

Farm Intercasts.

The Idol-Breaking Census.

Cor. Country Gentleman.

The census has broken some cherished idols, cleared the mists from many a social landscape, bringing us face to face with numerous industrial, economical and social problems of grave import.

In the New-England and Middle States, perhaps, such diminution may be attributed in part to the unprofitableness of agriculture and the consequent abandonment of farms and the conversion of fields into permanent pasture or meadow, but it is more largely due to the same causes as have been somewhat more clearly in operation farther west, i. e., a progressive increase in the invention and use of labor-saving devices displacing great numbers of farm laborers.

Like economies obtain in growing oats, rye and barley, while the improvements in corn culture are equally great. Forty years ago corn land was furrowed out one way, and if it was desired to plant in the best manner, marked out the other, the seed dropped by hand and covered with a hoe.

Later still came the Lister, which, on suitable lands, like the friable looms of the Missouri valley, enables one man with three horses to prepare and plant from six to nine acres per day, and then with improved cultivators to work an equal number of acres per day; so that with the (single) Lister and improved cultivating devices, the labor involved in preparing the land, planting and cultivating each acre of "listed corn," is but six-tenths of one day's work.

It is possible that neither of these implements may, as yet, be so perfected as to do just what their inventors claim; but the operations which they are intended to perform are not complex, and their success is, at most, a question of one or two years. I believe the two-row cultivator is already an assured success, and I expect with these two implements to be able, not later than 1893, to prepare the land, plant and cultivate corn at an expenditure of three-tenths of a day's work for each acre grown.

such an invention (and their success is also only a question of time), the ground will be prepared, the acre of corn be planted, cultivated, husked and cribbed—on farms large enough to warrant the use of these improved implements—at an expenditure of six-tenths of one day's labor; or counting the man's labor at \$1.25 per day, and the average crop at 30 bushels per acre, the labor cost—not including cost of team, which is rightfully a part of the farmer's capital—will not exceed 2½ cents per bushel.

In the potato field the planter and digger have already reduced, or will soon reduce, the labor involved in like ratio, and the labor in the hay field has certainly been so reduced by the use of the mower, tedder, rake, loader, stacker and carrier. It is these multifarious labor-saving devices which, lightening farm labor and making it somewhat less wearisome, has reduced the number required to produce a given quantity of agricultural staples (except cotton) to one-fourth what would have been necessary 40 years since.

One result has been the continuous and progressively greater efficiency of the men employed, thus forcing constantly increasing numbers from the old farming districts either into the towns or on to the public lands, to which resorted many of those displaced in the factory by a like progressive improvement in industrial appliances, but who can no longer avail themselves of such alternative, as there are (practically) no public lands worth farming outside the limited areas of the Indian reservations and the irrigable tracts in the arid districts.

With the continued improvement of labor saving devices, a force equal to that now employed on the farms will probably be quite large enough to cultivate all the land which can be brought into cultivation in the United States. If this assumption is correct, of four sons born on the farm, one will drop into the father's place, and the other three must, in the absence of new farms to be opened on the public domain, of necessity go to swell the population of village, town and city.

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will wages, and the farmer, having ceased to borrow, so will fall the rate of interest and all rents except those of agricultural lands.

C. WOOD DAVIS.

Cow Peas for Green Manure.

Cor. Country Gentleman.

The advice of E. W. S. (p. 34) concerning the use of cow peas as a renovating crop, demands something more to be said on that subject. I have great respect for Prof. Stewart's opinion on the scientific feeding of farm animals, and feel that he has done much good by his free and full advice on that subject; but he has evidently not had much experience in the growth of cow peas, and is clearly "out of water" on that point.

In the first place Prof. Stewart errs in supposing peas to be more expensive than clover. It costs more to put the land in peas than clover, but let me show you where the big balance comes in on the other side. When peas are \$1 per bushel here, clover seed usually ranges from \$4.50 to \$5. We usually sow one bushel clover seed to six acres, and 14 bushels peas per acre. Take it at the lowest figure for clover and we have 75 cents per acre for clover seed and \$1.50 for peas sown. We can hire land turned for \$1 per acre, and allowing 60 cents for harrowing we have the whole cost of putting the land in peas—\$3 per acre as against 75 cents for clover.

Turn the hogs in upon this field and when they are through harvesting it you have a crop of stover, worth fully as much as a crop of clover for green manure; and you have not lain out of the use of the land for a whole year to get it. The peas were put in after the wheat was harvested, and you may put the land back in wheat again, or any other crop, after the peas are off.

Again, Prof. S. is at fault in supposing that clover has a long tap root than cow peas. The fact is, that with us, peas will send their roots much deeper. I had almost said twice as deep as clover on the same land, and we count this a good clover country, too. Upon very thin land we cannot count for any certainty in getting a stand of clover; but when we sow a crop of peas, we are absolutely certain of something of a crop unless the whole soil is positively barren.

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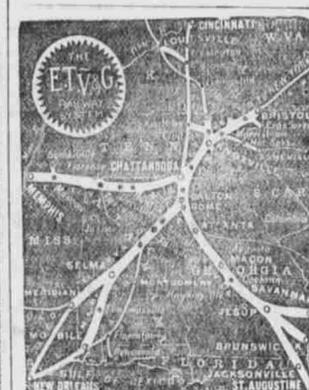
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