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AGRICULTURE

ADVANCE IN TEXAS BEEVES.

The almost total suspension of intercourse with Texas, during the war, had much to do with increasing the number of wild cattle there. The proportion of cattle to the population, is probably greater in that State than in any district in the world. According to the returns to county assessors in 1867, the ratio of cattle to human beings in the three great States of New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio, was only about as one to four; while in Texas the proportion was found to be reversed, there being four cattle to one inhabitant. Exactness of course is not claimed for these figures. But they are sufficiently near correct to give an idea of the great amount of surplus stock within the State.

The close of the war found a deficiency of beets in most of the States, both North and South. In 1867, the shipments of Texas beets from Abilene commenced. The first year about 75,000 head were shipped from there; in 1868, 125,000; in 1869, 150,000; while up to the present time in 1870, over 200,000 have been sent forward. But this is only one of the many routes over which these cattle passed. During the past year quite a business in shipping Texas stock has been started at Schuyler, Nebraska. These cattle are also mostly relied on for furnishing meat for the miners along the great mountain regions that lie to the westward. They have also found their way to the markets on the Pacific coast. In addition to this, tens of thousands of these cattle are scattered over all the Western States for the purpose of improving their condition before they are put on the market.

Nor is it towards the north that all these cattle are driven. New Orleans, Mobile and other cities on the Gulf of Mexico, receive their supplies of beef by steamboats plying between the southern towns in Texas. Indeed boats laden in whole or in part with Texas steers come up the Mississippi as far as Cairo. A large commerce is also carried on in Texas beets with all the West India Islands. In addition to all these ways of marketing the animals on foot, a very large number are now packed at Galveston, Indianola, Shreveport and other places. Salt beef obtained from the wild cattle of Texas is now found in nearly all the great markets of our own country, while considerable of it is finding its way to Europe. It is no wonder that this demand for one of the essential means of life should cause the raisers and dealers in this kind of stock to seek to put up the prices. This they have not been slow to do. At a late meeting of stock raisers in Live Oak county it was resolved "that in future we will only sell cattle at the following prices, viz.: First class cattle, \$18; second class, 15; third class \$11." Even at these prices the shipping and packing of Texas beets must be very profitable, and ere long, in our opinion, we must look for a further advance, for it is certain that the northern states furnish a supply of beef cattle quite inadequate to the demand.

How long Texas can continue to supply such an enormous number of beef cattle is an interesting question that does not admit of an easy answer. Railroads are stretching out into the state from the North and East, making the means of transportation both quick and easy. Besides this the state is very fast settling up by persons who will put the soil to other purposes than grazing. The state owns most of the public land within its borders, and is putting forth every exertion to induce settlers to occupy it. We hear of several very large tracts of land being fenced up for the purpose of caring for the stock and improving it by the introduction of superior bulls.

The Robidoux rancho, on the Gulf between the mouths of the Rio Grande and the Neches, owned by Mr. Kennedy, contains 142,840 acres. It is a fertile peninsula jutting out into the Gulf, and is fenced on three sides by the waters of the Gulf. The other side is fenced by 30 miles of plank fence. Every three miles of this fence has a little rancho for Mexican herders. In this enclosure are 30,000 beef cattle alone, besides the other stock. Other large land owners are digging wells on their ranches with a view of obtaining living water, the want of which, heretofore, has caused great suffering among the stock. Still with all these improvements it seems certain that the supply of Texas cattle is in a course of sure and quick extinction. The English race are proverbial beef eaters; and the propensity to devour rounds and sirloins seems not to change among those who cross the Atlantic. With all the shipments from Texas, the price of beef is steadily advancing.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ORGANIZATION.

Two reports were expected from appointments made at the anti-monopoly convention that met at Bloomington, Ill., last spring: One from the statistician appointed "to prepare and publish, with the aid of eminent counsel, a report of the products of the northwest, the rights to market and transportation, and the remedies available for existing wrongs," etc.; the other, your present committee, appointed to devise and recommend some form of organization among producers, through which they may hope to resist the growing power of the great carrying corporations. The latter report was to be a complement of the former; the one to set forth the grievances, the other to devise means for relief. Your committee regret that the statistician has failed to report, but, having no material aid provided by the convention, the failure cannot reflect upon his faithfulness, zeal or ability. Still the necessity for some kind of organization through which to assert the rights of producers against the unjust assumptions of corporate monopoly is patent everywhere. This necessity was pressed upon the convention by nearly every speaker on that occasion, in the most emphatic language, and strongly implied in the masterly letter of Gov. Palmer. Your committee have deliberated long before venturing upon the promulgation of a plan for uniting the people for the great struggle that is but just commenced, and whose magnitude is even now but imperfectly understood. Immense in numbers, scattered over millions of square miles of territory, isolated in business, in a measure unsocial, bound to different political parties, prone to be led, not always active mental workers, nor always highly educated, the producers form the most difficult mass to unite, of all the classes or professions of men. As a truth it may be said that, for the attainment of a single object in any reasonable time, if indeed ever, a simultaneous movement by them is entirely impossible. Farmers' leagues, or anti-monopoly leagues, over the whole country, bound together by no other ties than would be incident to the single purpose of resistance to a single wrong would simply prove disastrous failures. Any organization upon the higher plane of universal interest and universal protection, and must appeal, as well, to the social and intellectual requirements of the human mind. To build up a union of this kind, so that it shall fulfill its proposed destiny is a herculean task worthy the broadest and most active minds. Possessed of these ideas, your committee has, among other things, directed their investigations to the Order of the Patrons of Husbandry, and are free to state that we have, in this Order something, that in our opinion, affords in scope and perhaps, in ultimate design, the true nucleus about which to rally to accomplish the purposes of the carrying monopoly opponents. The organization is yet young and we doubt if its projectors at the outset fully comprehended all its capabilities or the full measure of influence that it may be made to exert. The organization consists of Subordinate Granges (answering to lodges or chapters in other secret organizations), State Granges and a National Grange. It seems to have the elements of permanency and usefulness in a high degree, and after mature deliberation, your committee would recommend its general adoption and earnest sanction as the most feasible and only really promising means to accomplish the ends desired by the members of the Convention by which we were appointed.

We may be allowed to say further, that we have delayed our report until near the close of the season's work, knowing that the people would not sooner have leisure to think of these matters and to work in this new field of organization against gigantic wrongs.

W. W. CORBETT,
H. C. WHEELER, } Committee.
JOHN P. REYNOLDS,* }
* I am not a member of the Order above referred to, but have more confidence in than in any other known agency to accomplish the ends in view.
JOHN P. REYNOLDS.

THE GRASSES.

Grass makes pasture for summer and hay for winter, and these are the chief feed of all the cattle, sheep and horses on the hills and prairies. Good Illinois steers are always saleable, and will buy any thing that can be obtained in this or in any other country. Upon grass we are dependent for beef and leather, mutton and wool, milk, butter and cheese; and with these, some how, always come a good supply of green-backs, which makes everything go easily.

The term "grass," as used in common every day life, by many people, is applied to all those plants which are used for pastures and meadows. This is a classification founded

upon use alone, disregarding all the other features of the plants. It is like calling every thing a fish because it lives in the water; or bird and insects because they can fly. These are superficial or artificial classifications and have no scientific value whatever. The basis for a natural classification exists chiefly in the peculiarities of structure of root, stem, leaf and flower.

I have no intention of giving a scientific definition of grasses. This is well done in the various text books which are accessible to any one who may wish to study the subject. With regard to structure, I will only venture to say a few words about the flowers of Indian corn. This belongs to the true grasses. In this plant the flowers are of two kinds, each incomplete in itself. On top of the stalk, the branching tassel produces one kind of flower, an abundance of a fine dust called pollen. On the side of the stalk are one or more short branches covered with a cluster of leaves, from the tip of which extend a large number of slender threads.

These side branches, becoming the ears, contain the other kind of flowers. The leaves about the ears are called husks, and the threads are often called the silk. One of these long delicate threads runs down to each one of the embryo kernels of corn. That each may become a kernel, it is first necessary that a grain of pollen from the tassel should fall upon the silk. Here the pollen grows or thrusts out a very delicate prolongation down to the young kernel. If the pollen from one variety of corn fall upon the silk of another variety, we get a mixture, so our seed will not be pure. In wheat, red top, oats and timothy, the flowers are perfect, having the pollen and silk (stamens and pistils) growing from the same flowers. Our new varieties of wheat and oats doubtless arise in a manner similar to the mixing of Indian corn.

The grasses include in all about 300 genera, which are composed of some 4,000 different kinds or species. They are wide spread in geographical range—being found in nearly every part of the land surface of the globe which sustains any vegetation—around the snow clad summits of the loftiest mountains, associated with lichens and mosses, chick weeds and gentians. Every species of grass has its own peculiar natural place or places of growth.

"Grass is king among the crops of the earth. More land is devoted to its cultivation and more money value realized from it than from any other product."—ALEXANDER HYDE, in Mass. Ag. Report, 1868-9.

Our hay and pasture are of more value than all other agricultural products combined and cannot be less than 500,000,000 dollars annually.

W. J. B.

USEFUL PARAGRAPHS.

In the top-dressing of meadows with compost, we are adding to the soil, raising it and inviting the roots of the grass upward, thus thickening the sod. This is the most precious of manures—this thick mat of roots and compost. It will prolong the meadows, and add to the production of grain when plowed. On a gravelly soil this compost will be improved if one of the principal ingredients is clay.

A grape, in order to keep well, must be well-ripened. This may easily be tested in bunches that have ripe and unripe fruit, such as the Clinton, Diana, &c. The unripe berries

will shrivel and spoil, while the more mature will do this less; the fully ripe will preserve their quality, and in some cases, as with the Clinton, will improve it; this may be extended in this grape to April.

Observing housekeepers must have noticed that apples in winter are sometimes found with part of the apple darkened. Cut into this and it will have the appearance of having been partially baked. This is caused by the frost while the fruit hung on the tree. The sun striking it while yet in a frozen condition thawed it too suddenly, causing the mischief which we see. The rest of the apple may be partially so.

Leave grapes and all kinds of fruit untouched till they are ripe, and then handle as little as possible—if not handled at all, it would be all the better. Bloom is a protection to the grape. Those grapes that are handled (in thinning out) have done less well with us than the rest. They were sooner affected by disease, and seemed to ripen less readily.

Milk cows should be kept in good, not fat condition, and a few weeks before calving should be scrimped in their food. This especially with good milkers. By lessening the amount of blood in the cow there will be less milk secreted, and less straining or inflammation of the bag. The milk fever may thus to a great extent be avoided.

There is, on apples, a thick coat that can be scraped off with a knife, having a white appearance when scraped; otherwise, in its natural state on the fruit, being hardly perceptible. This coat is a protection. But handle your fruit as in sorting as in the spring, and the root is sure to increase.

Endless are the reports of farming, as of other occupations. And yet there is, comparatively, little progress, and much confusion. This, in consequence of careless or inaccurate reporting; many to make out a case and some (a great number) from habits of inaccurate observation, if not from actual defect. Hence the unreliability of much that is given, and the danger which it threatens. Allowance should always be made, or discouragement and loss will result.

If you are not particular about the looks, turn your hogs into your orchard, but keep them out of their snouts. Let them root to their hearts' content, and mellow the soil; they are equivalent to a cultivator, better in sod; and they are continual workers. They will meet three important things: They will work the soil, manure it and destroy the infected fruit. This remedy, for at least a few, is advisable. Then grow sod if you like, and have a clean orchard—clean of hogs as well as vermin.

The best manuring is with sod; this generally costs nothing, and yields crops all the while, and is of the best quality as a fertilizer. From fifty to eighty two horse loads of manure are contained in the sod of an acre. What manure is used, let it be in the main to make sod.

F. G.

STAY-AT-HOME FARMERS.

It often occurs to me that, as a class, we farmers confine ourselves too closely to our homes. I am aware that we "must keep our farms if we would have them keep us," and that one may spend too much time away; but there is no doubt that good would follow if farmers would oftener drop their tools, and taking their families, go forth on a tour of observation. By close applica-

tion at home, by constant reflection on their own affairs, men almost forget that the world extends beyond their line fences, fail to benefit by the improvements of the times, and lose all sympathy with the great and active world which surrounds them. It does such a one good to forget his own cares and labors for a time, to go forth and view the efforts and estimate the success of his fellow-laborers; to see the energy, the motion, the mighty progressive spirit which pervade, and animate this ever-moving and never-halting age. A sight of the plunging locomotive, the majestic steamer, of the systematic rush of commerce, the improvements of manufactures and architecture, must inspire one with new zeal and determination, must convince him that there is no place for drones, but that he too has a part to perform in the work of progress. His own deficiencies will appear at once, to be remedied, and he will exert himself to bring to greater perfection whatever in his system he concludes to be good. And as he and his return, with a sense of relief, from the bustling world to their own well-loved home, they will have a stronger feeling of gratitude for what they have to enjoy, and a new courage to strive for better things, knowing that they are not alone in their labors, but that they have the sympathy of all the good and noble in their efforts to improve themselves and that which God has given to their care.

S. W. GIBSON.

ALSIKE CLOVER.

In your last issue you enquire for experience with the Alsike clover. The commendations of the Washington Agricultural reports, the Shakers and others, induced me to sow six acres of it on our common dry rolling prairie soil, in this county, about the middle of last May.

I sowed from three to four pounds to the acre, with the usual amount of Timothy seed. It came up very thick, though the drought in the early season was unparalleled in thirty years' experience here. It grew about half knee high by the last of September, and blossomed out all over the field within about three months of the time of sowing, so as to furnish quite a fall pasture for the bees, and still at this date of the 8th of November, an abundance of fresh feed for my cows and horses. The earliest blossoms bore seed; the later ones the stock fed off.

I am very much pleased with it indeed. I believe it is hardier, more prolific, and furnishing more feed for stock than either the red or white clover, and of a far more desirable quality for cows or hogs and especially for horses, as I have not seen the least indication of its causing the horses to be "slaver," as both the red and white clover has done to our horses every year before; so that for some years past we have had to keep them up and out of its way, in the fall of the year. If this should continue to be the fact, I should consider it to be invaluable for horses. But if, as some think, "slavering" is caused by a small insect, and not by the seed of clover, it may be the same insect will at last appear on this also. What is the experience of others on this point? At any rate I shall prepare to save seed and sow it largely on all my farms next year, as a grazing and hay crop.

I ought also to add, that it was so very

dry the middle of last May, when it was sown, that some of our best men told me I should certainly lose my seed, and I thought I should myself. But as I needed the seed without delay, I concluded to risk it, hoping it would soon rain. But no rain came, and I still wonder how it could have grown at all or lived through the weeks of excessive drought and heat that followed. I sowed it without other grain, on ground well harrowed and very fine in surface. I then run a roller over it, and "draggle-irons," after the roller, which made the ground fine enough on the surface for a carrot bed, as rapidly as a harrow would go over it. This extreme fineness of the soil alone, I think, saved the seed through the drought.

JACKSONVILLE, ILL.

J. B. TURNER.

HOG CHOLERA.

In 1862, I published in THE PRAIRIE FARMER, the following recipe as a preventive, not as a cure, of hog cholera, after a pretty thorough trial of it by myself and by some of my friends and neighbors. I have been surprised to find that since that time the same recipe, varied only in unessential particulars, has been hawked about over the State, and sold for five dollars each, with a promise to keep the secret, which some of them do not observe.

Now, Mr. Editor, will you please publish the recipe again; credit me five dollars, and help me keep the secret, and you and I will make a speculation out of it. Whether good for anything or not, I know of no one who has had any hog cholera of any account, from that day to this, who has persistently made use of it, beginning before he got the disease.

Recipe.—One peck of wood ashes, four pounds salt, one pound black antimony, one pound copperas, one pound sulphur, quarter-pound saltpetre. Pound and mix thoroughly; moisten enough to prevent waste; put in a trough in a dry place where the hogs can at all times eat just as much as they please of it. If predisposed to cholera they will eat it very freely, and it will make something of an item of expense, for a time; at other times they will eat less, or perhaps none at all.

J. B. TURNER.

JACKSONVILLE, ILL.

P. S.—I have heard of hogs being actually cured, after the disease sets in, by being scrubbed all over daily with copperas water, moderately strong. Hogs should at all times be supplied in full with stone coal, as they will then eat less of the above mixture, and be less expensive. Brood-sows, particularly through the period of gestation, should be constantly supplied with both, and also with varied kinds of food—cooked, green and raw—and occasionally a little meat or animal food to keep them in good order, so that the disease may not be thrown off upon the pigs, which has now become quite common.

J. B. T.

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION AT MILWAUKEE.

My attention has been called to a criticism in your issue of 5th instant, of my report of the Wisconsin State fair, at Milwaukee, printed by you on the 23d ultimo; which report, by the way, you erroneously credited to Mr. Lamberton. I suppose you must have had some conversation with him relative to the fair, hence you mistook my signature, the initial "L," for his.

With regard to my report, I beg to say, that the original read: "Including the five grand leading classes of horses, cattle, sheep, swine and farm products, G. H. Lamberton, of this city, took the lead from his celebrated farms, vineyard and gardens at Lamberton, Milwaukee county," &c. In condensing my report, you changed the word "including" to the word "in," and this city (Chicago), to Milwaukee, thus changing the sense of the sentence.

My meaning was, that collectively, in those five classes, his entries aggregated more, and that in my judgment were entitled to more premiums than any other exhibitors, and that his entries were mainly all in the classes named.

I had no intention of wronging anybody else, and Mr. Lamberton could not have had, as he was not interviewed.

The Chicago Republican, and Tribune, and the Milwaukee Sentinel, News and Wisconsin, and many other papers, whose reporters were on the ground, I think fully sustain my position. JOHN A. LAWRENCE.

CHICAGO, Nov. 17th, 1870.

WOOL IN CALIFORNIA.—The California Wool Clip for 1870, says the San Francisco Commercial Herald, may now be set down at 20,000,000 pounds, being an increase of twenty-five per cent. on the product of the former year; with a very manifest improvement also in quality. The most of the fall clip is now in, and is turning out remarkably well.