

Farmer's Column.



Give fools their gold & leave their power Let fortune's bubbles rise and fall Who sows a field or plants a flower, Or plants a tree, is more than all.

Thick and Thin Seeding of Grains.

The question as to the quantity of seed to sow, is one which has puzzled farmers who have a right to be classed as among the most intelligent of their class—and is one which must be determined by close observation and by practical demonstration. A correspondent of the Country Gentleman endeavors to throw some light upon the subject, and is unwilling to hide from his brother farmers the result of his investigations and experience, a course which should be more generally followed than is the case. Different soils (he says) in various conditions require different amounts of seed, and while it is a common mistake to use too much seed of all kinds, it is also common to see fields of grain and grass where more seed would have increased the crop. With grain and hoed crops, all overcropping of plants always results in a smaller yield and inferior quality of the crop. But there is great difficulty in hitting a happy medium between too thick and too thin seeding. We must learn to adjust the proper amount of seed to the various kinds and conditions of soil, and it is hardly wise to advise thin seeding at all times.—On low river bottoms, where nearly all kinds of noxious weeds abound, it is necessary to sow spring grain rather thick to prevent damage to the crop from weeds. One may be sure that the land will be occupied, and unless by the crop, weeds will fill the vacancies. The same applies to land subjected to the deprivations of wire and cut worms. I have had oats and barley properly seeded so thinned out by worms that the yield was seriously curtailed, which would probably have been obviated by heavier seeding.—Rich, clean land, in good condition, requires very much less seed than any poor soil, poorly prepared, or very foul with weeds. The excellent results of thin seeding, which sometimes come—where conditions are favorable—are suggestive and significant. Last year I harvested over 800 bushels of oats from a field of twelve acres after the seeding was so thinned out by worms as to cause much regret for anticipated failure. The result was a full development of every plant, and large, well filled heads. Had the soil been poor, or the season less favorable, the results would have been different.

What Lands to Drain.

All lands, in the opinion of the Indiana Farmer, that contain more water than is needed by the crops growing upon them. If you intend to raise corn or wheat, the land will need more draining than it intended for grass.—Even grass lands need not be very wet as if too wet, the growth of aquatic plants and grasses takes the place of the cultivated grasses and ruins the hay and pastures.

Loos, porous soils, underlaid with sand or gravel, are drained by nature; but all land that is underlaid by clay, rock, or other impervious material, needs draining.

What is to be gained by underdrainage? The surface of the water in the soil is lowered. The roots of cereals and grasses may penetrate as far as to the surface of the water, but never into it. It is necessary to draw the water off to such a depth as will give the roots of growing crops plenty of room to move downward for that nourishment that is necessary to their growth. The lowering of the water below the surface prevents a large amount of evaporation, and its effect is cooling the soil. The water being removed, air and warmth become admitted to the soil.

Drained lands are for this reason ready for planting at least one week earlier in the spring. The growth of crops is quickened through the summer by the increased temperature of the soil, which amount to several degrees, and the injurious effects of early frosts are prevented in the same manner. Crops, are therefore, given an increased period in which to make the growth of at least two weeks. This certainly is a very important gain.

These Fence Corners.

Somebody reasonably says that fence corners, with their mass of brush and weeds, afford secure retreat for such troublesome insects as live through a winter, and for the deposit of eggs of others ready to hatch out early in the spring, the larvae prepared to engage in depredations upon the first plants that appear. Cutting out and burning the rubbish is the best plan, as a fire puts an end to most of these, and thus the destroying element lessens the labor and saves the crops of the farm. All of which is true and timely.

"Here, Bill," cried a rural gentleman rushing toward the elevator as he saw it coming up, "here's the telephone if you want to see it."

An Open Winter.

"What kind of a winter are we going to have, Uncle?" asked an Express reporter of an old squirrel hunter and mink trapper, who makes his home in the hills across the river.

"I kinder calculate that we will have a rather mild winter; all the indications point to such."

"What signs do you go by, Uncle?"

"I have a good many signs and I never know one of them to fail yet. When I say we are going to have a mild winter, you can depend on it. Haven't I lived in this country for forty years, and haven't I watched the winters right along, and oughtn't I to be able to tell?"

"Are the corn husks thin this year?"

"You better reckon they are. There are two or three layers of them, and they are as thin as catkins. Why, the corn is all dry enough now to go through a snow without injury. The one or two frosts we have had sucked all the sap out of it."

"Are there any other indications besides the corn husks?"

"You better believe there are. Now, when the sun crossed the line the wind blew from the southeast. That indicates a mild winter every time. If it had blown from the north you could have been prepared to hear the wind howl great guns."

"Is that all?"

"Not by a long way. I could tell you enough to fill a book. My dog looked a ground hog the other day. I had nothing to do, so I got to work and dug the animal out. He didn't have a leaf or a twig in his hole; hadn't nothing in the shape of a nest."

"Isn't it too early for ground hogs to make their nest?"

"Now, I see how little you know about a ground hog. A ground hog has his hole dug, or has picked out his hole, by the first of September. If it's going to be a cold winter he has it filled with leaves by this time."

"Is there anything else?"

"Yes. The coons haven't commenced to gnaw the corn. That is a splendid sign. And another sign, and that sign never fails, the woodpeckers haven't commenced to drum. Now, if this was going to be a cold winter all the old dead trees would be covered with red heads pecking away at a hole in which to store nuts."

"Is it too early for that yet?"

"Not a bit. They should have their holes all pecked by this time, and be ready to fill them. There is not a smarter bird than the woodpecker.—He knows when he's about when he's pecking away at an old limb from morning till night."

Fortunes in Australia.

Socially, money will do very much in America; judiciously expended I think will do even more in England; in the way of sheer purchase of social recognition it will do little in Australia.—There was, indeed, a time there when in social seas, the moneyed man was regarded with actual suspicion. And for this there were some grounds. The original moneyed man might have had unpleasant antecedents, of which time had not yet effaced the memory. But now there is a vast number of moneyed men in Australia, and the means whereby their wealth has come to them are known as reasonably savory. They have therefore, ceased to be regarded with suspicion.

I do not think people at home have any idea how large fortunes are in Australia and how many of those large fortunes there are. Once in South Australia I had occasion to speak of a friend who had come from that colony and taken up his residence in London. I spoke of him as a very rich man.—"Oh no," was the answer, "he is very well off, but we don't reckon him as a very rich man." "Why," said I, "I understood him to be worth a quarter of a million?" "Well, I hope he is a little better than that," said my interlocutor, "but still we don't reckon him here as very rich."

I am not going to compile a roll of Australian millionaires, because, for one thing, it would take up too much space. But this I am not in society, nor nourish any hope of ever being admitted within that pale. If you find one of them inside it, he has not crossed the passade on the golden ladder, he entered by the gate in virtue of his social attributes. If these are unimpaired, you will find him outside among the nettles, or again, if he may be far away in the bush, a man content with himself and caring for none of these things. For it must be said that in Australia there is no universal aspiration after the lower grades of society. But the moneyed aspirant will not find that his wealth gives him social prestige. There are Australians now in England who have entertained royalty, and whose guests have filled columns of the Morning Post, yet who, in their native land, have never, with all their efforts, got further than the outlying fringes of Australian society.—Archibald Forbes in the Contemporary Review.

Outdone by a Boy.

Moral courage requires more fiber than physical courage. It is more difficult, sometimes, to do right than to march up to the cannon's mouth.—The boy who could keep from swearing, nor be afraid to stand by his colors in the presence of a room full of profane men, was a little hero. A lad in Boston, rather small for his years, worked in an office as errand boy for four gentlemen who did business there. One day the gentlemen were chaffing him a little about being so small and said to him: "You never will amount to much, you are never do much business; you are too small." The fellow looked at them.

"Well," said he, "as small as I am, I can do something which none of you four men can do."

"Ah, what is that?" said they.

"I don't know as I ought to tell you," he replied; "but they were anxious to know, and urged him to tell what he could do that none of them were able to do."

"I can keep from swearing!" said the little fellow. There were some blushes on four manly faces, and there seemed to be very little anxiety for further information on this point.

Shut up for the season—The pepper box.

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