

Aunt Diana

The Sunshine of the Family

CHAPTER XVIII.—(Continued.)

Missie had plenty of good sense, and she no longer stified it; her conscience told her that she would never have sinned so grievously against her father if Eva had not undermined her principles by her flattery and playful words of advice to be independent and assert herself.

A veil had fallen from her eyes; she no longer saw Eva's conduct in the same light, and as she grew better, and Eva sought opportunities to be with her, the disillusion became more complete. Missie found herself wondering over her own infatuation. Had Eva always been so loud in her manner, so unkind in her behavior to her mother, so unkind to Anna? Missie at first grew critical and then reproachful. Strange to say, Eva accepted her rebukes very meekly—evidently her affection for Missie was sincere in its way, for she took some pains to please her, and even tried to break herself of her faults. But for her unkind engagement with Captain Harper there was every probability that Missie might have influenced her for good; but her approaching marriage soon drove all salutary reflection away.

As Missie's violent infatuation for her friend cooled, she turned more and more to Alison for sympathy; and here at least she did not find herself disappointed—Alison returned her affection warmly.

Missie was a little exacting as an invalid, for she was still separated from her father, and, alas! there was still cause to be anxious for him.

Dr. Greenwood never told Alison what he had feared; but after a few days, when he and another doctor had consulted together over the case, he told her and Roger that there was certainly some degree of mischief in connection with the spine; it would be many months—perhaps a year or two—before he could rise from his couch.

"We certainly hope for his complete recovery in the future," he continued, reassuringly, as Alison turned pale and Roger looked unhappy. "Another inch and he would never have moved his limbs again; but now things are not so bad. Mr. Merle will have his books, and they will go far to console him in his enforced inaction."

Dr. Greenwood was right in his conjecture; Mr. Merle took the tidings very quietly.

"I told you your broad shoulders were made for something," he said, looking at his son with a smile. He and Alison had come to bid him good-night.

The nurse had not been dismissed, though it was already arranged that Roger should take her place in his father's dressing room.

"I shall have to leave the mill in your hands. Greenwood gives me no hope of being fit for business for the next year or two."

"I will do everything I can, father," returned Roger, sorrowfully; "but I feel awfully cut up about it all."

"There is no need for that, my boy," returned Mr. Merle. "I should not wonder if you do better at business than I, Roger. Perhaps this will be less a trial to me than you suppose. I do not deny, of course, that it is a trial; but still, with my books and children I shall try to be content."

"We shall do everything in our power to ease your mind," returned Roger, bravely. But he said no more, and shortly afterward left the room, leaving his father and Alison together.

"Roger feels this dreadfully," she said, anxious that her father should not misunderstand his son's lack of words.

"Yes, my dear, I know he does," returned Mr. Merle, with a sigh. "I am fortunate to have such a son. To think," he added, with emotion, "that I could ever have been so blind as to believe that villain's insinuations against him—and now the whole business is in his hands."

"You can trust him fully, papa."

"Yes, better than I can trust myself, Alison; that boy is true as steel, and will not fall me. I wish I had found it out before. I remember your aunt Diana once saying to me that 'if I studied my children as well as I did my books I should be rewarded for my pains.' By the bye, Alison, what does your aunt say to all this unkind accident?"

"We have not heard from her," returned Alison, in a low voice. "Roger wrote the very next day after the accident, and I wrote the next day; but we have had no reply."

"That is very unlike Diana," observed Mr. Merle, in a surprised tone.

"Roger says that she can not have received our letters, papa; you see she is in Switzerland, and perhaps she has deviated from the proposed route—that is just her way; if she takes a fancy to a place she will stay there for a day or two, and then she does not get her letters for days. If we do not hear from her soon, Roger thinks I had better write to Mr. Moore. It does seem so strange—her eyes filling with tears—that Aunt Di should not know how unhappy we have been."

"I believe you are fretting after her, Alison—you are quite thin and fragile looking."

But Alison denied this with a great deal of unnecessary energy. She was only a little tired; but now Mabel was getting better she would be able to have a walk sometimes.

"But you must not talk any more, papa," she finished; "you are looking rather exhausted. Nurse Meyrick will be here directly; may I read to you a little until she comes?"

Mr. Merle shook his head sadly.

"My dear, I should like it of all things, but you know Dr. Greenwood has forbidden any kind of study for the next few weeks, and I never cared much for works of fiction, except Sir Walter Scott."

"I meant a chapter or two out of the Bible before you went to sleep," returned Alison, blushing with timidity.

A sudden shadow passed over Mr. Merle's face.

"I did not understand you, my dear," he said, with a little effort. "Well, child,

do as you like—that sort of reading can not hurt one."

Alison felt the permission was accorded rather ungraciously, but still she dared not refuse to avail herself of it. She brought the Bible—Aunt Diana's gift—and sat down quietly by her father's side.

The voice trembled a little as she read, but she did not know how sweet it sounded in her father's ear. Once when she looked up she found his eyes fixed on her face, and stopped involuntarily.

"Shall I leave off, papa?"

"Yes, that will do for to-night; you may read to me to-morrow. You are so like your mother, Alison; she was fond of her Bible, too. You are a good girl, and take after her."

"Poor dear mamma. How hard it must be for you, papa, to lie there missing her."

"Ah!" he said, averting his face. "It is a lifelong loss. I think I never knew any one so good—not even Diana could compare with her. Do you know you reminded me so much of her that day when you wanted me to go to church. Child, your reproachful eyes quite haunted me. Ah, well! if ever I get well—"

He paused with a sigh.

"You will come with us then, papa," she said, softly.

"I hope so, Alison, but I fear it will be a long time before I have the chance. When a man has looked death in the face, as I have, who might have been hurried into eternity without a moment's preparation, he thinks a little more seriously about being spared—I think I am. You shall come and read to me every night if you like, my dear; it is a grand book, the Bible."

Alison's heart was too full to answer him, but as Nurse Meyrick came into the room at that moment she leaned over and kissed his forehead.

"Good-night, dear papa; I hope you will sleep well."

"Good-night," he answered, cheerfully, "and give my love to Missie."

Alison felt strangely happy as she left her father's room; it seemed to her as though they were coming closer to each other. There had been a look in her father's eyes and a caressing tone in his voice that told her that she was becoming very dear to him. She said to herself in her young gladness that Providence had accepted her sacrifice—her father's heart was no longer closed to her, and Mabel was beginning to love her. "Ask and it shall be given to you," was abundantly realized in her case—so true it is that love begets love, that the Divine seed of charity sown broadcast, even over barren hearts, will still yield some thirty-fold, some sixty-fold, some hundred-fold.

Alison's tranquil rest that night was only a preparation for a most trying day. Missie had left her bed for the couch that afternoon. When Alison had placed her comfortably, she had gone downstairs for a few minutes to speak to Anna, leaving Miss Leigh in charge. Anna detained her longer than usual—she had so much to say on the subject of Eva's approaching marriage, and while Alison was still talking and listening, Miss Leigh hurried down stairs with a very pale face.

"I wish you would come," she said, in much agitation; "Mabel is so very hysterical I can do nothing with her. Perhaps I have been incautious, but she questioned me so closely as to what the physicians said about her father that I could not avoid telling her."

"Oh, dear, what a pity. I meant to have told her myself when she was better," observed Alison, somewhat reproachfully.

Miss Leigh's tact was often at fault, and she had chosen an unlucky moment for breaking the news to Missie—just when she was weary with the fatigue of dressing.

Alison found her in a sad state—sobbing bitterly, with her head hidden in the pillows—and for a long time she refused to allow Alison to raise her into a more comfortable position. To her relief, Roger entered the room and asked immediately, in his downright manner, what was the matter, and why Missie was making herself ill.

"This brought on a fresh burst."

"Oh, Roger! what shall I do? Poor papa!"

"It is poor Mabel, I think," observed Roger, kindly, and he raised the sobbing little figure in his arms and brought the wet face into view. "I declare, child, you are a perfect Niobe. Allee, what are we to do with her?"

"He will not get up for months—perhaps for years—and it is all my fault!" cried Missie, passionately.

"Perhaps so, my dear, but do you suppose all these showers of tears will do father any good?"

"I must cry—I ought to cry when I am so unhappy," returned Missie, impatiently, and trying to free herself.

"No, my dear, no," was Roger's quiet answer; "you have given us all so much trouble that you ought to spare us any noisy repentance; the best thing you can do for us all is to get as well and happy as you can, and help to nurse father."

CHAPTER XIX.

Missie left off crying and stared at Roger. He told Alison afterward that those half-drowned blue eyes made him feel quite bad—but then Roger was such a soft-hearted fellow.

"You do not understand," she said at last, very slowly.

"My dear little sister," he said, taking her hand, "I do understand, and so does Alison, and we are both agreed on this point. Repentance is apt to be troublesome if it is carried beyond due bounds—and, in fact, it can degenerate into selfishness—and you are really very selfish about this."

"Oh, Roger!" exclaimed Alison, a little shocked at this plain speaking. But Roger knew what he was about; he was determined, as he said quaintly, "to seal up the fountain of Missie's tears."

"Is he not unkind?" returned poor Missie, piteously. "He calls me selfish, just because I am so sorry about papa."

"We are all sorry, Mabel," returned her brother, seriously, "though we do not go about the house wetting the floors with our tears, like medieval sinners. I declare it makes one quite damp to come near you—it is really bad for your health, my dear."

"Now you are laughing at me," she replied, pettishly.

"True, and that is the unkindest cut of all, is it not? But I am not laughing when I talk about your selfishness—"

you see you are just going against the wise old proverb, 'Never cry over spilled milk.' The mischief is done, my dear, but every one in the house has forgiven you for being the cause of it, and now you must forgive yourself."

"Oh, I can not," she said. "I shall be miserable until papa is well."

"There speaks selfishness," he returned, quickly. "My dear Mabel, why think about yourself at all? why not think how tired Alison looks, and how you may spare her? I am sure a cheerful word from you would do her no end of good."

Missie seemed struck by his words. She looked at her sister rather scrutinizingly. Certainly Alison did look pale, and there were dark rings round her eyes. Roger saw his advantage, and went on.

"You have no idea how people in a house act and react on each other—a depressing person is like a perpetual fog. I think I shall coin that speech as a proverb. You know I am a bit of a philosopher—Roger the sage—that sounds well."

Missie's lips curved into a smile; a little dimple came into view.

"Come, that's about the real article—a little more, and we shall have a rainbow effect," observed Roger in a delighted tone. "Now, we have the whole thing in working order. You have done wrong and been sorry for it—good!"—with an impressive pause; "now you are going to do better, and not think about yourself at all, but how you are to make us all happier. Good again. Thirdly and lastly, you are to turn over a new leaf and cultivate cheerfulness and that sort of thing."

"I will try," sighed Missie, raising her face to be kissed, "but it will be dreadfully hard."

"Most things are hard," was the philosophical reply; "but we shall never do much good in the world by sitting in the dust and casting ashes on ourselves—that sort of thing doesn't seem to belong to the present dispensation."

"No, it is 'Let the dead bury their dead,' now," observed Alison, in a moved voice. "Now, Roger, you may leave Missie to me; she is tired out, and I am going to read her to sleep."

"But I am not sleepy," replied Missie, reluctant to let Roger go, but it showed her new submission to Alison that she made no further protest—only as Alison read, Missie lay quiet, with a softened look in her eyes. Yes, she would try and bear it; they should not be any longer troubled.

"Thank you, dear," she said presently, as she noticed how Alison's voice flagged; "the book is very pretty, but I want you to leave off now and take a turn in the garden. Do please, Alison, it is such a lovely evening, and it will do you so much good. Poppie can come to me, she is a good girl and does not tire me."

"Are you sure, Mabel dear, that you can spare me?" asked Alison, anxiously.

"Quite sure," was Missie's answer, and then Alison consented to leave her. She was conscious that her strength was failing her a little; the close confinement and anxiety for the last fortnight were trying to her constitution; broken rest at night often followed the long day's work. She was pining, too, for a word from her dearest friend. She had written two days ago to Mr. Moore, questioning him about Miss Carrington's movements, but had received no answer from the confidential servant who acted as the blind man's amanuensis, and, in spite of her efforts to be cheerful, she was feeling dull and deserted.

(To be continued.)

Wedding Superstitions.

In spite of all her sound good sense, a German girl cherishes certain superstitions which she likes to observe on her wedding day. For instance, the moon must be increasing, neither at the full nor on the wane, for a waning moon foretells that marriage, love and luck will dwindle, while a full moon denotes but stationary luck at the best; but a waxing marriage moon will bring an increase of nuptial happiness, health and prosperity, says Woman's Life.

Neither will any German bride, of whatever rank, wear pearls, for she firmly believes in the forbidding old adage, "The more pearls a woman wears upon her wedding day, the more tears she sheds in after life." In the Fatherland, too, if it rains upon the bridal day, the bride will wisely look upon the best side of the matter, and regards the glistening raindrops not as her English sister does—as prophetic of tears, but "showers of blessings," while if she weeps at her marriage, she laughs after, saying she has spent her tears beforehand, so that she will have none to shed in her new home.

Sympathy.

It was in the art museum.

"Yes, Mandy," said Mr. Hardapple, as he referred to his catalogue, "this is a statue of Venus. You see, she hasn't any arms."

"Poor thing!" sighed Mrs. Hardapple. "I was just wondering."

"Wondering what, my dear?"

"Why, how in the world she ever carried her shopping bag."

A Sympathetic Strain.

"Do you think you are benefited by your sojourn at the seashore?"

"No," answered Mr. Sirius Barker. "Our hotel was at one of those sandy stretches where people tired themselves out in week-end holidays. When you looked at the place you felt sorry for the people and when you looked at the people you felt sorry for the place."—Washington Star.

Weighted in the Hand.

"Some grocers," remarked the customer, "have an off-hand way of weighing sugar, but I notice you're not one of them."

"Off-hand way? How do you mean?" asked the grocer.

"I noticed you kept your hand on the scales just now while you measured out five pounds for me."—Philadelphia Press.

A boy or girl may legally wed in Australia at 14.

FRIVOLOUS MADRID.

Spanish Capital a Spendthrift Town and Devoted to Gossip.

The note of Madrid is frivolity. It is a spendthrift town. Nowhere do so many people of modest means keep carriages, or at least hire them. The automobile has supplied a new outlet to an old passion.

Nowhere do so many people who cannot afford to have a motor driver, or to buy regular supplies of petrol (which, to be sure, is both dear and bad in Spain) keep an automobile. Therefore they turn out now and again for a short run at high speed to their glorification and the danger of the public. As for that public, it lives in the streets and in a perpetual state of brisk talk.

What London or Paris news comes through to Madrid, except telegrams, is mostly gossip. Important matters appear to interest the Madrilenos little. What did interest him was when a young person appeared on horseback in Hyde Park in a director's costume. Feather-headed and light-heeled, the Madrilenos is, on the other hand, good natured and easy to live with.

Madrid women dress well, even very well, and the charm of the Spanish woman is never denied. Modern Madrid is sometimes supposed to be modeled on modern Paris, but the writer's view is that there is nothing Parisian about Madrid, except the skin.

Paris works desperately hard, is intensely interested in serious things and produces thinkers and men of intellectual and scientific eminence. Madrid certainly does not work hard, does not appear to be much interested in anything but frivolity, and few of her greatest men, even statesmen, are much more than names.—London Times.

THE FAMILY DOCTOR



Itching.

Pruritus, or itching, is not a disease in itself, but is a symptom of so many unhealthy states of the system, or merely of the skin, that it has given rise to a formidable list of prescriptions and suggestions for treatment. A great deal of itching is caused by eczema. It is the kind that is called "dry" or "scaly" eczema which gives rise to a most disagreeable and persistent form of itching, which sometimes does not stop even after the skin seems to have healed.

Another form, called "senile pruritus," attacks old people whose circulation is defective and whose skin has a tendency to become thin and atrophied. In many of these cases it will be found that there is little or no perspiration, and this fact has much to do with the constant irritation of the skin that some old people complain of so bitterly, and which is often so aggravated as to threaten the general health, if not life itself, by reason of the incessant nervous irritation and loss of rest. Anything that will restore the lost function of perspiring will relieve the itching in many of these cases.

A most intense and horrible form of itching is, as we all know, often caused by the bites of certain insects. People differ greatly in their susceptibility to the bites of insects, but some are driven almost crazy by the bite of a mosquito. This itching is caused by the irritating quality of the acid poison injected by the insect, and is best met, not by yielding to the impelling instinct to scratch, but by quickly meeting the acid poison by the application of an alkali, such as household ammonia, or, simplest of all, by rubbing the spot with a piece of common soap.

In nervous itching, where there is no break in the skin, great relief is often obtained by menthol, which relieves by substituting one sensation for another, but of course has no curative effect.

Persons with thin and irritable skins, prone to itch easily, should always wear silk or soft gauze undergarments and if they wear woolen underwear should take care that it does not come next to the body.

There are as many lotions and ointments for the relief of this trouble as there are causes for it, but these should be prescribed only by the physician who has ascertained the cause in each particular case.

Mrs. Carnegie and the Poor.

Few people know that prior to her marriage Mrs. Andrew Carnegie was an ardent worker among the poor and has continued her work, though in a more restricted fashion. She was Miss Louise Whitfield and is many years the junior of Mr. Carnegie. The one child of the union, Margaret, was for some years exceedingly frail, a fact which caused Mrs. Carnegie to keep well hidden from the public eye. Even now that Margaret is a sturdy girl has mother shuns society and devotes herself to home life.

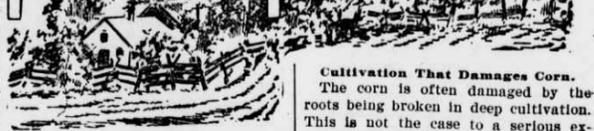
Buckwheat from "Buche."

The word "buckwheat" comes from the German "buche," or buck wheat. It is so called because it is triangular.

There is some objection because a man keeps his wife busy all day Sunday waiting on him.

The amateur gardener raises more blisters than vegetables.

FARMS AND FARMERS



Plans for Farm Barn.

The many very marked changes in farm life would lead one to believe that the large farm is, or soon will be, a thing of the past. The high price of farm help, the necessity for better cultivation and farming, fewer and better bred stock, better care of stock, better buildings for housing the hay, grain and stock, has or soon will bring the small farm, and, so planned and arranged that a greater variety of products are raised.

Many instances are known where the man who had struggled for years with 200 to 500 acres, barely made a living, and of doubling their income by simply renting out all of the land except fifty to eighty acres. That several cows must be kept on such a farm goes without saying, not only for the monthly income and profit, but for the manure that is necessary to keep the soil alive.



HARDY SMALL BARN.

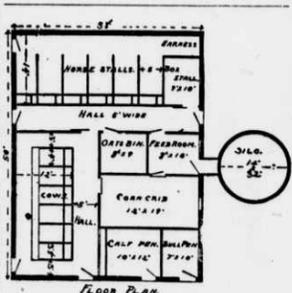
Present sanitary requirements call for many devices and appliances that cannot be installed on the small farm, but cleanliness and kindness is within the possibilities of any of us, and while it is true that to house the cows in the same building with the horses has some disadvantages, it also has its advantages, and to build separate buildings for both, is not only expensive, but calls for extra help in caring for and feeding them.

A careful study of the barn shown in the illustration herewith will show what we will call a condensed arrangement, and, while the cows are in the same barn with the horses, a good, tight partition separates them from the horse barn, to keep out the dust and odors. For the same reason the silo is located where shown, for silage, no matter how well cared for, has an offensive odor, that is readily absorbed by milk.

The floor plan is self-explaining, the silo is an ordinary stave structure, with wire cables for hoops, as the cable is not so easily affected by contraction and expansion as the solid iron hoops. The crib has the foundation left out as shown, and the floor is of 2x6 inch studding, with one-half-inch spaces between. The siding is drop siding, the same as the balance of the barn, but the top and lower edges are beveled, and a one-half-inch space is left between each board. This construction allows a free circulation of air, and keeps out the rain, snow and wind. The small amount of corn that drops through the floor is eaten by the poultry.

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Anything that will restore the lost function of perspiring will relieve the itching in many of these cases. A most intense and horrible form of itching is, as we all know, often caused by the bites of certain insects. People differ greatly in their susceptibility to the bites of insects, but some are driven almost crazy by the bite of a mosquito. This itching is caused by the irritating quality of the acid poison injected by the insect, and is best met, not by yielding to the impelling instinct to scratch, but by quickly meeting the acid poison by the application of an alkali, such as household ammonia, or, simplest of all, by rubbing the spot with a piece of common soap.



FLOOR PLAN.

try and hogs. The studding are 12 feet, and the lower story is 8 feet; the cow stalls are of cement, with gutter, and all stalls have pounded clay floors. It will pay to plaster the walls and ceiling of the cow barn with cement. After the silo has been used for several years, it is intended to lath and plaster it with cement.

It will pay to use good material throughout, provide a good foundation and roof, and to keep all exposed wood well painted.

As the various climates demand slightly different construction, and the lumber used is not the same in all sections, it would be simply a waste of valuable space to describe them here.—J. E. Bridgman, in St. Paul Dispatch.

Fertilizing the Garden.

Don't be afraid of getting the soil too rich for any of the vegetables whose leaf or stem is edible. If you cannot have plenty of well rotted manure, a top dressing of nitrate of soda just before planting will furnish the plant food needed of nitrogen, but other elements may be needed for a proper balance. Wood ashes, if available, are a good source for potash, but sulphate or muriate of potash may be used instead and frequently a dressing of hyperphosphate is beneficial.

If one is growing only a small garden for home use, the droppings from the poultry house will furnish enough fertilizer to keep the soil in a good state of fertility; but if growing truck on a large scale, it would be well to inquire of your experiment station what commercial fertilizers would be of most help in securing maximum crops of the vegetables you wish to grow.

Rotation of Forests.

The necessity of the rotation of crops is well recognized among modern farmers, and now it appears that in India nature is seen practicing the same thing in the forests. The soil becoming exhausted after a long period of one kind of forests, seedlings of other species gradually replace the old trees as they die out. On the Indian soil, the deodar tree has been observed taking the place of the blue pine, pine and oak slowly exchange places, and spruce and silver fir have been noted gradually extending into a forest of falling oaks.

Breeding Corn.

Prof. R. A. Moore says that painstaking in breeding corn has raised the average corn production in Wisconsin from 25 bushels per acre in 1901 to 41.2 bushels per acre in 1907. This increase is worth striving for in every State and on every farm.

Notes of the Pig Pen.

Give growing pigs food to produce bone and muscle rather than fat.

The pig should have a warm, dry bed kept clean and free from dust.

No domestic animal responds so quickly to good treatment as the hog.

Cultivation That Damages Corn.

The corn is often damaged by the roots being broken in deep cultivation. This is not the case to a serious extent early in the season, when the corn is small, but the check to the crop may be quite marked if cultivated deep late in the season, when the corn has reached a height of 2 to 3 feet or more, particularly if the previous cultivation has been shallow or neglected. If dry weather happens to follow such treatment the damage to the crop is much increased. When not followed by some form of cultivation that will level down the ridges left by the large shovel cultivator, the ground will dry out quite deeply and in the furrows between the ridges this drying readily reaches the roots of the corn. To obviate this as much as possible, when the old-fashioned large shovels are used, the work should be followed as soon as possible with something to level down the surface. Unless there is something to be gained by it, deep cultivation should not be followed.—Oklahoma Station.

Co-operation Among Farmers.

Men in all other lines of business organize and work together. Farmers are beginning to see the need of concerted action, but as a rule we still work single-handed. At Lombard, Ill., about twenty miles west of Chicago, the farmers who produce milk for sale in the big city have tried several times to organize in order to force the milk trust to pay them a price in accordance with what the customer pays, but the trust is always able to hire some farmer to break the rules of the local association or to talk against the project to such an extent as to defeat its ends. That is one great difficulty in forming protective measures among farmers. There are always a few men in the community who are willing to sacrifice future advantages to gain a few cents in present price.—Agricultural Epitome.

Easily Regulated Gate.

The gate hanger illustrated in the drawing is very handy for use where it is desired to let hogs pass from one pasture to another while cows are confined to one. As shown, the hanger is a piece of strap iron bent around the post and supported by pegs. These pegs may be inserted in holes at varying heights. This is also a good device for raising the gate above the snow in winter.—Sam Avery, in Farm and Home.

All in Management.

Folks say that if you want any class of stock that can always be sold at a profit, from weaning time until tottering old age, you want a mule. We do not raise mules, so can not speak from experience. This much we do know, however, several good friends of ours have been dickering in mules for years without making any money. Perhaps these are the exceptional cases that prove the rule. Others have raised and bought mules and made good money. We surmise it's more the man and his management than it is the mule, that reaps the profit. The same man dealing in razorbills might make some money.—Farmers' Mail and Breeze.

Fertilizer for Potatoes.

For potatoes the past year we used 1,200 pounds of fertilizer to the acre, one-third applied broadcast and the rest scattered in the furrow, brushing the fertilizer into the soil of the furrow before planting the seed. After planting, the surface was kept well stirred to prevent weeds starting and the cultivator was run often enough to keep down the weeds. A little hand hoeing was done. The yield was 250 bushels per acre. The crop followed corn and the land was very thoroughly harrowed before potatoes were planted. Plenty of harrowing and liberal use of fertilizers may be depended on to give a good crop.

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