FARM AND PLANTATION TOPICS.

From the Rural Carolinian.

DRIED PLANTS AND THEIR TEACHINGS.

A friend who had devoted much attention to vegetable physiology, especially in its relation to agriculture, lately showed us two interesting specimens of dried plants. One was the common oat, which the botanists class among the *Gramineæ*, or grasses, and the other vetch, a leguminous plant, allied to the garden pea, the bean, the lupines, and the clovers. The plants had been grown in flower-pots, from which the ball of earth had been taken and carefully washed away from the roots, leaving them unbroken and entire. The oat plant, or, rather, clump of plants, presented a mass of roots which would be likely to astonish the unobserving farmer and open his eyes to the necessity of giving his crop breadth and depth of soil, as well as something to feed upon. The bulk and weight of the roots was, we think, two to one at least as compared with the parts growing above ground. In the vetch, on the contrary, the proportion was reversed—the roots making not more than one-third of the entire bulk. Now the vetch, like the clovers, is found to be exceedingly rich in nitrogen, and therefore very valuable as a green-soiling crop. When plowed under, it enriches the soil by supplying the required nitrogenous plant food. Where and how this and similar plants get the vast amount of nitrogen, which they store up to enrich the soil, is, perhaps, an open question. It was formerly believed that plants like vetch, garden peas, buckwheat, etc., whose roots are comparatively small and of limited extension, absorb ammonia directly from the atmosphere through their leaves. Late experiments seem to show conclusively that this is not the case. They get it through the roots exclusively, but it still appears certain that it must be the atmosphere that supplies it. It is (in its elements) in the air, the rains and the dew which permeate the soil, and in that laboratory of nature, and decomposed and made available in the form of ammonia. These facts, thus briefly and imperfectly stated, teach several lessons of immense practical value to the farmer. 1. That different classes of plants have different modes of feeding, as distinctly shown by their roots. 2. That certain leguminous plants, and probably all of them, in a greater or less degree, are great purveyors of nitrogenous plant food, and should therefore be made use of as green soiling crops to enrich the land for the grains and the fibre bearing plants, the lime and other ash elements being cheaply obtainable to complement them. 3. That in view of the fact that the fertilizing elements which are elaborated in the soil come so largely from the atmosphere, it is of the utmost importance that the land be well broken up and the soil kept loose and porous by judicious and frequent cultivation, so that air and moisture can freely penetrate it.

IMPROVEMENT OF CLAYEY SOILS.

One of the principal defects of clayey soils, especially where they rest upon a subsoil of the same nature, is the excess of water which is held in them. The only effectual way in a majority of cases to get rid of this is by thorough underdraining. This draws off by imperceptible degrees all the excess of water and opens the soil to the free admission of the air, which in its passage through it imparts warmth and such fertilizing gases as it may contain. Open drains or ditches, though less effectual, are useful. In some cases water furrows, terminating in some ravine or ditch, serve a good pupose. Lime is exceedingly useful as an ameliorator of clayey soils, inducing chemical combinations, the mechanical effec of which is to break up the too great tenacity of the clay, while it adds, at the same time, an element of fertility which may perhaps be wanting. Gypsum, or plaster of Paris, has the same effect in a still more powerful degree. Ashes, coarse vegetable manures, straw, leaves, chips, etc., are also very useful, adding new materials to the soil, and tending to separate its particles and destroy their strong cohesion. Clayey lands must never be plowed when wet.

CLOVER AS AN ACCUMULATOR OF NITROGEN.

We find it stated that Dr. Voelcker, by a series of the most exhaustive analyses of soils and of plants, has discovered and established the fact that an immense amount of nitrogenous food accumulates in the soil during the growth of clover, especially in the surface soil; amounting, including that in the clover roots and tops, to three and a half tons of nitrogen per acre; equal to four tons and a third of ammonia. If this be a fact, the wonderful effects of clover, vetch, and similar plants on the soil cease to be mysterious, and the farmer need no longer buy ammonia in his commercial fertilizers, but only add to the soil the lime and other ash elements required, which can be cheaply furnished in available forms.

CHEATED—THE BROMUS SECALINUS SWINDLE.

Sometime ago a specimen of wheat, in which there were a few grains of chess, or cheat, was presented to the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences. It seemed at first as if the scientists were to be confounded and nature made to contradict herself. The specimen laid before the learned men of the academy was a head of wheat, to which small branches of chess were united, and apparently in a very natural manner. The specimen was finally referred to the "microscopical section," who report that the thing was a trick. The chess was nearly inserted into the wheat stalk, and held there by a substance "which the committee believe to be gum tragacanth."

WINTER PLANTING IN THE SOUTH.

In ordinary seasons, our winters in the lower south, or South Atlantic and Gulf Coast regions, are so mild that the hardier vegetables grow finely, and remain uninjured during the coldest months—December and January—but, occasionally, severer freezes occur, and the gardener must be content to take some risks, even in the case of the hardiest species. This, in the limited operations of the family garden, he can well afford to do, for failure costs merely a little not unpleasant labor and a few seeds, and success rewards him with an early and excellent crop. An excellent contrivance for securing plants in rows against frost consists in two boards, a foot wide, nailed together at the edges in the form of a three-cornered trough, made of light thin boards; these are easily handled, and a few such protectors will be found very useful. It is better that the ends should be closed, though the mere shelter of the lateral pieces will be sufficient in case of light frosts. In planting seeds of any kind at this season of the year, it is best that the rows should be slightly elevated above the general surface, and the covering be light. A good way is to saw on the surface, and then scatter or sift over them a little vegetable mold or light soil.

USEFUL KNOWLEDGE.

CABBAGE WORM.—After trying various remedies, we have found boiling hot water from a watering-pot, the simplest, easiest, and most effectual mode of destroying the cabbage worm. If applied quickly and not too long on the leaves, it produces no injury. It is easy repeated as occasion requires.

IT may not be possible to procure sand enough for mixing with large quantities of roots intended as food for stock. The next best thing to be done is to keep them secure from frost, light and air, and to prevent heating and fermentation by the use of air-flues. Carrots, rutabagas, beets and mangolds should be stored before they are damaged by frost, as they never keep well after being frozen.—*Western Rural.*

FAMILY GLUE.—We make our glue in the following way; Crack up the glue and put it in a bottle; add to it common whisky; shake up, cork tight, and in three or four days it can be used. It requires no heating, will keep for almost any time, and is at all times ready to use except in the coldest of weather, when it will require warming. It must be kept tight, so that the whisky will not evaporate. The usual corks or stoppers should not be used. It will become clogged. A tin stopper, covering the bottle but fitting as closely as possible, must be used.

THE United States of America produce annually about 275,000,000 bushels of wheat, or about 6½ bushels per capita. Of this amount they consume over 230,000,000 bushels, or about 5½ bushels per capita; and have about 42,000,000 surplus left for sale, The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland produces annually about 95,000,000 bushels of wheat, and consumes 190,000,000 bushels, or about 5¾ bushels per capita. It has therefore a deficit to purchase, amounting to as much, of wheat, as all it produces, or 95,000,000 bushels. Thus, England has two bushels of wheat to buy where we have one to sell.

STAIR CARPETS.—To prevent the pile from separating at the edge of the stair and wearing off, pads are used; these are made of a low grade of cotton, covered with the cheapest muslin. A quilt or comfort that has seen service will answer the purpose of stair pads. In addition to increasing the lease of usefulness of the carpet, the pads prevent noisy clattering of feet, and, in case the baby should fall downstairs, the injury received would be materially lessened. When first laid down the carpet should be several inches longer than needed, that it may be disposed of after each shaking so that a fresh place may come to all the edges. A wisp or small dusting broom is the best for sweeping stair carpets. After thorough sweeping a wet cloth may be used to good advantage in removing all dust.

MARY was the proprietress of a diminutive, incipient sheep, whose outer covering was as devoid of color as congealed vapor, and to all localities to which Mary perambulated, her young Southdown was morally certain to follow. It tagged her to the dispensatory of learning, one diurnal section of time, which was contrary to all precedent, and excited the cachination of the seminary attendants, when the children perceived the presence of a young quadruped at the establishment of instruction. Consequently, the preceptor expelled him from the interior, but he continued to remain in the immediate vicinity, and tarried in the neighborhood without fretfulness until Mary once more became visible.

PREPARING FOR WAR.

A Special Message from the President—Recommending an Appropriation for Sea-Coast Defenses.

The president sent the following message to the senate and house of representatives:

In my annual message of December 1, 1873, while inviting general attention to recommendations made by the secretary of war, your special attention was invited to the importance of the preparation for war in the armament of our sea-coast defenses proper. This armament is of vastly more importance than fortifications. The latter can be supplied very speedily for temporary purposes when needed. The former cannot. These views gain increased strength as years roll by. I have now again the honor to call special attention to the armament of our fortifications, and the absolute necessity for the immediate provision by congress for the procurement of heavy cannon. The large expenditures required to supply the number of guns for our forts, is the strongest argument that can be adduced for a liberal annual appropriation for their gradual accumulation. In the time of war such preparations cannot be made.

The constant appeals for legislation on the armament of fortifications, ought no longer to be disregarded, if congress desires to prepare for important material, without which the future must inevitably lead to disaster. This subject is submitted with the hope that the consideration it deserves may be given it the present session.

[Signed] U. S. GRANT.

WILL WONDERS NEVER CEASE?—When Dr. Walker proclaimed that he had produced from the medicinal herbs of California an elixir that would regenerate the sinking system and cure every form of disease not organic, the incredulous shook their heads. Yet his Vinegar Bitters is now the standard restorative of the western world. Under the operation of the new remedy, dyspeptics regain their health; the bilious and constipated are relieved of every distressing symptom; the consumptive and remittent fevers are broken; the hereditary taint of scrofula is eradicated! Skepticism is routed, and this wonderful preparation is to-day the most popular tonic, alterative, and blood depurent ever advertised in America. We don't sell rum under the guise of medicine. We advertise and sell a pure medicine which will stand analysis by any chemist in the country.

NO USE of any longer taking the large, repulsive, griping, drastic and nauseous pills, composed of crude and bulky ingredients, and put up in cheap wood or paste-board boxes, when we can, by a careful application of chemical science, extract all the cathartic and other medicinal properties from the most valuable roots and herbs, and concentrate them into a minute Granule, scarcely larger than a mustard seed, that can be readily swallowed by those of the most sensitive stomachs and fastidious tastes. Each of Dr. Pierce's Pleasant Purgative Pellets represents, in a most concentrated form, as much cathartic power as is embodied in any of the large pills found for sale in the drug stores. From their wonderful cathartic power, in proportion to their size, people who have not tried them are apt to suppose that they are harsh or drastic in effect, but such is not at all the case, the different active medicinal principles of which they are composed being so harmonized, one by the others, as to produce a most searching and thorough, yet gently and kindly operating cathartic. The Pellets are sold by dealers in medicines.

An Ex-Confederate in Luck.

J. C. Borlean, residing at Happy Jack, Louisiana, who gave an arm to the "Lost Cause," won a $3,000 piece of property in Col. J. E. Foster's Oct. Distribution at Houston, Texas. Louisianians are investing largely in the Second Distribution, which takes place March 3d.

AN Irishman called at a drug store to get a bottle of Johnson's Anodyne Liniment for the Rheumatism; the druggist asked him in what part of the body it troubled him most, "Be me soul," said he, "I have it in ivery houl and corner er me."

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Scrofula, or King's Evil, White Swellings, Ulcers, Erysipelas, Swelled Neck, Goitre, Scrofulous Inflammations, Indolent Inflammations, Mercurial Affections, Old Sores, Eruptions of the Skin, Sore Eyes, etc. In these, as in all other constitutional Diseases, WALKER'S VINEGAR BITTERS have shown their great curative powers in the most obstinate and intractable cases.

For Inflammatory and Chronic Rheumatism, Gout, Bilious, Remittent and Intermittent Fevers, Diseases of the Blood, Liver, Kidneys and Bladder, these Bitters have no equal. Such Diseases are caused by Vitiated Blood.

Mechanical Diseases.—Persons engaged in Paints and Minerals, such as Plumbers, Type-setters, Gold-beaters, and Miners, as they advance in life, are subject to paralysis of the Bowels. To guard against this, take a dose of WALKER'S VINEGAR BITTERS occasionally.

For Skin Diseases, Eruptions, Tetter, Salt-Rheum, Blotches, Spots, Pimples, Pustules, Boils, Carbuncles, Ring-worms, Scald-head, Sore Eyes, Erysipelas, Itch, Scurfs, Discolorations of the Skin, Humors and Diseases of the Skin of whatever name or nature, are literally dug up and carried out of the system in a short time by the use of these Bitters.

Pin, Tape, and other Worms, lurking in the system of so many thousands, are effectually destroyed and removed. No system of medicine, no vermifuges, no anthelminitics will free the system from worms like these Bitters.

For Female Complaints, in young or old, married or single, at the dawn of womanhood, or the turn of life, these Tonic Bitters display so decided an influence that improvement is soon perceptible.

Cleanse the Vitiated Blood whenever you find its impurities bursting through the skin in Pimples, Eruptions, or Sores; cleanse it when you find it obstructed and sluggish in the veins; cleanse it when it is foul; your feelings will tell you when. Keep the blood pure, and the health of the system will follow.

R. H. McDONALD & CO., Druggists and Gen. Agts., San Francisco, California and cor. of Washington and Charlton Sts., N. Y.

Sold by all Druggists and Dealers.