

Ring Out the Old Ring In the New

In taking account of our assets as is our custom at the beginning of the New Year, we find and appreciate your confidence and good will.

We hope for a continuance of the friendship which has marked our business relations and beg to extend to you the compliments of the season.

C. M. Baker & Son

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Bill of Rights.
The bill of rights is a declaration of fundamental principles deemed basic to the Constitution itself and borrowed from the English bill of rights of 1689. When the Constitution of the United States was framed and submitted to the people it did not have a bill of rights and it was so harshly criticized on this account that its friends promised to incorporate or add such a declaration, and the first ten amendments to the Constitution, made after the main instrument was adopted, were in fulfillment of this promise. All the State Constitutions now have bills of rights, practically identical with one another.

Queerest of Trades.
Mr. Chesterton once wrote a book called "The Club of Queer Trades." One of the queerest trades in real life is that of the elderly South London man who stands daily at a very congested crossroad and assists children over the thoroughfare. Some 16 years ago he started this occupation out of sheer benevolence, and has been doing it ever since. The small sums and the Christmas gifts he receives from the parents of the children serve to eke out his pension.

Tied Boot Too Tight.
Tying his boot too tight caused a farmer, named Lyons, death at Ashgrove, near Mallow, County Cork, Ireland, recently. The man was tying his boot in the yard of his house preparatory to going to work when a vein burst in his leg, and although efforts were made to stop the flow of blood, death ensued in half an hour.

Must Not Shun Combat.
"He is not worthy of the honeycomb who shuns the hive because the bees have stings."

Fine Job Printing at this Office.

Home Course In Modern Agriculture

III.—Preparing the Ground

By C. V. GREGORY,
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SINCE the condition of the soil has so much to do with the readiness with which the plants can get food from it one of the most important problems that confront the farmer is the proper preparation of the ground. The first work of preparation usually consists of plowing. Plowing the ground pulverizes it to some extent and buries the weeds and trash that may be on the surface.

Plowing should not be done when the soil is too wet, or the first of these objects will not be accomplished. Instead of being pulverized, the slice turned up by the plow will be packed together more firmly than ever and will bake into a hard clod. The furrow slice will also turn up cloddy if the soil is too dry.

A good way to tell when a field is in proper condition to be plowed is to squeeze a ball of the dirt in your hand. If it sticks together in a pasty mass you had better let it dry a few days longer. If it hangs loosely together in a mealy ball the plow can be set to work at once. Such soil will fall over the edge of the moldboard in loose, crumbly masses. The field will not be ridged like a washboard, as too many fields are, but will aptly demonstrate the truth of the old saying that "a field well plowed is half harrowed."

In order to do a neat job of plowing a colter and a weed hook are necessary.

times will pulverize the ground more than hours of work after it has become dry and baked.

The fall plowing will usually need to be gone over with the disk to get it in shape for planting. The superior condition obtained by double disking—that is, letting the disk "lap half"—will more than pay for the extra labor. There is an additional advantage in that the surface is left smooth. Disking spring plowing is seldom necessary.

In cases where improper plowing has left a field cloddy the roller may often be used to advantage. A corrugated roller is better for this purpose than a smooth one, as it tends to crush the clods rather than to simply push them down into the finer dirt. A homemade "planker" or clod crusher will often answer the purpose as well as a roller.

The roller packs the ground considerably and so quickens the capillary rise of water. If the surface is left smooth much of the moisture that comes up will be lost by evaporation, and later in the season the crop will be likely to suffer from drought. To avoid this the roller should be followed immediately by the harrow.

This loosens a thin layer of surface soil. When the capillary water reaches this loose layer its rise is checked, and comparatively little is lost by evaporation. For this same reason it is often well to harrow fall plowing as soon as it is dry enough in the spring, especially if disking is not to be done until late.

After the ground is plowed and disked the harrow must be used to complete the preparation for planting. There are many kinds of harrows, but none that are better than the ordinary spike tooth. These are made in all styles and sizes. The harrow is economical to use, since it gets over ground so rapidly. The best time to harrow in order to pulverize the soil is immediately after a light shower. The little clods will then be softened and will be easily knocked to pieces. To kill weeds, however, it is better to wait until the soil is a little drier, as harrowing a wet field will transplant the weeds rather than destroy them.

Do not be afraid to harrow too much. No work that you can put on a field pays better. No other implement will kill as many weeds in so short a time, and no other machine will tear clods to pieces so rapidly. A field well plowed and disked and harrowed until it is in as fine tilth as it is possible to make it is an ideal seed bed. Seed planted in such a soil will start under the most favorable conditions. If the seed itself is strong and the after treatment what it should be, a maximum crop may be expected.

Not all fields need to be plowed before the crop is put in. It is a general practice in the corn belt to sow small grain on stalk fields without any previous preparation. Experiments have shown that small grain does not yield enough more on plowed corn stalk ground to pay the cost of plowing. Very frequently they do not yield as much. Where small grain follows small grain, however, plowing is necessary to kill weeds and loosen the surface soil. It does not need to be loosened as deeply as for corn, however, since the small grain plants are harder than corn and the roots are more aggressive in pushing through a hard soil.

While plowing stalk ground is unnecessary, it will usually be found profitable to disk the land before seeding. This chops up the constalks and provides a mellow layer of soil for the seed to germinate in.

Where the oats are to be put in with a drill the ground should be double disked previously. If sown broadcast



FIG. V.—A GANG PLOW AT WORK.

ry attachments. By using them all the trash can be turned under completely. This not only hastens the decay of such matter, but also adds greatly to the looks of the field. Too many farmers do not pay enough attention to looks. A ragged looking field may raise just as large a crop as a smooth one, it is true, but the farmer who is careless in his plowing is likely to be careless in everything else.

If the plowing is done in the fall it does not matter so much whether it turns up cloddy or not. The hard freezes of winter are the best pulverizers that ever tore a clod to pieces. This is one of the advantages of fall plowing. One of the disadvantages is that in an open winter the soil is liable to wash badly. This can be prevented to some extent, however, by planting a catch crop, such as oats or millet, on the field after plowing.

The depth of plowing will vary with the conditions. A light, sandy soil does not need to be plowed as deeply as a heavier one. If the ground is plowed the same depth every year the bottom of the furrow will become hard and the roots will have difficulty in getting through it readily. A good plan is to begin at, say four inches, and plow one-half inch deeper each year until a depth of seven or eight inches is reached. Then go back to four inches and begin over again. In this way a little new soil is turned up every season and the layer of surface soil gradually deepened.

Spring plowing should be shallower than that done in the fall. The soil is full of tiny pores, its structure being much the same as that of light bread. If you will put one corner of a slice of bread in a dish of water you will notice that it becomes wet for a considerable distance above the surface of the water. This is caused by the moisture flowing upward through the little holes in the bread. The force that causes water to rise in a small tube is called capillarity. It is this capillarity that makes the water rise from the subsoil up to the surface where the roots can use it. The smaller the capillary tubes the faster and higher the water will rise.

When the ground is plowed these capillary tubes are broken up, and the rise of water is checked. To start it again the soil must be allowed to settle for a long time or else be worked down with the disk, harrow or roller. In the fall the depth of plowing does not matter, since the furrow slice will have all winter in which to settle. But in the spring this capillarity must be restored almost at once or the surface layer will become so dry that germination and later growth will be checked. Hence the importance of shallow plowing, so as to reduce the labor of disking and harrowing. If the surface of the ground is crusted or if there is much trash to be turned under the field should be disked before it is plowed. This will provide for a layer of fine dirt in the bottom of the furrow, which will pack down closely and help to restore capillarity.

If the furrow turns up "shiny" or shows any tendency to bake into clods it should be harrowed every half day, or every day at least. This seems like a great deal of extra work, but if a harrow is kept in the field it does not take long to hitch on to it and go over the newly plowed strip just before quilting for noon or night. A few minutes spent in harrowing at such



FIG. VI.—PREPARING THE GROUND WITH A DISK PLOW.

one disking before sowing and one afterward will cover them better than two after sowing. The drill is becoming more popular for sowing oats, and justly so. It places the seed at an even depth and covers them all. It saves seed because it places all of it where it has an opportunity to grow. After the oats are drilled or disked in at least two harrowings should be given. Even three or four would not be too many, since this is the last chance to cultivate the crop.

In some parts of the corn belt the practice of listing corn is followed. This consists in throwing up a large furrow and planting the corn in the bottom of it. In this case there can be little previous preparation of the ground unless it is to go over it once with the disk. Corn is listed only in very light soils, which do not puddle or become cloddy easily. Such soils need less preparation than the heavier clays and loams.

A LITTLE RUNAWAY

By AVIS INGALLS.



OF COURSE there was snow, newly fallen — what would Christmas be without that? And sleigh-bells, all a tinkle, and cheery greetings and glad smiles on every hand; and there were clear twinkling stars a way above the house-tops looking down from a deep blue sky, and, of course,

it was nothing but hustle and bustle. In most places, and all the necessary hullabaloo that makes Christmas the adorable holiday that it is—but—and here is where my story comes in.

On a quiet street, where the better class of houses stood, a trifle away from the shopping district and the street car lines, a little face was pressed against the window-pane, and two large tears stole down over a straight little nose. Other little girls were joyfully looking forward to this happy season, but Elizabeth Rockerby felt sadly at a loss and out of place as she stood in her black velvet and lace in her grandmother's huge drawing-room. She had overheard the parlor-maid and the upper house-maid, in a whispered conversation.

"The poor darlin', Nora, the house-maid, had said. 'The poor darlin'! And is it Christmas the little one's after havin'?' Never a bit of it! Don't ye believe it! Oh, the poor lamb! that solemn and stiff-like in her black dress—"

"Think of Cook's Ruby rigged out like that!" said Ellen. "Do you think she'd stand it for a minute? Not on your life! She'd be down under the table pulling the cat's tail; and she'd be teasing her mother for goodies, when she got tired of that! But this pale-faced mite, she's passed from one calculating relative to another, till she hasn't got a speck of zzip left in her. Do you know what Ruby'd do? She'd run away!" and Ellen laughed outright at the thought.

It was here that Elizabeth had slipped into the window recess, her pulses throbbing.

If Cook's little girl could run away why shouldn't she? Elizabeth had not known it could be so cold when one got out into the night; but the stars had a friendly twinkle, and the shop-windows looked so pretty with their tinsel drapings and red paper bells that she almost forgot the cold as she went eagerly from one gay collection of toys to another, an felt the companionship of children, as she rubbed shoulders with ragged newsboys and pinched-faced little girls who gazed quite as eagerly as she at the Christmas dolls holding outstretched arms to the passers-by.

"Are they—are they to sell?" she asked timidly, of a little girl who held her baby sister by the hand and stamped her feet to keep them warm.

"Sakes alive, yes!" said the other, in astonishment. "Ain't that one with the black curls too cute for anything!" she added, gazing at it with wistful eyes.

"Could we go in—and buy it?" asked Elizabeth earnestly.

"Course we could, if we had the ninety-eight cents."

"Come on, then!" said Elizabeth, and, grasping her incredulous companion by the hand, she plunged into the store. "The doll with the black curls!" she stammered. "May I buy it for this little girl?"

"Sure," said the salesman.

Elizabeth fished a dollar bill out of her little chain purse and watched curiously as the child lifted the doll tenderly in her arms and walked out, forgetting, in her delight to say "thank you," and the baby sister toddled after.

Out in the street again Elizabeth saw two small boys with their faces glued to the window of the next shop, where sticks of candy lay in fascinating rows, and chocolates and gum-drops were heaped in pyramids, with trays of fudge and marmalade-candy in between. She stopped, and, with all her hesitation this time, gave them each a cent.

Her chain purse was empty now, her exhilarating occupation gone, and she stood, a forlorn little figure in her ermine and velvet, on the corner of the crowded street.

She had remained thus for some little time when she heard a quick step behind her and she was quickly grasped by strong but kindly hands and swung on to the steps.

"So-ho!" said a big man, who had come up the street. "It's Mistress Elizabeth Rockerby! What are you up to, Betsy Jane?"

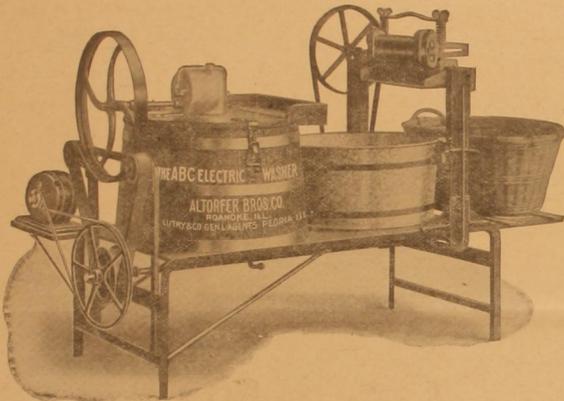
"Cousin Bob!" gasped Elizabeth.

"Yes, 'Cousin Bob,' and now, 'cry your trail, little sister!'"

"I—I ran away," faltered Elizabeth. "Well, come along in and I'll introduce you to the cousins," said Cousin Bob, cheerfully, and then I'll 'phone 'em up and tell them that it's our turn to have you."

And Elizabeth snuggled her fingers happily into her big cousin's hands as she stepped forward into a new life.

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