careful housewife adds to her store of linen every year, and thus always keeps on hand a sufficient supply. Sheets and pillow cases are nicest if made of the regular sheeting. For sheets that two and one-half yards wide is best. The sheets should measure when hemmed, at least two and one-half yards long, otherwise they cannot be tucked snugly under the ends of the mattress. Sheeting which is from one and three-quarters to two yards wide is best for pillow slips. Two thirds of a yard is enough for a pillow of ordinary size. A pillow slip should be at least five inches longer than the pillow, and a hem from two to four inches is generally turned in.

Of towels, one cannot have too many. Little, flimsy towels are poor economy, even if they are cheaper at first cost. The big, soft, Turkish bath towels are excellent. They wear well and are not hard to launder. Then there are several weaves of course a linen towelling which makes excellent towels. Cut into lengths of one and one-half yards, and hemmed, they are very satisfactory. For nice, one should lay in a supply of damask towels. These are fine, soft and handsome, and every housekeeper likes to have some of these in her linen store. Towels when bought by the dozen, come cheaper, so it is generally economy to buy them that way.

DISH WASHING.

It is a great help to the mother to have the dish washing taken off her hands. If she has young daughters they should be taught to do this light and simple duty, and do it well. Boys, too, are frequently taught to help their mothers, and the mother who follows such a course is wise indeed. Where a boy has sisters he no doubt, resents doing what he terms "girls' work," yet there are a number of duties he should be held responsible for such as chopping the kindling wood, and always keeping the wood-box full, keeping the dooryard in order, etc. All this will spare hard work for the mother. The child who is taught implicit obedience, not through fear, but through firmness, will do willingly what it is told. The mother who must coax or threaten her child into doing her bidding has no one but herself to blame for such a state of affairs. Many a mother would rather do everything herself than ask help from her children, simply because they make such a fuss about doing anything.

It is a noticeable fact that most girls "hate" to wash dishes, and those who enjoy it usually have the best method of doing their work. It is no wonder that washing dishes, as it frequently done is disagreeable. A greasy cloth, small pan, insufficient hot water, etc., certainly make hard work of it. The way to get a little girl to enjoy dish washing is to provide plenty of hot, soapy water and a large pan. The cloth should be white sweet smelling and soft. The towels should be perfectly clean, and plenty of them provided. When the dishes are cleared from the dining table they should be scraped with a knife and piled neatly and convenient to the dish pan. Then if they are washed in proper order in hot water before wiping the work becomes very simple. The child must be taught to do even this simple work right. First the glassware, then the silver, following with the china, is the order practiced. When once learned, such a lesson is never forgotten, and it certainly is best for all concerned to know the correct way of doing everything.

After the dishes are done the cloth should be washed up in soapy hot water, rinsed and hung out of doors to dry, preferably in the sunshine. The towels should be rinsed up likewise in hot water and hung up to dry. They will then be clean and sweet for the next time. In this way so many towels will not find their way to the weekly washing, and it is by far nicer than to use the dark, grimy towels seen in many houses. The child should be allowed to take plenty of time to do her work well, for hurry probably is the cause of more broken and cracked dishes than anything else. After the dishes are put away the dishpan should be washed up and set away, and the sink or table where the work was done should be scrubbed and made clean as soap and warm water will allow.

The mother is wise who makes work pleasant for her children. She will find them eager to help her instead of unwilling and thus afford her much comfort and pleasure.

SOME NOTES ON MEATS.

Never wash any meats unless from necessity, as washing takes from them a large part of their nutriment.

Meat with yellow suet is not fit for use, and should be destroyed; an examination by a veterinary will always show some organic disease in the animal.

The directions given above for beef will apply to the other meats named, the different methods of "hashing," and making of "made" dishes being given in another article. Any one who can cook and serve meats in simple form, can make any of the French side dishes, as they depend mostly on the ingredients used, and not so much on skill.

When cooking lamb remember that it takes almost as much time as mutton; it is much more nutritious than veal, and more healthful, but has the disadvantage of increased cost in this country.

We do not include pork in the list of meats, as it is not fit to be eaten in any quantity, and is perfectly indigestible.

Never use lard about meats; always use good butter when required.

Beef is served well-done, and underdone; but mutton, veal, lamb and game are always served well-done.

The best sauces for the different meats are, for roast beef, brown gravy, with mushrooms if you prefer; boiled beef, catsup, or horseradish; broiled meats of all kind, butter rubbed on only; for roast veal, white sauce; for chops and cutlets, fried, although I hope none of my readers will be guilty of this barbarism, any of the French made sauces.

Garnish to taste; or parsley for beef; beets or celery for veal, and roast apples for roast lamb; unless served with mint sauce when sprigs of fresh mint may be used.

BE CONSIDERATE.

Parents are seldom considerate of the sufferings of their young children at nighttime, when compelled to go to sleep in the dark, lonely bed rooms. Cowardice and imagination appals them with terrors which, though without the slightest foundation, are as real to them as fire, or burglars, or bears. A nurse will often intensify this apprehension by saying, "It's no wonder you are so afraid o' nights, you are so naughty in the daytime." The defenseless, ignorant child gets into bed, thinking that some one is lurking round. Mothers should absolutely forbid any frightening of the children in this respect, and see that their orders are carried out.

FOR QUICK RELIEF.

In cases of sudden and severe pains in the bowels caused by an accumulation of gases in the stomach, a hot infusion of peppermint is a valuable remedy for the older children; and for the tiny mites of humanity who are troubled with colic, two or three drops of the essence in hot water will quickly give relief.

For quick relief for any ailment, no mother should think of giving spirits to her child, except in extreme cases and under medical advice. Many a mother flies to hot alcoholic drinks on the slightest approach of a cold, giving a young child this supposed all-powerful remedy; and a taste for drink is often formed from taking these hot spiced stimulants.

GLASS UMBRELLAS.

It is rumored that before long glass umbrellas will be in general use—that is, umbrellas covered with the new spun glass cloth. These, of course, will afford no protection from the rays of the sun, but they will possess one obvious advantage, namely, that they can be held in front of the face when meeting the wind and rain, and at the same time the user will be able to see that he does not run into unoffending individuals or lamp posts.

SHE WAS GETTING SUSPICIOUS.

Mr. Sprightly—Well, you know, my love, even the devil's not as black as he's painted.

Mrs. S.—I don't know about that, but I know he's a good deal blacker than he paints himself.

A BOY CAPTAIN.

How a Sixteen-Year-Old Skipper Piloted a Fever Stricken Ship Safely Into Port.

With death walking the deck by his side, short handed, officers dead or disabled with fever, through seven weeks of disaster, danger and fear, a boy of sixteen years of age performed an act requiring rare force of will and character in the south seas recently. His name was William Shotton, and he is the son of an English sailor.

The Trafalgar, his ship, a four masted bark of 1,700 tons, sailed from Batavia, on October 29, 1896, with a cargo of petroleum for Melbourne, Australia. Fever broke out among the crew even before the ship left port, and Captain Edgar was invalided. The command devolved upon the next in authority, Mr. Roberts. But scarcely had the ship weighed anchor when he, too, was stricken, together with several other able bodied members of the crew. The ship carpenter next succumbed to the fever, and on the same day Officer Roberts leaped overboard in delirium. The entire charge of the ship thereupon devolved upon Shotton. Luckily for all concerned, he was born of a race of sailors and had received some instruction in navigation.

For a time the winds were moderate but the fever still pursued its deadly course, and on December 7 the cook died, the sixth victim of the disease. Port Fairy, Australia, was the first place sighted on the mainland, but this was by no means the end of the boy captain's troubles. A few days later a fearful storm broke out, and Shotton was of the opinion that nothing could be done but run before it, since to attempt to withstand it would almost certainly mean destruction in the weakened state of the crew. All of the crew who were half fit for duty were ordered on deck and the necessary steps were taken, to put the ship in order to carry out the decision. Day and night the young captain was on the bridge, giving his orders amid the awful tempest with a coolness and calmness which would have moved many a gray haired skipper to envy. Finally the wind moderated and the vessel was able to resume its journey to the Victoria coast.

A TRYING HUSBAND.

It is possible to carry even one's virtues to excess. Mrs. K. felt this to be true in the case of her husband's generosity. He was a very studious man, who lived "in the clouds" much of the time, and was quite lacking in practical common sense. A man of this kind, good and true though he may be is likely to cause his wife more or less anxiety and annoyance.

One fall Mrs. K. purchased a handsome cape for herself. It was to be her "best wrap" that winter, and she put it away in her closet with great care. Some days later she wanted it for a special occasion, but it was not to be found. After searching "high and low" for it, she went up to her husband's study and said to him:

"Have you seen anything of my new cape?"

"Cape? cape?" said Mr. K. dreamily. "Have I seen anything of your cape? Why, no, I guess not."

"Are you sure?"

"Why, yes; what should I be doing with your cape? I—let me see. Wait a minute. It seems to me that —I yes, I did give a cape away to a poor woman I met at the door one day. She said she wanted a wrap of some kind, and I—is it possible that I gave her your new cape? I meant to give her your old one."

"My old one is in my closet, and you must have given away that handsome new one that I had never worn! Why can't you keep your wits about you?"

"It is too bad," said the contrite professor. "I'll try to be more careful hereafter."

A few days later Mr. K. was out on his lawn when a ragged and evil-looking tramp came down the road, and with the usual tale about having just come from the hospital, begged for "the price of a meal o' victuals."

Mrs. K., who was sitting by the window, saw her husband give the man what seemed to be a bill, which the tramp took and departed with such alacrity that he was out of sight before Mrs. K. could go out and say to her husband:

"You didn't give that creature a bill did you?"

"Why, yes, I did. I didn't have anything but a five-dollar bill, and I told him he might get a good meal out of it and bring back the change."

The tramp must have dined sumptuously, for not a penny of change ever came back to Mr. K.

A VEGETARIAN ARGUMENT.

It is estimated that twenty-two acres of land is necessary to sustain one man on fresh meat. The same space of land if devoted to wheat culture would feed forty-two people; if to oats eighty-eight; potatoes, Indian corn and rice, 176; and if to the plantain or bread-fruit tree over 6,000 people.

TOO MUCH SALT.

Many people eat altogether too much salt. The result is that the skin and kidneys are excessively taxed to get rid of the salt, and both are injured by it. Few people have healthy skins, and it is believed that many cases of derangement of the kidneys are due to the salt habit.

A poor man succeeded in gaining admission to the presence of the wealthy Baron Rapineau, to whom he told the harrowing story of his misfortunes and his destitution in such eloquent terms that the baron, moved to pity and with tears in his eyes and voice broken with sobs, said in faltering accents to his servant: "Jean, turn the poor fellow out. He breaks my heart."