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## TIMELY TOPICS FOR FARMERS.

### HOW TO DO PAYING WORK AT THIS SEASON.

Suggestions of Interest, from an Authoritative Source.

(W. L. Jones in the Southern Cultivator.)

It is presumed that by this time every farmer has matured his plans, and is already under way in executing them. One of the first things to claim his attention is the preparation of the manure to be used. He has decided to use composts largely and he must now prepare them; the matter cannot be deferred much longer. While a compost will give far better results than any other manure, it is not so readily prepared. A month or six weeks in advance of its application, the general drift of experience indicates that better results ensue where they are prepared three months in advance. Composts for cotton should be put up at once, and care taken that every condition for proper fermentation be present. These conditions are proper admixture of ingredients, decided moisture all through the mass, and a decided compactness. A loosely thrown up pile of manure will become too hot and be greatly injured. A proper fermentation brings about several valuable results. First, it reduces or breaks down the coarser ingredients, as hay, straw, leaves or other litter, and renders the distribution of the compost easier and more uniform. Uniformity of distribution is a matter of first importance. In the next place it renders inert, insoluble materials active and soluble. All of the nitrogen, for instance, of green or fresh manure is insoluble; it is either in the form of albuminous compounds or of urea (a constituent of urine), and must be changed to ammonia or nitric acid, before plants can appropriate it. The danger is that, as this ammonia is formed, it may be driven off by heat and be lost. This is to be prevented by keeping the fermentation within proper bounds, as above pointed out, and by covering the heap with a layer of rich dirt six or eight inches thick, to catch and absorb any escaping ammonia. Another and very effective means of preventing loss is using kainit as one of the ingredients of the compost. The general idea has been that land plaster was excellent for that purpose. But plaster only acts efficiently where there is water to dissolve it, and this is not so in a compost heap. Kainit, on the other hand, will not. Kainit is decidedly the best cheap and available substance for the purpose that we know of. It has been just stated that kainit ought to be one of the ingredients of a compost heap—what other of the chemical or concentrated fertilizers should enter into it. There need be no hesitation in saying that phosphoric acid, in some form, should occupy a front place in this respect. No substance is more universally wanting in old, long-cropped lands than phosphoric acid, none, the application of which, on such lands, has given more uniformly good results. Besides kainit and phosphoric acid, there are no other chemical fertilizers which need generally enter into composts; in exceptional cases some others may be needed; that depends upon the nature of the more bulky basis of the compost, and to this let us turn attention. As a rule, barn-yard manure is the main foundation of composts. It consists of the excrement and urine of horses and cattle mixed with a variable quantity of litter. With the farmer it is an ever-present inquiry how he may increase the quantity and improve the quality of this most valuable substance. As to the first (the quantity), the ready answer of Northern and European writers has been by keeping more stock. But bear in mind, however, that this answer comes from regions where grass and grain are the leading crops, and where large cities and a dense population (largely manufacturing) create a large demand for food, including meat. To a Northern or English farmer the question is, shall hay and grain be sold direct from the farm, or shall they be converted into meat and milk, and cheese and butter, and these become the objects of sale? He can find sale for either. With a Southern farmer the conditions are somewhat different. At present the most of his land is too poor to grow grass successfully, and climatic conditions render small grain crops rather uncertain. The cities about him are small, population is sparse, and a small portion of it engaged in manufactures. Would these surrounding want a general increase in the number of live stock on the farm? That is extremely doubtful. Except in localities where there is an extended "range," most farmers have, until a recent period, erred in keeping too much rather than too little stock. In one direction there might be a profitable increase, viz., in raising all the horses and mules they need, and possibly the hogs required for domestic use. Gradually our farms might be brought up to the requisite degree of fertility to produce grass and grain enough for a moderate increase in the number of milk cows. There is a demand for good butter at the South, and we ought by all means to strive to work up to the point of supplying it. But after all, the increase suggested would be small, and would not go very far towards increasing the quantity of manure. How, then, can it be done? By more careful husbanding of all manure material on the farm (especially the urine of animals) and the preventing of the leaching of the soluble (and therefore most valuable) portions by rain. In this connection the most urgent need of Southern farmers is more stall room for stock. Stalls should be large and roomy, and so arranged that stock

will not have to be haltered, but may be free to move about at will. When animals are haltered their urine is discharged at certain spots; the coarse manure is not uniformly impregnated with it, as it should be, and the animals will stand or lie down in wet manure to the serious injury of their hoofs or hides. Again, large stalls are desirable, that manure may accumulate in them for long periods of time without undue raising of the bottom of the stall or other inconvenience. Large stalls, for like reason, admit of the use of large quantities of litter. And this is one of our most available means of increasing the quantity of stable manure. On many Southern farms nine-tenths of the urine of stock is practically lost. When not at work they are allowed to run at large in open yards, where there is no absorbent; or if there is one to absorb it, the rains most effectually leach it out in the end. Kept in large stalls, when not at work, and these stalls kept well littered, a very large portion of the urine is absorbed and perfectly saved. When litter is impregnated with urine, its quality is greatly improved. It is a very different thing from litter simply mixed with solid excrement and rotted. Here is room for great improvement in our methods—this husbanding of the urine. Again, stalls should not be cleaned out more than once a year. Managed as above, neither the health nor the cleanliness of animals demands it, and under no other conditions can manure be accumulated with so little loss or detriment to its quality. The great foe to barn-yard manure of high quality is the open yard. Abundant littering helps matters some, but leaching will be great. The dark, rich juices which flow from it after every heavy or protracted rain are impregnated with salts of ammonia no less than soluble mineral ingredients. Let us banish the open yards from our farms, and change the name from barn-yard to stall manure. Another source of bulky, organic manure, which is quite unlimited, and which may serve as a basis for compost, is leaves, straw, etc., decomposed by the agency of saler and lime. As manure is used alone or in combination with lime or lime may be used alone. In the best case the acid function of the leaves is to decompose and reduce the lignin. When ashes are used, alone, they accomplish the same purpose, but in addition increase very materially the fertilizing properties of the leaves. They add to them lime, potash, magnesia, phosphoric acid and sulphuric acid—indeed, every mineral ingredient needed by plants. If a phosphoric acid is added to such a mixture, a very complete and perfect manure is produced. Such a mixture, then, makes an excellent basis for a compost. Ashes and lime should not be added directly to stable manure; they will drive off ammonia. But after those substances have been mixed with large quantities of leaves, have become diluted and marked by them, and entered into new combinations, they may then be mixed with stable manure without detriment. Ten bushels of ashes to three or four well packed two-horse wagon loads of leaves makes a good mixture. It ought to be prepared some months before it enters into the final compost heap. A farmer might begin now, and at all available opportunities through the year, gather and haul leaves and put up pens of such mixtures. He would be astonished at the amount which system and energy would accumulate in the course of a year. It should not be put in piles, but in pens four or five feet high, well moistened to start with, well packed and covered at top with a layer of rich dirt several inches thick to retain moisture. After such a heap has been well moistened, rains will be apt to keep it wet enough afterwards. Rain will leach thin layers of manure scattered in a yard or the thin edges of a spread-out heap, but will not leach a mass four feet thick with straight upright sides. Now, supposing a farmer has the several materials mentioned on hand and is ready to make his compost—how shall he proportion the several ingredients? Furman's formula, now so extensively used, is thirty bushels each of stable manure and cotton seed, 400 pounds of acid phosphate and 200 pounds of kainit. Experience has shown this to be a very excellent compound for land of average fertility. Can it and should it ever be varied? Suppose one has cotton seed, but no stable manure. In such case ten additional bushels of cotton seed should take the place of the lacking manure; so that the formula would be 40 bushels of cotton seed, 400 pounds of acid phosphate and 200 pounds of kainit. But it would be desirable to keep up the desired dilution of the chemical fertilizers in the compost, to mix with the above ingredients twenty-five or thirty bushels of rich earth, or wood mold, or something of the kind. Again, suppose one has stable manure, but no cotton seed; the place of the cotton seed may be taken by cotton meal—say 30 bushels of manure, 300 pounds of cotton seed meal, 400 pounds of acid phosphate and 200 pounds of kainit. Suppose one's land is extremely poor. Then the quantity of the cotton seed in the compost may be doubled, the quantities of other ingredients remaining the same. If one's land is quite rich, half or even less of the cotton seed may enter into the compost, the other constituents remaining the same. Suppose one has the mixture of leaves and ashes, but no manure or cotton seed; then the formula should be 60 bushels of leaf mixture, 400 pounds of cotton seed meal, 400 pounds of acid phosphate and 100 pounds of kainit. Less kainit would be called for in this case, because the ashes, in leaf mixture, would take its place. If lime only was mixed with the leaves, the full quantity of kainit should be added. It is well to build the compost pens in

or near the fields to which it is to be applied; this will save hauling during the very busy season of spring. And every one ought to provide himself with a compost distributor, both for economizing labor and time and for securing uniformity of distribution. Various patterns of these are now made over the country, and some of them are simple and inexpensive. A revolving cylinder with spikes, in a hopper with slot in the bottom and movable slides to regulate width of slot, constitute the essential parts of a spreader, and almost any farmer can make one for himself. As spring oats will be sown this month, attention is called to the mixed character of seed oats sold in the market as Texas rust-proof oats. Last year a good deal sold under that name were not red rust-proof; the crop ripened late and very unequally. The straw of some was tall, soft and giving—quite different from the strong, stiff straw of the rust-proof. Some seed sold as Texas rust-proof is very good, but one should be cautious and examine closely before purchasing. As a rule, it is better to buy home-raised seed, if it is possible, when one is under the necessity of buying at all. For spring oats, sow spring-grown seed, and those from a region south of your locality are preferable to those from a point north of you. We need fully acclimated varieties. Sow as early as possible, it is just as well to risk killing by cold when a crop is sown early, as to run the gauntlet of destruction by the drought and rust in the spring when a crop is sown late. Rich land and bottom land may be sown later than poor upland. Have a seen good crops of oats on bottom land sown in March. It is always well to sow some of the oat crop on such land, if one has any that is well drained. Bottom lands need occasional rest from corn crops, and if the spring is very dry an oat crop on bottoms pays very handsomely. By all means sow a large crop of oats, and give it a fair chance. PLAIN TALK FOR YOUNG MEN. Some Advice Based on Common Sense and Every-Day Experience. Yes, stand up right before us, while we talk to you like a Dutch uncle. And what are we going to say? Just this: Save something, young man! Don't spend all you get, and run in debt. Don't blow your money on cigars, beer, good clothes, or, it may be, a fast girl. Don't run or incline to that sort of business. It is demoralizing, dangerous, deadly. There is nothing that gives out his chest so broadly—fills him with such an inspiring sense of manliness, as to own something. Try it, and see what a noble pleasure it is to own a piece of land. It may be only a few acres. Perhaps an humble village plot, or a more pretentious city lot, but to own it—to have as all your own, that which you have paid for, a piece of God's good round earth, is to acquire a feeling of security and independence which is the most delicious and profitable experience in the world. To step out upon—to plant your poor feet squarely on some piece of land, some little portion of earth and feel that it is all your own—that you alone possess it, that it has been won by your own endeavors, by toil and struggle, through patient working; to know that the grass that greens it, this spot of earth, your own—the violet that blooms above its verdure, the vines that ornament it are yours to delight and enjoy, gladdening the eye, enlightening the senses; that the glad sun will beautify it and the rains of heaven moisten it into brightening beauty, all this brings a sense of pleasure and feeling of contentment that can be realized from no other method of enjoyment. It is freedom, independence, joy! Then to this exquisite and ennobling sense of possession may be added the delight of a home, and underneath heaven, there is no joy so pure, so elevating as a well ordered home! Beneath the shade of your own vine and fig tree, clasping your little ones to your heart, with wife in loving communion, the glories and peace of the home of God is only above this heaven on earth! Yes, young man! Own a piece of land! No one, however small his pay, little his savings, but can in due course of time have a home of his own—a piece of the good, wide earth, all his own! Boys, work for it! Young man, get it, and the State and the nation will be the gainer, and humanity the better off, for the true nobleness of citizenship is centered in him who has earned a home, for that home leads to the observance of law, and respect for constituted authority inculcates moral and Christian duties and these to love for your fellowmen and to the fear of God! Young man, get a piece of land.—Exchange.

## THE SILK CROP FOR THE SOUTH.

How the Farmers May Diversify Their Work to Advantage.

Louisiana writes to a Western paper: It is possible to add to the present crop of the planting States a crop not less in its realized value to the people who grow it than the cotton crop is now. The silk crop of Europe has the chief resources of the northern provinces of Italy and of several districts of France for more than half a century. It is still at the highest position for those countries, but it cannot be increased and made profitable to supply this country with silk. It cannot be increased for reasons connected with the close occupation of the land here, the heavy taxes, and the encumbrances and restrictions on the occupiers of the soil; the heavy rents and the absolute need of growing as much as possible, and the labor of the people, cannot take care of it. In the central and southern States here the situation is wholly different. There is a surplus of land, very lightly taxed, and not overburdened, but almost absolutely out of use, because it does not pay to cultivate it in competition with the West. There is an urgent demand for labor to produce crops and no restriction whatever on the freedom of the owners of land or the occupiers of the farms in the few cases where the occupants are the owners. There is no crushing exaction of taxes levied from the people, and the only necessity is to produce a crop as profitable as possible. The cotton crop has had a great position as the money-making crop of the South, but it does not return the most necessary of the expenses incurred in growing it. It does not pay a dollar for his labor, and it usually demands all the fertility of the soil, leaving nothing to prepare for it, and the farmer is waiting to realize what it does not value as it still is to the large masses and on the whole, it has proved to be a failure, and especially for the eastern States of the South. But in all these older States both the soil and the climate especially favor the growth of silk. The mulberry is indigenous, and grows freely without cultivation. Large parts of the country and all classes of lands will produce it profusely without cost and without ploughing or fertilizing. The land being practically free of taxes, the occupants are free to devote their time and energy to the raising of the mulberry trees. After the mulberry trees are sufficiently grown it is an easy work to turn them into silk—a few days only, not more than a month—and the crop of the year is grown and gathered, ready for sale. The cocoons need no preparation of consequence, none which involves any material cost. If a flature is near at hand they can be immediately reeled, and the reeled silk is worth five dollars a pound—not the six or eight cents a pound which the ginned cotton brings. The cocoons, when gathered, are worth eighty cents to one dollar a pound; but they are not difficult to reel, and may be reeled at home, as is done in Italy. The full value of the silk can then be realized. This silk will be the most enduring and permanently valuable of all fibres; as much more valuable for any definite use than iron. There is not the least practical difficulty in producing silk in any village or on any farm. No machinery is needed, and not a dollar need be paid for any tools or fixtures. Light feeding frames may be made by any man or intelligent boy of light boards or of branches of trees. Shelter from storms must be taken to avoid waiting or chilling the young worms. The eggs must be kept in a cool and dry place until the leaves appear. It is not proposed to give precise directions here, but only to assure all intelligent persons that there is nothing more required than every such person can readily learn. If a mistake is made in some particular, it may be easily corrected the next time. The writer of this note has had a lifetime experience in the public service and a thorough knowledge of the cultivation and resources of the country for a long period, and since 1851. Then the best realization of the cotton crop was still very imperfect, because cotton was very little manufactured. Now manufacturers of cotton in the South are general and prosperous, but to grow cotton is no longer profitable, with profit, on the worn lands of the eastern States South. Still more, the circumstances of the country are greatly changed, and an immense consumption of raw silk has been established. The present demand takes 500,000 pounds per month, or 6,000,000 pounds per year, worth \$30,000,000. The import of raw silk for November, 1886, were 546,035 pounds, value \$2,645,174. If half of this were not grown here it would cost the mere trifle to the growers, beyond their time, and would be a net profit of almost its full value. It would be so much directly added to the national resources, and it would all come to those who have no other resource to convert their time into money. A canal has been cut through from Lake Erie to the ocean, but further work towards making a harbor of the lake has been suspended until the arrival of piles, which are daily expected. Large suction pipes have been laid from the lake over the hill into a deep valley, where a steam dredger will be set to work and the debris conveyed by the suction pipes will be used as filling for the road, which has been graded for five miles towards Los

## SHERMAN AND BLAIR.

A Presidential Ticket that is Much Talked About.

(From the Washington Republican.) The presidential ticket makers about Washington are talking a great deal of Sherman and Blair as the Republican candidates for 1888. It is claimed that the two Senators would form a peculiarly strong combination on account of the variety of causes to which their prominence is due. A leading western Senator, who would not allow his name to be used in this connection, for obvious reasons, spoke of the ticket with enthusiasm in conversation with a reporter. "Senator Sherman," said he, "has the confidence of the business men in every section of the country in a greater degree than any other man in public life. His wise and conservative policy as Secretary of the Treasury and his soundness on all the important questions which have engaged the attention of Congress in the last twenty years mark him as an absolutely safe man to put in the White House even if he did not possess any brilliant qualities of mind. In one particular he is unique. Although a Western man, and of course deeply interested in the progress of his section and alive to its peculiar interests, he is as well liked by the great financial movers of New York and the factory men of Massachusetts as he is by the farming element of the west. You will not find that the Senator's name is very generally lauded by the politicians on account of his personal popularity, for he does not travel on his "magnetism," so to speak; but go north, east, south or west and you will hear people say: "Sherman is a safe man." The business interests of the country can rely on him." This, it seems to me, is the greatest praise that could be bestowed on a statesman. Personal magnetism, brilliancy on the stump, and solidness with boys are all very well in their way, but business men think more of sound principles, conservatism, and long legislative experience. Senator Sherman is one of the very few statesmen who have not, in the course of a long public career, gone wrong on some important question—hence the widespread confidence he inspires. He could certainly carry New York, which is likely to be again the pivotal State in 1888, and it is more than probable that Connecticut, Indiana and New Jersey would go with him. The Republican campaign with Senator Sherman as the standard bearer would be a short and successful one. The price needed any day, and with the Ohio Senator on the ticket the candidate would need no defense either. His record ever since he entered politics is pure, and there is nothing to hide or explain. Of course there would necessarily be petty campaign lies, but they would affect the Senator just as the throwing of pebbles would affect the Washington monument. Senator Blair would, I think, make the strongest kind of a second in this ticket. In the first place, he is from the east. Then his strength is of a peculiar kind which would swell the Republican vote in doubtful quarters. His earnest and consistent temperance record would be worth thousands of votes to the ticket in New York State alone where, among temperance people, he is looked upon as a sort of apostle. No one doubts the sincerity of the man or attributes his profusion of temperance principles to a desire for political gain. He is known to be opposed to run on principle, but he is one of those who believe that the liquor traffic can be regulated better by the Republican party than by any third party organization. He does not see the expediency of breaking up the grand old party, which has taken the lead in every species of progress and reform during the past thirty years, in order to advance prohibitory plans of more than doubtful feasibility. With the conservative temperance people his name is a tower of strength, and there are enough there in the very quarters where their votes are needed, to swell the Republican vote to such proportions as would clear away all doubts of success in 1888. Another great element of strength in the Senator is the favor with which the South looks upon his efforts to promote education in their section. I am not one of those who think that the South is going to remain forever "solid." I believe that with a man on our ticket who would represent some idea that is popular in the South we could gain two or perhaps three States next time. Virginia, you know, is strongly in favor of the Blair educational bill. It is likely to go Republican any how in 1888, but with Senator Blair on the ticket assurance would be rendered doubly sure. The same may be said of Tennessee, which, in a national contest, is a close State. West Virginia would likely fall in line also, since the Blair bill has more advocates there proportionately than in any other State in the Union. So, all things considered, I think the Republicans could not name a stronger ticket two years hence than Sherman and Blair.

## THE COTTON CROP.

Unequaled for Cleanliness. Color and Length of Staple—Price of Seed is Low.

WASHINGTON, D. C., February 10.—The report of the cotton crop of 1886 shows the average at the date of the close of the picking season, the proportion of the crop marketed on the first of February, the quality of the staple, the price of seed and product, compared with that of 1885. The close of the picking is reported the same as last year in the Carolinas and Texas; one day earlier in Mississippi; two later in Georgia and Louisiana; four in Tennessee and twenty-one in Arkansas. The dates are: North Carolina, December 2; South Carolina, November 30; Georgia, December 1; Florida, November 27; Alabama, November 22; Mississippi, December 7; Louisiana, December 12; Texas, December 3; Arkansas, December 25; Tennessee, December 15. The later maturing of the crop is extending the season in a few States only. In Arkansas the season was lengthened by the inability to pick the heavy harvest. Returns of the proportion marketed made the average to February 1, 1885, five per cent. At that date about 5,550,000 bales had gone from the plantations. This would indicate a crop of 6,460,000 bales, a mere trifle above the November indications. Of the rate of yield, the proportion by States is as follows: North Carolina 87, South Carolina 88, Georgia 85, Florida 83, Alabama 87, Mississippi 84, Louisiana 83, Texas 86, Arkansas 81, Tennessee 83. The quality of the crop is superior. Rarely, if ever, have returns of cleanliness and color, combined with the length of staple, equaled those just received. The price of seed is low, and complaint is made of the combination of oil millers to reduce prices. Renters will sell at any prices, sometimes as low as five to eight cents per bushel. The best planters refuse to sell at running rates. The average in Mississippi and Louisiana is ten cents, eleven in Arkansas, twelve in Texas and Tennessee, thirteen in South Carolina, Georgia and Alabama, sixteen in Florida. Feeders of cattle and sheep pay the highest rate. The product is larger than last year in Florida, Tennessee, Arkansas and Texas, and smaller in the other States. The average result from a careful analysis of present returns is an aggregate less than two per cent. lower than that of last year. THE CHEAPNESS OF THE FOOD IT PRODUCES. Mr. George W. Koimer, a leading farmer and stock raiser of Augusta county, Va., has furnished the Staunton Vindicator the following account of his experience with a silo. "Last August I put up a frame building 12 by 12 and 12 feet high. The frame is 8 inches, planked up on both sides. The space between was filled with sawdust. I put in a plank floor and covered with plank, with a door in one corner at the ground. The building did not cost over \$20, with an estimated capacity of 30 tons. On August 23 green corn was cut. Not having planted the corn for the purpose, and only as an experiment, I selected the lightest growth in the corn field. The corn was cut in half inch lengths by steam power, and during the filling of the silo three men tramped the cut fodder as tight as they could pack it. The silo was only filled only half full, not feeling sure that this plan of house would keep it well. The top was then covered with one and a half feet of wheat chaff and placed loose planks, closely fitted, covering the entire top. Upon the plank was put two feet of stone. The gable ends were nailed up and the job was completed at a cost of about \$1 per ton. "On December 5 I opened the door at the bottom made for the purpose of getting the ensilage out. I found it in splendid condition, except a few inches around the sides and on top. Fearing there would be some trouble to teach stock to eat it, some of the ensilage was offered to horses, cows and hogs—all ate it at once with as much relish as if it was green clover. After feeding the ensilage a few days to cows, they increased their flow of milk, besides giving a richer quality. The stock, which have been fed upon ensilage alone except access to a straw stack, have increased in weight and manifest an increased appetite and taste for it. It is said that green clover, cut when in bloom, makes as good an ensilage as green corn. Clover that will make one and a half tons of hay will make twenty tons of ensilage per acre, and corn that will make forty to fifty bushels per acre will make about twenty-five tons of ensilage. Work of a Crank. While Adellina Patti was singing in the Grand Opera House, San Francisco, on Wednesday night, a tremendous explosion above the railing of the top gallery. As soon as the location of the trouble could be learned, a policeman rushed to the scene and found a man with burnt face and hands, moaning with agony, and the remains of an infernal machine about him. He was placed under arrest and conveyed to the hospital, where he stated that when he stooped to pick up his hat and cane he found a package under his seat which he picked up, and that as he raised it to see what it was it exploded. He was badly hurt. He gave his name as Dr. James Hedges, aged 71 years, resident in San Francisco. He stoutly maintains his innocence, but it is generally believed he tried to throw a bomb at Patti. "What's the use in kicking?" asks an exchange. There isn't any. That is probably why most men kick.