



RUSTIC SENTIMENT AND HUMOR.

When vernal suns have kissed the hills,
The daffodils and daisies,
'Tis sweet, at morn, to hear the birds
Hymn out their matin praises.
I love the genial airs of Spring,
The fragrant dew-lipped roses;
I love to hear the shagbark crow,
For when they crow, they crowses.

Through woodlands wild, with tangled leaves,
Alone I love to wander;
To muse upon the dreamy past,
And on the future ponder.
I love to see the startled stag
Fling antlers to the breezes,
And leave behind the insect hum
Of flies and buzzing bees.

And when the storm-kings thunder-guns
Flash o'er the heavenly arches,
I love to hear the forests far
Resound like martial marches;
There freedom's feathered monarch reigns,
The bird that screamed and frightened,
With flapping wings, the king of beasts,
Both times they scratched and bited.

I love to see the farmer's plow
Throw up the stubborn furrow,
Where all the whistling winter long
The rabbits kept their burrow.
And when at noon the horned yoke
To pasture bend their noses,
'Tis sweet to hear the dinner tone
Of every horn that blowses.

I love at dawn, when slow the sun
Fires up the mountain passes,
To hear the bleating flock afar,
And braying Johnny Asses;
And when at dusk the milky kine
Return to welcome houses,
'Tis sweet to hear the tinkling bells,
And see the baby cowsees.

When soft the moon her virgin light
O'er dreamy earth diffuses,
I love to hear the Thomas cats
Meow to Tabby's mewsees.
On fragrant beds of catnip green
They lie like loving spouses,
And purr their dreams, and pledge their tails,
In loud a-mewsing mowsees.

I love, as in the days of yore,
To hear the rippling waters,
Where loud the parent frogs discourse
To croaking sons and daughter;
And when the star-gem'd wing of night
Beyond the vision reaches,
I love to hear the owlets screech,
For when they screech, they screeches.

My soul is filled with love for all
In nature, grave or funny,
For life is full of shadows dark,
As well as pleasures sunny.
Yet far above them all I love
The love for me that sighs—
That clings to me in weal or woe,
And cries whenever I crieese.

Proper Time and Manner to Cut Grass for Hay.

The season for hay-making is at hand; and, for the benefit of farmers and all who have hay to cut, we extract the following practical suggestions from the latest number of the *Country Gentleman*:

The above is a question about which good practical farmers entertain quite opposite views; though they seem to agree in this, that the value of hay as food for farm stock depends very much upon the time or season of its growth when mown. But notwithstanding this apparent agreement, there is still a wide difference of opinion as to the time the grass possesses the most value for winter food for cattle, horses and sheep. Consequently, practice varies according as these different views are entertained.

Some farmers cut their grass as soon as the bloom appears, or even earlier, and others at all subsequent stages until the seeds are ripe and the grasses are so dry that the product may be stored almost as soon as cut. "Such differences of practice must necessarily be followed by a wide variation in its value. That such variation actually exists is evidenced by the fact, that upon the same quantity of hay, and this made from the same grasses, the stock of one farmer will thrive and that of another will dwindle."

This contrast in the thrift of the cattle on adjoining farms, is frequently occasioned by the fact, that one farmer cuts his grass early, or mostly while in blossom, the other letting his grass crop stand till the seed had generally matured; this farmer contending that the seeds were the most important and nutritive portions of the hay, besides, he says it will "spend better." Cattle fed through our long winters upon this late cut hay, generally go to pasture real "spring poor."

The nutritive substances of grass are those, which are, for the most part, soluble in water, such as sugar, gluten, and other compounds. Now if this is so, it is evident that the grass

should be cut at the time when it contains the largest amount of these principles. From its earliest growth the sugar and other soluble substances gradually increase till they reach their maximum per centage in the blossom, or when the seed is fully formed in the cell. From this period the saccharine matter constantly diminishes, and the woody fiber, perfectly insoluble in water and innutritious, increases till after the seeds have matured, when the plant begins to decay. Of course, if the plant is not cut in the flower, a great part of the nutriment of its stems and leaves is wasted.

Says Mr. Sec'y Goodale, in his report, "The principal point to be inquired into in order to decide the best period for cutting, is, when does grass contain the most nutriment? And to this, no definite and precise answer can be given, which will be alike correct in all cases, for reason that in different grasses this stage is not the same, being earlier in some than others; but for a general answer, both theory and the opinions derived from the experience of the great majority of intelligent and observing farmers, concur in the reply—'when in full blossom, or while the bloom is falling.' At this period, most grasses have, so far as can be judged, obtained from the soil and from the atmosphere, the greatest amount which they will have at any stage of growth, which is of value as food for animals, and these exist at this period in the most valuable form. The changes which take place subsequently are chiefly within the plant; a part of the starch, sugar, gum, albumen, &c., soon go to assist in the formation of seed, and a part to constitute woody fibre, which is indigestible and worthless; and so much as is thus converted, is actual loss.

Of hay cut at a later stage, cattle will doubtless eat less, and some infer from this, that it will "spend better;" but the true reason why they eat less is, because the system can digest and assimilate less. The actual benefit derived from hay is in proportion to the available nutriment contained in it."

As far as our observation extends, the prevalent opinion is, that more loss is sustained by late, than by too early cutting. That grass is sometimes mown too early, there is no doubt; but as a general rule, the farmer had better err on the safe side, and commence haying early, if he has a large amount to harvest, even if he suffers some loss by shrinkage of the first mown. It gives him a better chance to "make hay while the sun shines," for he has a longer period to secure his crop before it is "dead ripe," and sometimes saves hiring help, when labor is at its highest price, and scarce at that.

No inconsiderable proportion of the hay annually cut in these valleys is deteriorated in value by being cut too late. The most nutritious juices of the grass are mostly dried out, from which cause the hay is neither as palatable nor as nourishing as it would be if cut in the proper season.

We trust that, the present season, there will be no neglect in cutting and curing the hay, and that our market and stack-yards will afford a better quality than heretofore.

It is quite possible that many of our farmers might, in some respects, improve their practice of mowing. The *American Agriculturist* gives some pointed directions on this subject, under the head of "How to Mow," which we copy, believing it will be found to contain at least correct principles which it will always be found profitable to adopt:

A smile wreathes the lip of our veteran farmer as he reads the heading of this article. Can an editor teach me anything new in that line! On no, sir, perhaps not, but let us hint a word or two to your sons, or to some young men who have not such skillful fathers to teach them. We want them to learn this art aright, then they will never forget it.

Mowing is one of the most fatiguing operations of farming, and the more so, as it has to be done in very warm weather. Any hints to lighten the labor will be very useful. In the first place, then, rise early, and begin before sunrise. By doing so, and having your scythe sharpened and in perfect order the night before, you may get half a day's work done by nine o'clock. The coolness of the morning air, and the dew on the grass, will both help along the labor. At nine o'clock, you may retire to the house, or to some shady tree, and rest yourself for several hours, while your slow neighbor is sweating through the mid-day, and perhaps hurting himself by over-work and by taking down large draughts of cold drink to allay his thirst. Between two and three o'clock you may begin work again, refreshed and vigorous, and may labor till sunset with little fatigue.

By all means keep your scythe constantly in good order. Let it be adapted to the surface of the ground to be mowed. If that is level and free from obstructions, the scythe may be long and almost straight, and it will work easy. If the ground is broken, or covered with stones or low stumps, the scythe must be short and crooked.

While the snath should not be too heavy, neither should it be so light as to tremble and shake in the mower's hand; also, let it never become loose from the blade, as this will cause it to catch on every obstruction, and require a great waste of strength to make it cut. Many young mowers, in their haste to get over a certain piece of ground, often worry themselves by this little neglect.

It is very pleasant to mow in company, but

young and inexperienced mowers should be careful how they pit themselves against the brawny arms of older and stronger workmen. Many a promising young man has been injured for life by this ambition to be thought a great mower.

Hoping that our young laborers will be careful when following close to each other, we commend them to their noble work, and hope they will pass through the hay harvest in good health, and gather abundant crops.

Remedy for Short Pasture.

The following timely hints, which we copy from the June number of the *American Agriculturist*, were timely and applicable also to this locality:

Those who have but a limited range of pasture and keep stock enough to crop it well, are almost at the mercy of the weather. If there chance to be favoring rains, and a good season for the growth of grass and clover, all is well; but if, as frequently occurs, there comes a long period of drouth, the browned fields already closely cropped, suffer severely, having little to protect the roots from the full power of the sun, and the cattle suffer yet more. The milk pails show serious diminution, the dairying profits shrink, and the stock fall off when they should be gaining. A severe check of this kind will be felt throughout the season, for much of the pasture may be "summer killed," and the full flow of milk can hardly be regained. This may be guarded against by putting in a small plot of corn, sorghum, millet or other suitable crop for cutting and feeding green. An acre of corn sown broadcast now, will very soon yield sufficient to give great relief to the short pasture. It is not necessary to stable the cows; cut a good supply for them and feed night and morning before they leave the yard; they will eat it with a relish, and make ample returns in the milk pails and the churn. Even if the threatened drouth should not come, and abundance of grass should grow, the soiling crop need not be lost. Cut at the proper season, and properly cured, it will not come amiss next winter.

Those having unoccupied and suitable grounds may yet plant corn for soiling or for winter fodder. Spaces in fields where the seeds have not germinated should be planted with something that will mature or afford an article of fodder before frost comes.

Improvements in Soil Culture.

The spirit of improvement in agriculture has reached the Pacific coast and throughout California. Wherever that spirit has been awakened, the results are visible in increased yields of fruit and heavier crops of grain. They have now hit the right nail on the head.

Of the favorable increase in crops in that State, the *Sacramento Union* says:

"The increase in the yield, per acre, is attributable to the fact that cultivators are beginning better to understand the soil and climate with which they have to deal. They know better when to sow their grain; how to plow; and they have discovered the value and importance of manure.

Three years ago everybody neglected the offal from their harvests and stables. Now, there is no article more taken care of or more judiciously distributed by the mountain farmer, than manure, in all its forms and shapes, from the old bones scattered around butcher shops, to the saw dust heaped up about lumber mills.

The effects of this economy are beginning to show favorably everywhere. Fields that two years ago were considered exhausted by the two or three successive unmanured crops immediately preceding, are now rank with oats, or barley, or wheat.

Apart from the superior skill and industry of the husbandman, the present season has been a most excellent one for grain crops. Early and copious fall rains favored seasonable plowing and sowing; and late spring rains have done the best that nature could do for the growing crops. An abundant harvest may be expected.

The grape and fruit crop will show a still larger increase than the cereals—at least in localities of no greater altitude than this place, Mokelumne Hill or Angels. There is an increase over last year of 100 per cent. in bearing trees and vines; and the trees will be fuller of fruit. Peaches, plums, apricots, nectarines and cherries are now secure from any frosts which may reasonably be expected.

Prices of fruit will be much lower than last year, but just as the prices decline the consumption will increase and the market for fruit enlarge."

Mammoth Strawberry.—Mr. Garnett, says the *Placerville Democrat* of May 26, presented us a strawberry taken from his garden in this city, which, in point of size beats anything of the kind we have ever seen. It is in the shape of a heart, and measures round its edges seven and a half inches.

Agriculture the First of Sciences.

The antiquity of the husbandman's art is certainly not to be contested by any other. The three first men in the world were a gardener, a ploughman, and a grazier; and if any man object that the second of these was a murderer, he should consider that, as soon as he was so, he quitted our profession and turned builder. It is for this reason, I suppose, says an eastern writer, that Ecclesiasticus forbids us to hate husbandry; because (says he) the Most High God has created it. We were all born to this art, and taught by nature to nourish our bodies by the same earth out of which they were made, and to which they must return, and pay at last for their sustenance.

Behold the original and primitive nobility of all those great persons who are too proud now, not only to till the ground, but almost to tread upon it. We may say what we please of cities, and lions rampant, and spread eagles in fields d'or or d'argent; but if heraldry were guided by reason, a plough in a field arable would be the most noble and ancient arms.

All these considerations make us fall into the wonder and complaint of Columella, how it should come to pass that all arts and sciences, metaphysics, physics, morality, mathematics, logic, rhetoric, etc., which are all, we grant, good and useful faculties; and even vaulting, fencing, dancing, attiring, cookery, carving and such like vanities, shall all have public schools and masters; and yet that we should never see or hear of any man who took upon him the profession of teaching this so pleasant, so virtuous, so profitable, so honorable, so necessary art.

Vegetable Curiosities.

The *Sonora Age* says that Mr. Benton, of that place, has a cabbage growing in his garden that has attained the enormous height of eight feet. The *Age* gives the following description:

"The stalk is about the size of a man's wrist, and stretches up four feet before it exhibits any leaves or branches. It is more than one year old, and Mr. Benton thinks as it is of the evergreen family that it could be profitably cultivated for shade and ornamental purposes. The most interesting fact connected with this remarkable vegetable is, that an appreciating sparrow has built her nest amongst its branches, which already contains three little eggs. Her tedious process of incubation will soon be rewarded by a callow brood to enliven her home amongst the swaying branches of the old cabbage tree. If its rapid growth be uninterrupted for another year, we shall not be surprised to see it appropriated by the bird of Jove for the same purpose."

On reading the above somewhat extravagant notice, says the *Petaluma Journal*, we were reminded of a similar vegetable wonder in the garden of Dr. Hepburn, of this town, and for the purpose of instituting a comparison we visited the doctor's garden, and ascertained the history and dimensions of his giant cabbage. This tree, we are assured, is six years old, and has annually furnished a supply of plants for the use of the extensive vegetable garden.

The only trouble taken is to spade up the ground around the tree, and at the proper season an abundant supply of plants spring up, which are transplanted as they are wanted. For three years past, the birds have availed themselves of its hospitable shelter as an admirable place in which to rear their young, but no aristocratic eagles have yet ventured to disturb the harmony of the more unpretending songsters which cheer the bright mornings with their sweet minstrelsy.

By careful measurement this tree was ascertained to be ten feet and one inch in height, and for two or three feet the main body or stalk averages nine and one-half inches in circumference. The branches are several feet in length, and produce a luxurious supply of small heads, of superior excellence for the table. If any one can beat this curiosity in the cabbage line, we should be pleased to hear from them.

The Horse Chestnut.

Among our ornamental trees, says an eastern journal, there is none more worthy of cultivation than the horse chestnut. The beauty of its form, the earliness and luxuriance of its foliage, its freedom from insects, the size and beauty of its blossoms, and its curious fruit, combine to render it an almost indispensable ornament to the lawn.

"Of this tree there are several varieties—the best known of which are the yellow flowering (*Aesculus flava*), the white flowering (*A. hippocastanum*), and the coral or reddish colored (*A. rubicunda*); of the yellow is the least desirable. But surpassing all is the double white, a cut of which we give herewith. The flowers of this variety are white, prettily spotted with red as in the single variety, but as double as the most perfect (or imperfect?) rose that can be found.