HARVESTING THE CORN CROP.

When to Cut the Fodder—Practices in Different Sections—Cutting by Machinery.

The season for harvesting corn is so long and the practice from extent of the crop and pressure of work in other directions so elastic and often so long delayed that the value of the crop, of the source especially, is affected doubtless more seriously than farmers themselves imagine. Results of experiments at the stations teach that the weight and value of stover is reached when at the stage of growth indicated by a well dented ear and the first drying of the blades. The grain is hard at the season of a well ripened ear and a half dried blade. In the process of ripening the grain there is little decline in yield or feeding value after the best condition is reached.

Different practices prevail in different sections. In Maine, where much of the corn is for the canners, it takes an unusual number of hills for a shock. In New Jersey it is usual to cut up sets from 48 to 64 hills to the shock, according as it is heavy and green. The aim is to cut as soon as the grain on the ears is glazed, provided the weather is not rainy and warm. The husking and utilizing are matters of convenience—any time before the snow flies. In Ohio many cut 12 hills square and husking is done when convenient. In Pennsylvania it is known to rot and corn as soon as it is safe from molding in the shock. It is put up in shocks of from 60 to 120 hills each. The wasteful custom of turning cattle and hogs into the field to work their own will still prevails in sections of the north and the central maize districts.

The majority of farmers continue to cut their corn in the old way, although there are on the market machines for harvesting corn that save much time, labor and expense. There are a number of these machines, the main point of which are doing away with the old plan of tying gallows, which make considerable work and lock valuable time.

The mode of operation of a cutter that has given satisfaction is as follows:

The horse hitched to the harvester walks between the rows. The wings, with knives attached to the front edge, extend far enough on both sides to engage all the stalks in the two rows. Two men occupy the seat on the machine, facing out, with one hand reaching forward to support the stalks as the knives first strike them, and as they are cut the other hand and arm is used to draw them back against the leg, where they are easily held, the bolts resting on the wings until the gallows row is reached, when the horse is stopped, and the load—12, 14 or 16 hills, as desired—is deposited at the shock. The man returns to the machine, start the horse and work as before.

The Farmer's Friend.

A writer in The Farm Journal writes about a device which he calls the farmer's friend. He says:

While mills for pumping water cost from $50 to $250 my "farmer's friend" can be put up for about $12 or $13 and run for years without a dollar's expense. I bought three molasses hogsheads for a dollar, spiked them out and a few days dry, then had the blacksmith put on each four hoops of round wagon tire at 50 cents a hoop. I built a staging 6 feet high and set the three casks on it and connected them near the bottom by a three-quarter inch lead pipe, then ran a galvanized drawn well pipe from one of them through my wood shed into the washroom, and to the end of this pipe attached a globe faucet. To make the pipe joints tight I drove soft pine wedges around them, calked the holes with cotton and painted over the joint with thick white lead. The water is conducted from the house roof into the casks by troughs and spouts. I have just completed a similar arrangement for my barn, and the cattle like it better than well water. I have a brass valve screwed on the end of the connecting pipe to shut off water from pipe in cold weather to prevent freezing.

Clover and Its Substitutes.

In a press bulletin from the Michigan station it is advised if clover is found in the spring to be killed by the snow to use to plant the field to corn or some millet.

Omitting the clover crop for a year will starve out the the borer and enable the clover to be grown again. In my case one crop of hay may be expected from the clover before it falls. Alfalfa in Michigan gives seldom a greater and usually less yield than that of common red clover, while the plant itself is less desirable in several respects. Crimson clover, so far as tested in the west and north, has not been satisfactory. Spurry was recommended in a bulletin of this station last year as a valuable plant for improving certain light, sandy soils. Many have since tested it on various soils as a forage plant, with unsatisfactory results. It is too small and contains too little substance to be of value where clover or the ordinary grasses will grow. Moreover, it is somewhat inclined to become a weed.

Productive Capacity of Farm Labor.

According to statistics furnished by Secretary Morton, in 1850 50 per cent of all the persons of the United States who were engaged in gainful occupations were farmers. But in 1890 less than 40 per cent represented those engaged in agriculture. In 1850 five men with the farming implements and machinery of that day, produced 500 bushels of grain. In 1890 five men, with improved farm implements and machinery, produced 1,000 bushels. In 1850 the average product per man was 100 bushels. In 1890 it was 200 bushels. By improved machinery, therefore, the productive capacity of each farm has been doubled, so far as results are concerned, and in the case of mines it has been almost quadrupled.

THE PLANTS FOR THE LAWN.

A Very Reasonable Arrangement Where Flower Beds Are out of the Question.

A very good deal of satisfaction comes from the use of plants in tubs or pots on the lawn in summer. Where dogs and cats are allowed it is not to be possible to save plants from flower beds, and it is then that tub plants are to be called into use to take the place of the others. The lot of plants available is a large one in fact, there is hardly any limit to it. Bubbles vary well. Many plants now used for the purpose, bedding plants can be used as well. There is too much to be said: Let it be whatever plant it will, more attention must unquestionably be given to watering, as the soil will lose moisture quickly when in a tub. Sometimes with bedding plants suggested by County Gentleman see the following:

The sage needs it a splendid tub plant. Its tall, fringed flowers in his opinion are uncommonly beautiful. They in a white one look a trimmer as well.

Lantanas are splendid plants for the purpose, as they are such sun lovers. Give them plenty of water, and it cannot hurt but help for them. There are pink, orange and other colors.

The Hydrangea hortensia is an extremely showy plant. It is a fine body, has large, bright green foliage and is sure to flower every year. The large heads of rosy white flowers last a long time. Agaphus umbrosus, the Tuberose, has pure white flowers. Both of these will often produce blue flowers, even when nothing is done to bring it about. Iron in the soil will make the change, it is said, so will also a few drops of ammonia.

A very small plant, half vine and half corm, is the hardy passiflora, which produces many scented white flowers from June to September. It is hardly here always protected a little. In other situations it has got hurt in winter, preventing flowering.

Among miscellaneous plants may be mentioned the oleander, the white and the pink; Magnolia grandiflora and M. fuscata; India rubber plant, cycas, bay and lavendula—all valuable for their large foliage and not for their flowers.

In the city dwellings many more plants and flowers are to be seen today than there were a few years ago, and largely through the use of tub and pot plants and window boxes. The summer set flowers are not confined. Boxes are raised above the ground in some way and bedding plants used to fill them. Large boxes have been continuous fixtures outside the windows, and they are kept filled all summer with blooming plants and vines, and in winter with bright evergreens.

Cold in Summer.

For rational conditions we may divide them into three places—first, such as delight in open sunshine and will thrive in any kind of summer weather. Cosmos, ipomia and large calceolarias belong to this group. Those that love the open air, but dislike cold detesting storms. The marguerite and most all woolly foliage need one of this nature. Third, those so prefer shade from hot sunshine. Among these are the epiphyll, lorea (lobster claw cactus) and phyllocactus. The editor of Gardening says:

There is a great deal of nonsense about the brickbat, lime rubbish and gravel soils often urged as being the proper compost for cacti. We have found that they all grow well in a free or gritty loam. As far as practicable they should be kept dry overhead. When in active growth, they like a fair supply of water at the root; when at rest, they should be kept moderately dry.

Latest European Novelty.

An English exchange is enthusiastic over a recent acquisition in horticulture. By a system of turning glass houses on wheels, with or without heating apparatus affixed, running on rails, crops which are to be forced, protected or ripened in succession, may be brought under glass as they stand in the soil or on stages.

A NOVELTY IN VINERY.

For this process the following claims are made: A more rapid and economical production of fruits, flowers and vegetables, the easy application of shelter and control of temperature in climates subject to sudden changes.

In the Fruit Garden.

Overbearing prevents the full development and maturity of most fruits, and more especially of such fruits as the Seckel pear and the Delaware grape. If we desire best quality, we must thin severely.

Probably it will not be long before seedless apples, pears, grapes, etc., are in general cultivation.

Red Astrakhan is one of the best of early apples.

Standard trees are often allowed to branch too low.

One of the largest Boston commission dealers in fruit recently mentioned the following as the best bulletin to be received: Boston, Buffalo, Albany, Rome, Rochester.

Advantages claimed for seedling varieties are low cost, rapid growth and larger life considerations which are sufficiently supported to experiment to warrant a more general trial of the plan.

The Desert Lands.

The issue incorporated in the senate amendment of the bill giving to each state and territory which has desert lands within its limits such amount of those lands, not exceeding 1,000,000 acres, as the state may reclaim and cultivate by actual settlers within the next 10 years. The general government has in Nevada and North Dakota, Montana, Idaho, Washington, Oregon, California, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Wyoming and California 500,000,000 acres of what are known as desert lands, amounting one-third of lands which cannot be cultivated without irrigation. The constituents vary in value from $1.25 and more in north Dakota to $4,000,000 in Montana.

HANDLING CORN FODDER.

Pitching Fodder—Putting Up Shocks With a Tower—A Good Fodder Rack.

Every intelligent farmer knows long before any experiment stations proved it that the cornstalk with its leaves made good food when well cured. Much of the best work in early harvesting, the cutting of the stalk and shocking it, has required to save it. If we had a harvester for fodder corn that was as near perfect as some implements that have been devised for harvesting other crops—one with which we could do the stripping by simply holding sometimes down on the end—the "other half" of the corn crop would not be wasted as often as it is. Brooders are now giving a good deal of attention to implements for harvesting the corn crop. We have machines for doing the cutting by horse power, and while they do not save as much labor as we would like every little helps. What we need now is a machine, method or plan whereby the lifting and carrying can be done by horse power. There is a great deal of this hard work to do from the time the corn is cut until it is stripped into the manger. There are a great many short cuts that, although rude, have not been passed and are recommended for the benefit of others. An Illinois farmer gives through the columns of the Farm Homestead a few hints in relation to methods that he has found useful. He says:

To pitch fodder with a fork I take a common fork, cut off a few inches of the tines and then round the ends a little on the grindstone. One will rarely be followed that by the stalks sticking to the fork. Of course fodder pole targets were used when handled in this way, but where is to be whole this is not especially objectionable. Of course, too, the leverage is on the wrong end of the pitchfork for heavy fodder, but for pitching off the load or raising to a height it seems handy.

The discovery of a way to pull up shocks of corn with a four wire worth many dollars to me last winter. It saves a great deal of time and perspiration. There is no more walking around the shock to find a long branch and no more pulling off stalks that are frozen fast or that have not been cut off. The method I employ simply is to take a rope 10 or 12 feet long, tie it to the wagon in front, and with the other end, which should have a hook fastened to it, pass it round near where the shock is tied. The hook should be hooked into the rope so as to make a slip noose, which should be drawn tight before the horse pulls. A large shock will make a tree scratch, especially when it is frozen down, but it usually comes up stiff and clean and can be dragged home without the loss of anything to speak of if once is on the ground.

In feeding fodder a suitable rack is a great saving. I use a V shaped rack, two or three feet back and above the manger, with six inch holes, but not quite at the bottom of the V. The fodder is pitched in at the top of the V, but the stalks are much if only through the holes, where they strip the ears, husks and leaves from the stalk, and the latter finally drops through also and reaches the manger below.

Utilizing Water For Irrigation.

All through the country west of the Missouri river many schemes are being tried to utilize water for irrigation. Thousands of wind and steam power pumps are lifting the water from wells, ponds or rivers so that it may run by upon the land. Most of this is being done by private enterprise, each farmer trying to secure a supply of water for his own farm. This is different from the company or community plan of building a large irrigating system with a fund contributed by many stockholders and dividing the cost among those who use the water. Of many of the wide and shallow streams of the west this expensive building of irrigating canals has been considered the best method because it was considered the most feasible plan for the water to the lands itself.

Of late years some successful efforts have been made to use the water power for pumping. Most of these devices run almost level for half a mile or more and then fall down a "riffle" or flume to allow of two to five feet. The plan somewhere is to have a pump or pumps in "riffles." A few days of work is built across the stream so as to give additional head of water. Wing dams are then built so as to form a letter V, with the apex down stream. The water is forced through this with increased power and turns a water wheel which works a pump and elevates the water. This power is constant as the wheel can be raised or lowered to correspond with the height of the water. This is working satisfactorily on many far western farms. There are many streams running through various farms that might be utilized in the manner. Surely to owners like this, who must irrigate or see their crops go to dust from lack of moisture, the water would be far more useful on the fields than in the bed of the stream, says Rural New Yorker.

Sunflower Culture.

Since it has been found out that the peculiar soil and of certain swamp lands is especially adapted to the cultivation of sunflowers, an increased acreage of such land is devoted every year to raising that vegetable for market, and in some parts of Kalamazoo, Michigan, the cultivation has become a very large industry. When the plant was first introduced and raised only here and there, few knew enough of it, but many of our native farmers have acquired a liking for it, so that the species which attack celery have rapidly increased in number and in the severity of their attacks. Bulletin 101 of the agricultural experiment station of Michigan, which is circulated to these farmers, will therefore be especially welcome to all commercial growers as well as to the owners of private gardens.

CHASING THE WALRUS.

How He Is Harpooned and Then Finished with Cold Lead.

Arnold Pike, of a walrus hunt in Bird bay, to the south of Spitzbergen. The bay was full of fast ice, but eastward the sea was fairly open, and the hunter was coming slowly back to the sloop when the harpooner suddenly laid aside his gun and headed the boat for a blood red stain the salvage supplied into the size of a small house, but which was really a walrus.

"The walrus raises his head, and we are motionless," says Mr. Pike. "It is intensely still, and the scraping of a piece of ice along the boat seems like the roar of a train passing over a bridge. Down goes the head, and we glide forward again. The walrus is uneasy. Again and again he raises his head and looks around with a quick motion, but we have the oars right at our backs and be never notices us. At last we are within a few feet, and with a shout of 'Yock ep, gualing!' (Wake up, old boy), which breaks the stillness like a shot, the harpooner is on his feet, his weapon clasped in both hands above his head.

"As the walrus plunges into the sea the iron is buried to its stem, and with a quick twist to prevent the head from slipping out of the same slit that it has cut in the skin, he throws the handle in willingness and thrown into the boat. No 1, who with a turn round the forward thwart has been paying out the line, now checks it, as sinks and the 'harpooner,' being forward, hung back on their oars to check the rush. Bumping and scraping the ice, we are towed along for about five minutes and then stop as the walrus comes to the surface to breathe.

"In the old days the lance would finish the business, but now it is the rifle. He is farther the boat. I sight for one of his eyes and let him have both barrels without so much effect apparently, for away we go for two or three minutes more, when he is up again, still facing the boat. He comes to case no more for the solid expense bullets than if they were peas, but he is low this time, and as he turns to dive expose the fatal spot at the back of his head and close."—Milwaukee Wisconsin.

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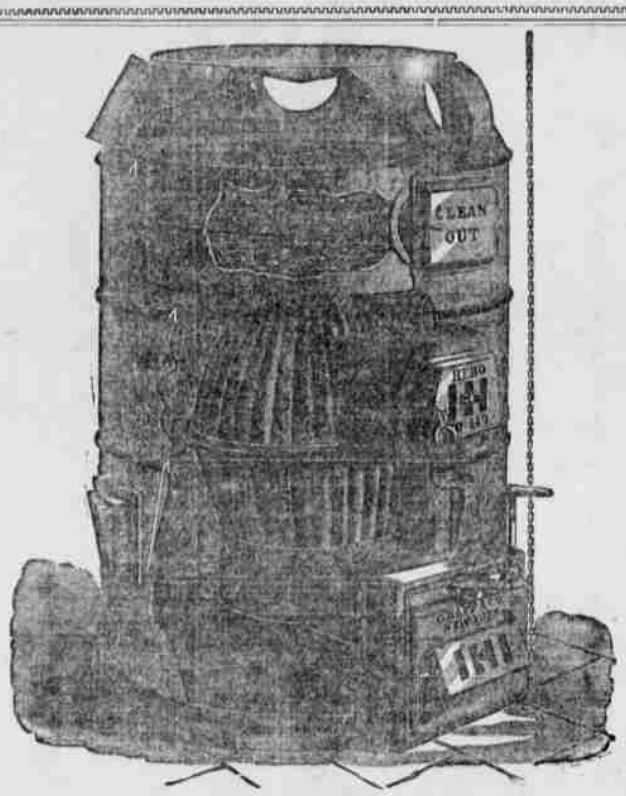

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