



Flax Culture.

The operations of the war inhibiting the obtaining of cotton from the growers of that staple of commerce at the South by the people of the North, they are diligently seeking for substitutes for that article, aside from the movements that have been, and are being, made to introduce cotton culture into Illinois, Indiana, and other western States. To supply the demand for lint and fibre that has been, and will be created by a continuance of hostilities between the contending factions, a return to flax-growing which has for years been measurably abandoned or neglected in the Eastern and Middle States, has been and continues to be strongly urged by agriculturists, and others interested in the matter.

At a late meeting of the American Institute Farmers' Club, New York, the subject of flax growing was taken up and lengthily discussed. The following is a synopsis of the remarks made by the speakers on that occasion:

Mr. Carpenter gave his opinion that this was one of the most important questions that have ever been brought before the Club. Flax should be sown about the 10th of May, on well-prepared soil, about half-a-bushel an acre. Flax fiber mixed with cotton improves both. It does not require a very strong soil to grow flax, nor does it exhaust the land any more than other crops, and he wanted to see the cultivation greatly extended, and hoped that the Club would lend its influence to promote this object.

Prof. Nash said flax is grown at the West for the seed alone. When I was a boy every family used to grow flax enough to make cloth for domestic use, all over New England. It requires a strong, heavy soil, and is very exhausting—so much so that grass did not take well. If sown for seed, or to use the fiber for coarse cloth, half-a-bushel per acre is enough. For very fine fabrics a bushel and a half per acre is sown. Plow about May 1, and make the surface very smooth before sowing. It is pulled as soon as a part of the seed is ripe, and dried and the seed beaten off, and then spread on grass to rot, so that it can be dressed. Flax will grow, of course, on stony land, but the soil must be good. The reason that flax culture ceased so far in this country, is because that cotton could be produced so much cheaper. The mere act of swingling occupied a man all day to dress 16 pounds, and the culture of flax will never be extended in this country until we can prepare the fiber at a cheap rate—by some of the processes that have been tried—either by steam, or acid, or alkali. I have no doubt flax is more healthy for garments than cotton, and it may be produced to any extent desired, if it can be cheaply prepared for use.

Dr. Trimble said that the culture of flax has been abandoned in a great measure by the Pennsylvania farmers, who used to grow enough for all family use. But cheap cotton has driven out flax, because the labor was so great it could not compete with cotton. It will not be revived, unless the great labor of its preparation can be done by machinery, at a cheap rate; that is the great difficulty in the way of inducing farmers to extend the flax culture.

Dr. Jarvis in his remarks said that cotton was not as healthy as flax. If flax is dirty at first in its preparation, cotton is always so through all its wear; it is giving off fine particles of dust, that fill the air of our houses, and injure the health of all who use cotton cloth. He thought in every sense of the word, cotton has been a curse to the world. It is not as healthy as flax for any kind of clothing, particularly bedding, and he thought the world would be greatly benefited by the use of flax, to as great an extent as it now uses cotton.

Mr. Henry—I had supposed that rotting, and breaking, and swingling, and hatching flax were among the antediluvian notions of the world. As to flax exhausting the soil any more than any other crop, I don't believe it; and certainly with the improved machinery of the age, there is no difficulty in preparing the fiber for use.

Mr. Gale said there is still a great deal of flax raised in Pennsylvania, and in the interior of this State. It is now prepared by machinery that obviates the most disagreeable hand labor of the old time. Farmers are content to raise flax at about 12 cents a pound. There is no trouble about growing flax; the only question is about being able to produce it as cheaply as any other fiber, whether cotton or silk. All the business of dressing flax is very dirty and disagreeable, when done by hand, and most farmers prefer to raise other crops and have substitutes for linen cloth.

Mr. Lancaster, formerly of New Hampshire, stated that with regard to flax seed, it depends upon what the crop is to be used for. If for seed alone, three pecks per acre will do; if for seed and fiber, a bushel, or a bushel and a peck, and it should be sown as early as it could be after the frost is out of the ground. It is a very exhausting and laborious crop.

A hand will not pull over a quarter of an acre a day. When dry, the seed is beaten off, it is then spread and not turned till it is rotted sufficiently. A man in New Hampshire, where I used to work among flax, could dress from 25 to 50 pounds a day. And as to the use of linen, there is no end to its use; and there is no cloth applied to so many uses as that of flax. We can grow 400 pounds per acre, and used to count it a good crop at 14c. per pound for the flax, and \$1 to \$1.50 a bushel for the seed, as an acre would produce 25 bushels.

The flax question is one of great importance to the country; because, if we can prepare the lint cheaply, all parts of the country can produce a better fiber than cotton, sufficient for the use of the inhabitants at less than the average price of cotton, and the fabric will be more valuable and its more healthy.

The people of Deseret are doubly interested in the culture of flax. They need the lint for many purposes, paper making not among the least, and without the seed, oil for painting cannot be produced, an article in great demand, and will continue so to be, and its use will soon be increased an hundred fold above what it is now or ever has been, in these valleys if manufactured here. Farmers should turn their attention to the subject more than they have heretofore in preference to growing so much wheat, for should they not in the end of the year, realize as much profit from an acre of flax, as from an acre of wheat, according to the amount of labor expended in the culture, at established prices it will be more advantageous to them eventually as time will prove.

[From the New England Farmer.]

About Keeping Goats.

Many persons who cannot conveniently keep a cow, would find it profitable to keep one or two common goats. They require but little care, may be supported at small cost, and yield a good supply of milk of superior quality. A goat well kept will yield from three pints to two quarts of milk daily for a large part of the year, the quantity diminishing in the cold weather as the time of kidding approaches. It is much cheaper to keep a goat in town than to pay a milkman, and fami is everywhere will find the milk very nutritive and wholesome, and especially good for children in most cases. An English writer estimates that two goats are equal to a small Shetland cow.

Goats may be very cheaply supported. If picketted in a pasture in warm weather or allowed to be at large, they will pick up their own living, eating readily almost every sort of green thing. Grass, weeds, twigs of bushes, vegetables, fruits, nearly everything that grows will suit their taste. They are fond of dry leaves, cornstalks, horse chestnuts, and even eat poisonous plants with impunity. If confined in a yard or in closer quarters, they will take the scraps and waste of the kitchen. Some persons allow them to feed out of the swill-pail, but this practice cannot be commended. Cobbett says in his "Cottage Economy":

"When I was in the army in New Brunswick, where, be it observed, the snow lies on the ground seven months in the year, there were many goats that belonged to the regiment, and that went about with it on shipboard and everywhere else. Some of them had gone the whole of the American war. We never fed them. In summer they picked about wherever they could find grass; and in winter they lived on cabbage-leaves, potato-peelings, and other things flung out of the soldiers' rooms and huts. One of these goats belonged to me, and on an average throughout the year she gave me more than three half-pints of milk a day. I used to have the kid killed when a few days old; and for some time the goat would give nearly or quite two quarts of milk a day. She was seldom dry more than three weeks in the year."

The same writer adds that "goats will pick peelings out of the kennel and eat them. They will eat mouldy bread or biscuit, fusty hay and rotten straw, furze bushes, heath-thistles and, indeed, what will they not eat, when they will make a hearty meal on paper, brown or white, printed on or not printed on, and give milk all the while?"

I may add to Cobbett's list of odd delicacies by stating that my own goats have gnawed smooth the rough sides of my pile of h mlock bark, and have cleaned out all the powder-post from the sills of the wood-shed!

But goats, like most other animals, prefer clean food, and will not devour all the above-mentioned things, if a supply of more desirable edibles are at hand. In the winter, it is well to lay in a few hundred pounds of hay—second crop is preferable—a few carrots and some fine feed. Indian meal is sometimes given to them, but it is too drying. They need water occasionally, but do not drink much. The goat is the most hardy of our domestic animals, enduring easily all extremes of heat and cold. It needs the shelter of a shed or barn in wintry weather, and will lie anywhere on the floor, preferring a board to a bed. Its natural activity and nimbleness, together with a capricious disposition, fit this creature to enjoy a state of freedom. When roaming wild on its native mountains, it loves to climb the most dangerous and inaccessible places, clinging on the verge of precipices by its wide-spreading and sharp-edged hoofs, and

defying the pursuit of the hunter. This inclination it manifests in domestic life, by scaling sheds, walls, wood-piles, &c., with great agility. But the goat will bear confinement extremely well, continuing in good health and yielding the usual quantity of milk. On shipboard, it is healthier than any other domestic animal, and is highly valued on account of its sportiveness, its familiarity, and its ability to give milk upon such waste food as is there obtainable.

The milk of the female goat is sweet, rich and nourishing. It has the body and smoothness of cream, is viscid and strengthening, little product of oil, but abundant in the matter of cheese. In tea and coffee, it is far superior to cow's milk, and will go at least as far again in imparting color and flavor. In all kinds of cooking, it is equally excellent. It has no peculiar or unpleasant taste and is not affected by what the creature eats: onion tops have been given to the female, by way of experiment, without imparting an oniony taste to the milk. I consider two pints of goat's milk to be as good in a family in every way as three pints of cow's milk.

For most feeble and sickly children as well as those in health, it is invaluable. It does not tend to form curds in the stomach as cow's milk does, and is therefore frequently prescribed by physicians in cases of extreme weakness. It is sold for the purpose in Salem at twenty-five cents a quart. Invalids abroad often resort to the mountainous districts of Ireland and Scotland to derive benefit from the use of this article, which is there known as 'goat's whey.' Mr. Colman noticed that the Irish mountaineers about the Lake of Killarney, kept from one to thirty goats apiece for the sake of the tourists to that delightful region. In Spain and Portugal, goats are abundant, and in Lisbon, their milk is more commonly used than that of cows. The goats in those countries are driven into the cities in the morning and milked at the doors of the houses. The district in France most celebrated for goats is the Canton Mont d'Or, where, in a space not exceeding two leagues (six miles) in diameter, upwards of eleven thousand are kept chiefly to supply the city of Lyons with cheese. There are several other interesting particulars relating to the goat which I will give in another paper.

G. L. STREETER.

Liver Complaint in Sheep.

A correspondent of the Michigan Farmer in a communication in relation to that disease in sheep, says:

It is a fact that sheep are liable to an affection of the liver, as well as men, or other animals. Many of the nicest sheep in the country have died of it, and after taking off their pelts farmers have thrown their carcasses to the hogs, without an effort to ascertain the cause, or find a remedy for it if known. The most prominent and dangerous type of diseased liver in sheep which has come under my notice is adhesion to the side, or side and bowels. The symptoms are, loss of appetite and an inclination to occupy some corner of the fence alone. And often the animal will be found dead next morning. Sometimes they will linger several days, and in spite of all the usual modes of nursing, they leave their pelts to pay their "doctor's bill." A friend of mine has discovered a remedy, and as he does not design to patent it, I will, if you please, give it to your readers: He builds a scaffold in some convenient place, about five or six feet high, leaving the center open, with a space as wide as a man can easily span with his feet. Then, by the help of an assistant, he catches the sheep, mounts the scaffold, and placing his feet on the planks, the assistant passes the hind feet of the sheep up to him between the planks, when he "churns it up and down" (as he calls it,) for five or ten minutes, which disengages the adhesion, and the sheep gets well without further trouble. But I would suggest the feeding of them on plenty of green pine, hemlock or tamarack boughs as a preventive, which will doubtless be better than the churning process as a remedy.

About Cotton.—The Hartford Courant states on the authority of a gentleman engaged in the manufacture of cotton, that the sea island is valued for the length of its fibre, not its fineness—it being the coarsest cotton grown for market. The common varieties vary in length from one-half to three-fourths of an inch, five-eighths being a fair average, while the sea island is from an inch and three-eighths to an inch and three fourths in lengths, and is sought by the British spinners for thread, and embroidering cottons, requiring machinery expressly for its manufacture.

Improvement in Candles.—Steep the cotton wick in water in which has been dissolved a considerable quantity of nitrate of potassa; chlorate of potassa answers still better, but it is too expensive for common practice. By this means a purer flame and superior light are secured, a more perfect combustion is insured, and snuffing is rendered nearly as superfluous as in wax candles. The wicks must be thoroughly dried before the tallow is put to them.—[Scientific American.]

—An Iowa regiment has a rule that any man who utters an oath shall read a chapter in the bible. Several have got nearly through the Old Testament!

The White Sparrow.

FROM THE GERMAN

"Sleep is the worst of thieves—He steals half our lives!"

In most parts of Germany there passes current among the people, this proverb—

"He that would thrive, Must the White Sparrow see."

The meaning of the proverb is not at first sight so apparent as that of some others that circulate among us, such as "Early habits make the man," and, "Honesty is the best policy," &c.; but the moral signification it is intended to convey is not the less true and important. I will, therefore, here relate the story connected with its origin, even as I received it myself from the lips of an old and valued friend.

There was an old farmer with whom everything appeared to grow worse from year to year. His cattle died one by one, and the produce of his land was not half that it ought to be; in fact, all his property was, to use a very familiar expression, "going to the dogs!" In short, scarcely a week passed by that either the tax-gatherer or the pawnbroker did not come to his window, and, addressing him with a courteous bow, said—

"I am really very sorry, Herr Ruckwart, to be compelled to put you to inconvenience, but I am obliged to do my duty."

The old friends of Herr Ruckwart also tried to do their duty to him. They advised, they entreated, and they helped him, but all in vain, and so one after another gave him up in despair, declaring with a sigh that as for poor Ruckwart, there was no use in trying to help him—he was past being helped.

He had one friend, however, whose heart was in the right place, and who was not only a good man, but a very clear sighted one. This friend thought he would not give Herr Ruckwart up altogether without making one more attempt to save him. So one day, he led the conversation, as though accidentally, to the subject of sparrows, relating many anecdotes of these birds, and observing how greatly they had multiplied of late, and how very cunning and voracious they had become.

Herr Ruckwart shook his head gravely in answer to this observation, and said,

"They are, indeed, most destructive creatures. For my part, I have not the slightest doubt that it is mainly owing to their depredations that my harvest has of late years been so unproductive."

To this conjecture his old friend made no rejoinder; but after a moment's pause continued the conversation by another interrogatory—

"Neighbor, have you ever seen a white sparrow?"

"No," replied Ruckwart, "the sparrows that alight in my fields are all the common gray sort."

"That is very probable, too," rejoined his friend. "The habits of the white sparrow are peculiar to itself. Only one comes into the world every year; and being so different from his fellows, other sparrows take a dislike to it, and peck at it when it appears among them. For this reason it seeks its food early in the morning, before the rest of the tribe are astir, and then goes back to its nest, where it remains for the rest of the day."

"That is very strange!" exclaimed Ruckwart. "I must really try and get a sight at that sparrow; and if possible, I will catch it, too."

On the morning following this conversation, the farmer rose with the sun and sallied forth into his field. He walked around his farm, searched his farmyard in every corner, examined the roofs of his barns and the trees of his orchards, to see whether he could discover any traces of the beautiful white sparrow. But the white sparrow, to the great disappointment of the farmer, would not show itself or stir from its imaginary nest.

What vexed the farmer, however, still more, was that although the sun stood high in the heavens by the time he had completed his round, not one of the farm laborers was astir—they, too, seemed resolved not to leave their nests. Meanwhile, the cattle were bellowing in their stalls with hunger, and not a soul was near to feed them.

Herr Ruckwart was reflecting on the disadvantage of this state of things, when suddenly he perceived a lad coming out of the house, carrying a sack of wheat on his shoulders. He seemed to be in great haste to get out of the precincts of the farm, and Herr Ruckwart soon perceived that his steps were not bent towards the mill, but towards a public house, where Caspar had, unhappily, a long score to pay. He hastened after the astonished youth, who believed his master to be still in the enjoyment of his morning nap, and quickly relieved him of his burden.

The farmer next bent his steps to the cow-house, and peeping to see whether the white sparrow had perchance taken refuge there, he discovered to his dismay, that the milk-maid was handing a liberal portion of the milk through the window to her neighbor, to mix with her morning cup of coffee.

"A pretty sort of housekeeping this is," thought the farmer to himself, as he hastened to his wife's apartment and roused her from her slumbers. "As sure as my name is Ruckwart," he exclaimed in an angry tone, "there must be an end to these lazy habits. Everything is going wrong for the want of somebody to look after them. So far as I am concerned," thought the good farmer to himself, "I will rise every day at the same hour I rose this this morning, and then I shall get my farm cleared of those who do not intend to