FARM AND GARDEN.

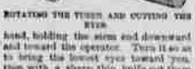
INFORMATION OF PRACTICAL IMPORTANCE TO RURAL READERS.

Observations on Cutting Seed Potatoes Made in a Bulletin Issued by the Virginia Experiment Station—Rocking Method of Cutting the Tuber Illustrated.

It is true that whole medium or large seed potatoes usually give an increased yield over smaller tubers or small cuttings, and also show a gain of a few days in reliable maturity; but they also show a very decidedly larger yield of small or unmarketable tubers, and increase the cost of seed many fold, varying of course with the local price used. This may be illustrated by stating that seed cut to "two eys" pieces requires 8 to 10 bushels to plant an acre if the pieces are placed 10 to 12 inches apart in the row, and the rows 2½ to 3 feet apart. Whole seed planted in hills 12 to 18 inches apart will require 40 to 60 bushels to plant an acre. The conditions desired in growing potatoes is to place the plants so as to occupy the entire ground, having them just far enough apart to secure good individual development of tubers. This can be best accomplished by small cuttings planted closely—say, rows 2½ feet apart and planted 10 inches apart in rows. With Early Ohio, Early Rebecca, Beauties and several other varieties so planted nearly the entire yield will be of marketable size.

The often practiced method of cutting the tubers for seed to lengthwise or crosswise at random and then cutting the pieces into smaller portions is reprehensible. There is in our estimation but one proper method of cutting seed, and we believe that growers who have once tried this method will assent to the above statement.

The method of cutting which we allude to is to take the tuber in the left



ROTATING THE TUBER AND CUTTING THE EYES.

hand, holding the stem end downward and toward the operator. Turn it so as to bring the lowest eye toward you, then with a sharp thin knife cut them out, making a curving downward stroke extending to the center and base of the tuber. Turn tuber slightly to bring other eyes toward the operator, and repeat the operation. The eyes of a potato are arranged more or less regularly around a spirally ascending axis, and by turning the potato slightly after each operation they can be cut away in compact pieces so as to give each one a nearly equal proportion of the tuber. This, of course, cannot be done at the seed end, and when the operator has removed the eyes as close as practicable to the seed end a good practice is to cut it down through the center.

This method of rotating the tuber and cutting the eyes away successively is shown in the cut. There, however, the illustration represents the pieces cut to one eye, but the system of cutting works equally well with the two eyed cuttings. And, for ordinary seed, the bulletin quoted from advises about that size. If the seed is cut in advance of planting, to save time in the rush of work, the pieces should be thoroughly dusted with plaster to prevent evaporation.

Our Farm Animals.

According to the annual report from the agricultural department at Washington the number of horses on farms is 14,056,756, with an average price of all ages at $63. The number of mules is 2,256,535, having an average value of $71.88. The number of milch cows is 16,619,583, an increase of 66,726 from last year. The average value per head is $21.63. There is a tendency to increase of dairying in the south, especially in the mountain region. Other cattle aggregate 36,870,648, including those on ranches. The highest value is $28.64, in Connecticut; the lowest $8.46, in Arkansas. The number of sheep is 42,411,126. The average value is $2.51, an increase of more than 10 per cent. All other kinds of farm animals have declined slightly in price. A tendency to increase of numbers is seen in most of the states. The aggregate number of swine is 50,629,196, showing a decline of nearly 2 per cent. The average value is $4.15, a decrease of 57 cents per head.

Advice About Fertilizers.

Manuring crops in the hill is simply to concentrate the fertilizer for a small space. Such a plan will answer if there is an insufficiency of the material used, but as the roots of plants spread over a large area in search of food it is better to broadcast all manures and fertilizers, this not only giving greater feeding capacity to the roots, but also permitting of a more intimate incorporation of the ingredients with the soil during cultivation of the crop. The Philadelphia Record, authority for the foregoing, further says: Mix plenty of land plaster with your manure. Plaster absorbs gases, arrests the escape of ammonia, and is of itself an excellent fertilizer. For grass crops and as a special fertilizer for clover it is unequalled. It is also cheap compared with its real value. Used in the hills with corn, plaster assists in attracting both moisture and ammonia from the air and gives the young plants a good start.

Mistakes in Pruning Trees.

Nothing in the shape of ornamental trees has a more awkward appearance than one of long legged form trimmed up with a bare stem as high as a man's head or a horse's back, capped off by an evergreen. Standing alone, they should be perfect specimens feathered all the way down to the ground, or if the trees are old, large and stately in growth, presenting the magnificence of broad spreading oaks or magnificent elms, the foliage and the with branches which sustain it should approach so near the ground that the kings claim would be barely visible.—Country Gentleman.

In all that pertains to art, science, wealth, prosperity, power and prestige the United States is going to lead old land English speaking nations, and other countries may as well face the fact and acquiesce in it. Britons may kick against our informal, shortened, common sense spelling, but money or lake they Americans will adopt it.

POULTRY THAT PAYS.

The Egg Type of Hens—Egg Food and Egg Production.

Rural New Yorker recently gave an account of how 100 pullets, hatched at one time and raised together, were placed in one house, and when one laid she was taken out. This was continued until there were fifty in each house.

THE "EGG TYPE," BUILT FOR LAYING.

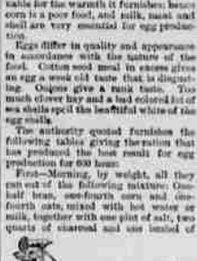
A critical examination showed that nearly all that were laying were of the No. 1 type—one flat cut—while those that were still unproductive resembled in shape and appearance No. 2—one arched cut—which is a longer legged, ungainly, slim bodied hen, that spends her time looking for something to get scared at. A record of the two flocks showed a difference of 39 per cent. in the number of eggs laid. No. 1 kept laying until nearly denuded of feathers, and molted moulting and began laying quicker than No. 2. A short legged, deep bodied, full breasted, wedge shaped, large combed hen, with a quiet disposition, has capacity to consume large quantities of food and return eggs instead of noise and flutter. The breeder is confident that this flock, grown from selected mothers, will average 200 eggs each per annum. The 39 per cent. advance obtained makes a difference of $1 each in the two flocks. There are "families" of butter cows among the Jerseys, and some day there will be "egg hens" among the already famous Leghorns. One of these improved hens placed in the hands of one ignorant of feeding eggs would be compelled to descend to a level with the rest of his flock from lack of a well balanced ration.

The egg shell is largely carbonate and phosphate of lime, while the edible portion is composed of 74.6 per cent. of water, 12.5 per cent. of albuminoids, 10 per cent. of fat and 2 per cent. of salt. This is the average of eighty eggs analyzed at the Geneva experiment station. Milk and meat are largely albumen. The hen cannot elaborate lime and albumen from fat or starchy food, which is chiefly valuable for the warmth it furnishes; hence corn is a poor food, and milk, meat and shell are very essential for egg production.

Eggs differ in quality and appearance in accordance with the nature of the food. Cotton seed meal in excess gives an egg a week old taste that is disgusting. Onions give a rank taste. Too much clover hay and a bad colored list of sea shells spoil the beautiful white of the egg shell.

The authority quoted furnishes the following tables giving the ration that has produced the best result for egg production for 600 hens:

First—Morning, by weight, all they can eat of the following mixture: One-half bran, one-fourth corn and one-fourth oats, mixed with hot water or milk, together with one pint of salt, two quarts of charcoal and one bushel of



THE "SCRATCHER TYPE," BUILT FOR OPEN THIS SCHOOL.

clover hay cut fine. If there be no milk add sixteen pounds of chopped meat and one bushel of beets cut fine.

Second—Noon, whole grain by measure. Two parts oats, one buckwheat and one wheat; give one quart to fifty hens in shell.

Third—Night, the same as second, all they will eat.

Fourth—Drink, milk or pure water.

For chickens, a cake made of sour milk, salt and soda made thick with sifted feed and baked, also cracked wheat.

Here and There.

There were 183 entries of Indian games exhibited at the late New York Poultry show.

And now we are told that Mr. George W. Childs has a $20,000 stable at Wayside.

An enterprising Iowa farmer who operates a big farm has called in the telephone as a means of direct communication with the various departments thereof.

A law protecting song birds has been passed in Oregon.

Over four thousand fowls were exhibited at the New York Poultry show.

From the Mississippi station comes the report that 10 feeding cows for milk and butter outmanured 14 more economical than outmanured meal.

A bill appropriating $600,000 for California's exhibit at the World's fair has passed the assembly.

The wheat crop of south Australia and New Zealand is reported short and of poor quality.

Lord Salisbury has taken a large contract on his hands. He has promised the British nation that his new royal commission will expose to the light the "unwholesome delusions and theories that are accepted as truths by the working classes." This little book will probably not be forgotten in the next elections by those classes that cherish the "delusions."

Is It Rum?

A distinguished gentleman who thinks he is trying to "benefit the masses" writes that the coffee house scheme certain benevolent individuals are trying to introduce instead of the saloon will not work because unfortunately those whom the effort is made to benefit are too fond of strong stimulants ever to be willing to substitute mild ones for them. From his point of view the sole object of the Saturday night saloon parties is drink and nothing else.

But is this so? Possibly those far away benevolent individuals who are trying to "benefit the masses" might learn something if they were to spend an evening behind the scenes at one of the Saturday night saloons whence the working men reel out in the small hours, leaving behind him much of his week's earnings and in time all of his self respect. They could listen to the stories that are told, see the games of cards that are played, hear the songs, and also note how eagerly every little incident is seized on and magnified that will afford fun or entertainment to the crowd.

At the close of the Saturday night revels the high and far away philanthropists or fine lady would learn, if still capable of learning, that it is not the rum or beer which is the main feature of the evening's entertainment. It is the social feature. The saloon is the poor man's club, and that is the truth about it. Give them tired workingmen a place where they could go for social amusement. Let there be a bulldozer there and a restaurant, where for workingmen's rates they could obtain a good warm supper. Then let them amuse themselves, subject to no goody good espionage, but to the same surprise, no more and no less, that is exercised over them in the saloon, and the chances are that against this sort of poor man's clubhouse, in the course of a short time, the saloon would stand no show at all. Let the good fellows smoke, tell their jokes and play cards and relax after their week of toil as they will. Let them pay cost prices for what they get, too, so they may feel this is not a charity thing at them by the "upper classes," but a place where they may at once amuse themselves and sustain their own self respect. There would be less gambling and more intellectual enjoyment, but we have no right to assume that the workingman would not appreciate this. Members Philanthropists, try it.

Shakers Claim Tobiah.

What a brave old Shaker Tobiah would make, to be sure! He has written to Elder Evans that the Oregon paper, The World's Advance Thought, has offered him great spiritual nourishment, and wrote it not for the spiritualistic tendency therein, which is foreign to his nature, it would appear, but for its absolutely. Then the mild mannered old Shaker brother, after the flesh, Frederick W. Evans, sits down and writes a long letter to the great Russian author, claiming him as already a brother.

Come to America and be of us, says Elder Evans to Tolstoi. He recounts the points on which Tolstoi and the Shakers agree. Both inculcate celibate lives and community of property. The American disciples of mother Ann Lee have reduced both these cardinal doctrines to absolute practice. The good Shaker brother also declares that Tolstoi is practically, speaking after the manner of unregenerate Americandom, all right, and that he is personally ministered to by a Christ spirit, as Jesus was. It is only anti-Christ, Elder Evans explains, that has made a God out of Jesus.

The elder says, moreover, that a Shaker preacher years ago predicted a mighty outpouring of the divine spiritual religion to Russia, the religion taught and professed by the Shakers, that is to say, to Tolstoi its apostle!

Best Dress for Women.

Something will certainly come of the agitation of the subject of women's dress. There is a growing tendency to regard the present style as unsuitable for women in business and outdoor work, but the trouble is to decide on what shall take the place of it.

The Evening Sun consulted a number of distinguished artists on the subject, and publishes their suggestions in the form of letters from each. Those who express decided opinion agree on a few points. One of these is that the artistic gown and that most agreeable to the wearer is the ancient Greek costume. Still this would not be available for business and work. It is too "loppy," as to speak. It might be modified, however.

Two parts of women's fashionable make up these artists unanimously condemn. Those are the tight waist and the high heeled, pointed toed shoe. They are horrors that between them ruin all grace in form and movement among women. There is no such thing as a waist line, really, and until lately no woman ever knew she had a waist. That it is an artificial creation is proved by the fact that it changes its place from time to time, according to the dictates of fashion; now drawing up to the armpits and again sliding far down on the hips. At present it is on the down grade, nearly to the extreme. If the ancient Greek lady had a string around her middle to confine the drapery, she generally concealed it artfully by a fold, that the long, up and down sweep might not be broken by the unsightly waist line.

Large cities ought to have at least one municipal lodging house, apart from the police stations, where decent strangers who have no money can go for a night's lodging. It often happens that excellent people who are not acquainted with city ways find themselves in need of just such a lodging house. Women and children get lost, strangers are robbed and swindled, and for other reasons want police protection. It is not fair to them to put them into a lodging with police criminals. Decent, cheaply quarters ought to be provided.

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