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MISCELLANEOUS

From the American Farmer.

TO THE YOUNG FARMERS OF MARYLAND.

ON PRACTICAL AGRICULTURE.

Six teeth out of my Threshing Machine, and the consequent delay in my operations enable me to devote a few to a subject on which I have long contemplated addressing you, but until the present, prevented by various causes—that of *Practical Farming*—more especially as applying to *young Maryland Farmers*, like myself, on *old lands.*

The recent change in the form of *our* venerable and useful Agricultural Journal; keeping pace as it does with the "lights" as they are discovered booming above the mists of by-gone ignorance, has suggested the *spirit* of these papers; or, if you will dignify them with the term, essays—and it is my special aim, so far as consistent with fact, to avoid all the technology of pedantry, the "schools" and the metaphysical theorist.

Succeeding to the management of an old estate, at a period when mercantile pursuits presented more *pecuniary* attractions than agricultural, my first experiment in the latter, was to let my farm on shares, by the advice of my friends, to a *working* man; the consequence was, that at the end of two years I was heartily glad to rid myself of a vampyre who exhausted what little 'blood' there was left in the old 'turnip'—his last boast on quitting me being, that "*he had skinned my farm in two years,*" and thought by "*rushing it*" (a favorite phrase of his.) to be able to do the same where he was going. Hence you can readily imagine the condition in which I found matters, on assuming sway in person.

My first efforts at restoration were to repair and have made several hundred pannels of out-fencing; discarding entirely, and using the materials on it, all inner or cross lines, save a good sized paled barn-yard; a five-rail feeding and milking yard, and a poultry yard—designing to pursue the *soiling and exercise* systems, and study the economy of manures, of which more anon.

Of course the eyes of all our old neighbors were upon me, and their aged mouths spake wondrously wise as to what "I would *not* do," not "what I *would*," to make a living off *that old* place. "Your meadows have all *run out*," quoth one; "you'll have to spend many a dollar to repair your houses," another quotha—and so on, until at last, had I not at least possessed the negative merit of *obstinacy*, I should have beaten my ploughshare into a sword, and taken the *road* to Texas for a livelihood!

"It's a pity," said a person who was burning blue lime, "you don't lime that *bare-looking field;* why it won't raise *dog's hair.*" Now, gentlemen, with your leave, it is of that very field I intend treating in this my first agricultural paper. My *on-shares working* man, not leaving until late in November, no time could be found to flush a piece of sod for my corn, having to sow my wheat, some as late as 25th November; so the only spot "*clean enough*" the next spring was "that bare-looking field;" now, by the order of retrospect, you shall have the history of this field—A neighbor had it some six years ago on a lease; his last crop was wheat, to *bind which he was compelled* to haul out *old straw; its own being too short to tie around a sheaf.* My brother then worked it in corn, manured in the hills; the crop was scarcely worth saving; his wheat succeeding that, no yield; next my working man planted it in corn, partially manured in the hills, and then neglected—so that you will perceive the only place I had for this voracious crop had been planted in it the previous year, without, of course, any yield. After having it ploughed, harrowed, and rolled in March, I had it cross ploughed, harrowed twice and rolled in April; marked off in checks 3 feet by 4 1-2—widest spaces running north and south, or nearly so—hauled out two hundred one-horse cart loads of wood-pile stuff; and sand and mortar, from an old wall, composted, about equal parts, putting two shovels full in each hill. Now the soil, naturally, is what we term a white oak, clay bottom, with a few traces of iron ore, in particles—a stiff, unmanageable soil, if ploughed when *wet*, and impossible to be worked when *dry.*

The season, you will remember, was very dry; *notwithstanding this*, after the hoeing, I ordered the cultivator to be passed through it in both directions, until countermanded. I was assured by all the old hands, "It'll all *fire* sir." I persisted, however; laid it up about the 21st of July, with a small one-horse plough, ploughing about *four* inches deep; cultivated it down level again; cut it off down to the ground on the 15th September, and hauled off, to shock, a fair yield of heavy corn. The next day I put in a Wiley, 56, plough, (a good implement where there is no sod,) cross ploughing the last spring furrow, and following it with a Sinclair & Co. No. 8, subsoil plough; obtaining by this a depth of sixteen inches—nine of old and seven of new soil—the subsoil retained in its original bed, but pulverised and lightened up so, that an addition of some inches to the general surface was apparent, besides securing a deposite for the absorption of all surplus moisture, if a-wet; or in a dry season, a reservoir of water to be evaporated by the sun, thro' the pores of the superstratum of old earth; thus gradually incorporating the whole mass—which is completed by a deep ploughing with the ordinary plough when next broken up—and nourishing the crop. But, to return—having finished ploughing and harrowing, it was seeded in wheat on the 21st September—the soil appearing to be a mellow, findly-pulverised loam. The rain falling in torrents, before we finished, prevented the lands from being opened, the water furrows marked off or being rolled in; yet we succeeded in getting the temothy seed sown, depending upon the rain to set it. The ground began to clog, and betray symptoms of the "old leaven"—nor did it dry till the April following—one acre was harrowed in with 100 bushels of old leached ashes, two acres were broadcast with the same quantity, one in February, while frozen, and one in April; the other (there being four in all) remained unaided—25 bushels, the first yielded; 15. the second; 20 the third, and about 14 the fourth; now threshed and measured.

The timothy now looks green amid the stubble, and stands so thickly that, I think, "ill weeds" dare not usurp its place; and promises a fair swarth of full mowing, for cow hay.

Apropos of Meadows for No. 2.

CINCINNATUS.

Bultimore county, July, 1845.

PULVERIZATION.—Of all agricultural reformers, the once celebrated Jethro Tull, the first to suggest and invent important improvements in farming machinery, and author of the drill system of husbandry, deserves, in my judgment, to stand at the head of the list. True he carried his theory in favor of extreme pulverization to the extravagant length of maintaining that it might even be made to supercede manure; still his leading principle of perfect pulverization is too much overlooked in common practice.

No farmer need expect a good return whose land in horse or hoed crops is not kept clean and infinitely pulverized. This is the reason why nothing is more destructive, at least for that year, than ploughing wet land. It bakes, and becomes impervi-able alike to moisture and to the roots of plants. There is no sign of mismanagement, which should be more signally condemned and stigmatized than that of stirring land when wet. Frost alone can restore it to a healthy condition.

But for breaking down and pulverizing clods of heavy and stiff land turned up by the plough in the ordinary way, there is no implement (I speak from personal observation) to be compared to that simplest and cheapest of all contrivances, already mentioned, but little known, *the drag log.* To make it, you have but to select a tree 18 inches or more in diameter, and of that take a section of about 4 1-2 feet in length, the cut is then mauled in two, and out of one half of it this efficient implement is formed by letting in two pieces of scantling on the flat top surface, near the ends of the log, using shafts, or a tongue, as horses or oxen are to be employed; the latter the better. The advantage of using a large tree is that the long may slide smoothly over the surface, without displacing and carrying the earth along before it. The inventor of this truly valuable implement (honor to whom honor is due) is Thomas B. Gray, a most intelligent and industrious farmer in Virginia.—*Skinner.*

The following Lecture of Mrs. Caudle is "in season," and will perhaps aid the desires of those who wish to go "the sea shore:"

MRS. CAUDLE'S CURTAIN LECTURES.

Mrs. Caudle "wishes to know if they're going to the sea side, or not, this summer—that's all."

"Hot? Yes it is hot. I'm sure one might as well be in an oven as in town this weather. You seem to forget it's July, Mr. Caudle. I've been waiting quietly—have never spoken; yet not a word have you said of the sea-side yet. Not that I care for it myself—oh, no; my health is'nt of the slightest consequence. And, indeed, I was going to say—but I won't—that the sooner, perhaps, I'm out of this world, the better. Oh, yes: I dare say you think so—of course you do, else you wouldn't lie there saying nothing. You're enough to aggravate a saint, Caudle; but you shan't vex me again. Why should I worry myself?

"But all I want to ask you is this; do you intend to go to the sea-side this summer? *Yes? You'll go to Gravesend?* Then you'll go alone, that's all I know. Gravesend!—You might as well empty a salt-cellar in the New River, and call that the sea-side. What? *It's handy for business?* There you are again! I can never speak of taking a little enjoyment, but you fling business in my teeth. I'm sure you never let business stand in the way of your own pleasure,—Mr. Caudle, not you. It would be all the better for your family if you did.

"You know that Matilda wants sea-bathing; you know it, or ought to know it, by the looks of the child, and yet—I know you, Caudle—you'd have let the summer pass over, and never said a word about the matter. What do you say? *Margate's so expensive?* Not at all. I'm sure it will be cheaper for us in the end; for if we don't go, we shall all be ill—every one of us—in the winter. Not that my health is of any consequence: I know that well enough. It never was yet. You know Margate's the only place I can eat a breakfast at, and yet you talk of Gravesend! But what's my eating to you? You wouldn't care if I never eat at all. You never watch my appetite like any other husband, otherwise you'd have seen what it's come to.

"What do you say? *How much will it cost?* There you are, Mr. Caudle, with your meanness again. When you want to go yourself to Blackwell or to Greenwich, you never ask, how much will it cost? What? *You never go to Blackwell?* Ha? I don't know that; and if you don't that's nothing at all to do with it. Yes, you can give a guinea a plate for whitebait for yourself.—No, sir; I'm not a foolish woman; and I know very well what I'm talking about—nobody better. A guinea for whitebait for yourself, when you grudge a pint of shrimps for your poor family. Eh? *You don't grudge 'em anything?* Yes, its very well for you to lie there and say so. *What will it cost?* It's no matter what it will cost, for we won't go at all now. No; we'll stay at home. We shall all be ill in the winter—every one of us, all but you; and nothing ever makes you ill. I've no doubt we shall all be laid up, and there'll be a doctor's bill as long as a railroad; but never mind that. It's better—much better—to pay for nasty physic than for fresh air and wholesome salt water. Don't call me 'woman' and ask 'what it will cost?' I tell you, if you were to lay the money down on that quilt, I wouldn't go now, certainly not. It's better we should all be sick; yes, then you'll be pleased.

"That's right, Mr. Caudle; go to sleep.—It's like your unfeeling self! I'm talking of our all being laid up; and you, like any stone, turn round an begin to go to sleep. Well, I think that's a pretty insult! *How can you sleep with such a splinter in your flesh?* I suppose you mean to call me a splinter?—and after the wife I've been to you! But no, Mr. Caudle, you may call me what you please; you'll not make me cry now. No, no, I don't throw away my tears upon any such person now. What? *Don't?* Ha! that's your ingratitude! But none of you men deserve that any woman should love you. My poor heart!

"Every body else can go out of town except us. Ha! if I'd only married Simmons. What? *Why didn't I?* Yes, that's all the thanks I get. *Who's Simmons?* Oh, you know very well who Simmons is. He'd have treated me a little better, I think. He *was* a gentleman. *You can't tell?* May be not; but I can. With such weather as this, to stay melting in London! and when the painters are coming in! *You won't have the painters in?* But you must; and if they once come in, I'm determined that none of us shall stir them. Painting in July with a family in the house! We shall all be poisoned, of course; but what do you care for that?

"*Why can't I tell you what it will cost?*—How can I or any woman tell exactly what it will cost? Of course lodgings—and at Margate, too—are a little dearer than living in your own house. *Pooh! You know that?* Well, if you did, Mr. Caudle, I suppose there's no treason, in naming it. Still, if you take 'em for two months, they're cheaper than for one. No, Mr. Caudle, I shall not be quite tired of it in one month. No: and it isn't true that I no sooner get out of town than I want to get home again. To be sure, I was tired of Margate three years ago, when you used to leave me to walk about the beach by myself, to be stared at through all sorts of telescopes. But you don't do that again, Mr. Caudle, I can tell you.

"*What will I do at Margate?* Why isn't there bathing, and picking up shells; and arn't there the packets, with the donkeys; and the last new novel; whatever it is, to read—for the only place where I really relish a book is at the sea-side. No, it isn't that I like salt with my reading, Mr. Caudle! I suppose you call this a joke? You might keep your jokes for the day-time. But as I was saying—only you always interrupt me—the ocean always seems to me to open the mind. I see nothing to laugh at; but you always laugh when I say any thing.—Sometimes at the sea-side—especially when the tide's down—I feel so happy; quite as if I could cry.

"When shall I get the things ready? For next Sunday? *What will it cost?* Oh, there—don't talk of it. No: we won't go. I shall send for the painters, to-morrow.—What? *I can go and take the children, and you'll stay?* No, sir, you go with me or I don't stir. I'm not going to be turned loose like a hen with her chickens, and nobody to protect me. We'll go on Monday? Eh?

"*What will it cost?* What a man you are! Why, Caudle, I've been reckoning that, with buff slippers and all, we can't well do it under seventy pounds. No; I won't take away the slippers, and say fifty: it's seventy pounds, and no less. Of course, what's over will be so much saved. Caudle, what a man you are! Well, shall we go on Monday?—What do you say—*You'll see?* There's a dear. Then, Monday."

"Anything for a chance of peace," writes Caudle. "I consented to the trip, for I tho't I might sleep better in a change of bed."

MUSQUITO LYRICS.—Reader, asks the Yankee Blade, were you ever disturbed in your nightly slumbers by a mischievous demon, in the shape of a formibable musquito? Do you recollect how he first sung you into a doze by his somniferous buzz, and then stinging you into frenzy by the gentle use of his little proboscis, flew instantly from the scene of his perforations, just in season to escape the wrath of your descending fingers. Could you not almost hear him chuckle over his success as he rubbed his claws and sharpened his bill for a new adventure; and after a repetition of his exploit, was not his "buzz, buzz," as he wheeled off again, full of scorn and contempt, mingled with a note of exultation, that vexed you beyond all mortal endurance! Did you not then bounce up from your couch, desperately bent on revenge—an incipient curse perhaps quivering on your lips, and every vein swelling—every muscle tense with fearful and passionate energy of purpose? And did you not, after sundry vehement but futile strokes, aimed at your invisible and impalpable enemy, conclude to fall back into your bed and give it up quietly, satisfied that a musquito is invincible? If you can answer in the affirmative to these interrogatories, then are you fully qualified to appreciate and enter into the spirit of the following thrilling strains:

THE MUSQUITO SERENADE.

AIR—*'Tis my delight of a shiny night.*

In a summer's night I take my flight
To where the maidens repose,
And while they're slumbering sweet and sound
I bites 'em on the nose!
The warm red blood that tints their cheeks
To me is precious dear,
For 'tis my delight to buzz and bite
In the season of the year.

When I get my fill, I wipe my bill,
And sound my tiny horn,
And off I fly to the mountain high
Ere breaks the golden morn;
But at eve I sally forth again
To tickle the sleepless ear;
For 'tis my delight to buzz and bite
At the season of the year.

On the chamber wall about I crawl,
Till the landlord goes to bed;
Then my bugle I blow, and down I go
To light upon his head;
O, I love to see the fellow slap,
And I laugh to hear him swear;
For 'tis my delight to buzz and bite
At the season of the year.

Do not run in debt for that which you can do without.

A MAN GROWN BY GUANO AND ELECTRICITY.—The New Haven Courier tells the following capital story:

A citizen of this place, while recently on a tour in the State of New York, was induced to make one of the audience of an itinerant lecturer who was holding forth upon the efficacy of electricity as applied to vegetable productions.

In the course of this harangue, Guano was incidentally alluded to as a powerful agent in quickening the growth of plants, and the effects of both were displayed in such glowing language that the auditory soon imagined themselves standing in the midst of a field and endeavoring to measure the height of the grain before it was out of reach. The whole assembly were in a fine state of enthusiasum, and swallowing down the wonders revealed to them with open mouths and starting eyes, when a plain looking old farmer arose, and with apparently much diffidence, begged leave to confirm the lecturer's statements, by the relation of an incident which he had recently witnessed, and to which he was a party:

'I have,' said he, 'a very bad boy, named Tommy; he's given us a good deal of trouble, and having tried various methods to reform him without success, I told my wife that it would be best to try something that was new, rather more severe. Accordingly we agreed to shut him up at night in the barn. This answered very well for awhile, but he grew worse again, till finally I was obliged to shut him up every night by sundown.

'Well, one night while Tommy was roosting with the cattle, and I was in bed, there came on a tremendous thunder storm. It lightened sharp enough to put out a man's eyes, and thundered so loud that it made the house rattle like a snare drum. Feeling rather uneasy about the boy, I got up early in the morning, and went out to see how he fared. As I was going to the barn, I met a man most eight feet high coming towards me. I never had seen such a tall critter in all my life before, and I begun to feel sorter scarible at having him about my premises.

'Hello, says I, as soon as I could speak, who are you? and what are you doing in my barn yard?

'The strange looking animal answered in a little squeaking child's voice, 'Why, father, it's me; don't you know Tommy?'

'You! says I; Tom, how on earth did you get stretched out so long in one night? why, you're growed as tall as all out doors, don't you know it?

'Why, yes, father,' says he, 'I s'pose I have, for last night I slept on them bags of Guano you put in the barn, and that and the lightning together just did the business.'

The effect of this story upon the audience was indeed electric. Peal upon peal of laughter followed, the people went off every way, and the next day the lecturer, upon electricity and guano, was among the missing.

CURE FOR HYDROPHOBIA.—Mr. James A. Hubbard, of Bond county, Ill., in a letter to the St. Louis Republican, says:

Eighteen years ago, my brother and myself, were *bitten* by a mad dog. A sheep was also bitten at the same time. Among the many cures offered for the little boys, (we were then ten or twelve years of age,) a friend suggested the following, which he said would cure the bite of a *rattle-snake.*

Take the root of the common upland *ash*, generally called black ash; peel off the bark, and boil it to a strong decoction; of this drink freely. Whilst my father was preparing the above, the sheep spoken of began to be afflicted with hydrophobia.—When it had become so fatigued from its distracted state as to be no longer able to stand, my father drenched it with a pint of the ash root ooze, hoping to ascertain whether he could depend upon it as a cure for his sons. Four hours after the drench had been given, to the astonishment of all, the animal *got up*, and went quietly with the flock, to grazing. My brother and myself continued to take the medicine for eight or ten days—one gill three times a day. No effects of the dreadful poison were ever discovered on either of us. It has been used very successfully in snake bites, to my knowledge.

AN USEFUL HINT.—We learn from an English paper that an efficient method has been suggested of purifying wells, &c., from foul air. The plan is simply to throw into the well a quantity of unslacked lime, which as it comes in contact with the water, throws up a column of vapor, driving before it all the deleterious gases.

A CATIOUS MOTHER.—The Boston Times knows of a mother in that city who will not let a tailor come near her children for fear he will "give 'em *fits.*"