Farm and Dairy.

Edited and conducted by W. A. Ackerman, of Albion, Secretary of the State Grange.

Questions of interest upon subjects relating to Agriculture will be cheerfully replied.

Politics in Granges.

There seems to be a wide-spread belief that the order of Patrons of Husbandry is a secret political organization. Repeated assertions that it is not, given by men of integrity holding high positions in the order, do not remove the impression. The exercise of a little common sense in examining the principles upon which it builds, would soon convince any clear headed man that it has no feature of resemblance to any political party ever organized. There is nothing secret in the order except the work. Its principles are enunciated in the public prints, and freely discussed by its members everywhere. It endorses the motto: "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity."

It aims to develop a higher and more independent manhood and womanhood; to promote social and intellectual culture; to add dignity to labor; to deal fairly with all, and to protect its members from the rapacity of the many trade monopolies which have long set, like a nightmare, upon agricultural thrift. Is there any political leaning in all this? Again; let any fair-minded man observe the make up of any subordinate grange with a critical eye, to detect, if possible, party tendencies. If he is acquainted with the membership, he will find uncompromising democrats, radical republicans and free thinking liberals fraternizing in the Grange, in which political designs receive no countenance nor thought. Besides all this, he will observe that a large portion of every subordinate body is composed of women, who take all the degrees, and are entitled to all the profits and privileges of the order. If not yet satisfied, let him examine the officering of the State Grang, as represented by its executive committee—one republican, one liberal, and one democrat—and this without a thought, and without knowledge of the political affiliations of the members there in the meeting at Albany, which elected them separately by ballot.

Perhaps the influence of the Granges will be exerted in behalf of the ballot for women. It is even probable that it will, for a fundamental principle of the order is equal rights to all, and the theory of women voting on all questions is put to the fullest practical use within the organization. But if politicians are not yet satisfied, let them try to enter the order, and they will find the ballots of Patrons more difficult to manage than any which they have ever undertaken to manipulate, and they will be likely to conclude that whatever power the order may have, it can not well be applied to the running of any political machine.

Water for Stock.

No farm stock can have the full measure of thrift without plenty of water, and that must be had at the right times, and must be reasonably pure. However good and fresh the grass may be, there is still need of water, especially for milch cows. A full flow of milk is dependent upon the healthy condition of the animal, full feed and complete digestion. Without good water in abundance there will not be good health, there will be restricted appetite and impaired digestion. Horses, sheep and young cattle have less need, perhaps, of water, and on especially favorable pastures, may do tolerably well for a considerable time, with no supply beyond that contained in the juicy feed, together with the dews; but it is quite unsafe to depend on these sources alone.

A very great portion of our hill lands are watered by springs, which, with a little direction, can be made to give increased accommodations. The dry season of summer is the proper time to observe the requirements in such situations, as well as to mark out the plans for proposed improvements in the matter of watering stock. Those lands are among the best for pasture. Their grasses are usually fine, succulent and rich. If there is a lack, it is very commonly in the supply of water for drinking, and may be made good by a little care. The point of delivery for the springs should be well chosen, with reference to good standing room, and there should be provision made for so conducting away all surplus, so that approach should always be dry for the cattles' feet. The evils of a mud hole, through which the animals must tramp to procure drink, are not easy to estimate. It is enough to say that the whole profit in milk or flesh is often lost by this bit of carelessness.

Our flat lands are not so good for stock as the hill lands, chiefly because of the difficulty of procuring abundant water supply. Graziers occupying the uplands can hardly appreciate the embarrassments proceeding from this cause. The labor and annoyance of pumping a supply of water for a herd of cattle becomes, in the course of the season, exceedingly irksome, and is often insufficiently done, by which there is always direct loss in the thrift of the animals, which means, of course, loss of profit.

Nobody is enlightened when we say lands should be devoted to such purposes as will yield the most legitimate profits. Thin lands without water cannot be given profitably to pasture, and lands with moist surface-soil cannot be used well for grain. In this business of farming, more than in ordinary affairs, there is need of the exercise of thought, to provide for all contingencies, and to secure good results.

Meadows which have been out, need to be kept entirely free from the tramp of cattle's feet, as well as from grazing, until a nice after-growth is obtained. In best meadows should at no time be entirely grazed. We have a theory which, at some happy time when we can do so to please, we expect to put to the test, that meadows in this valley can be made to produce twice as much grass to the acre as they do now. Pasturing them is no part of the process. We shall try to show, on a single field, the truth or falsity of our idea. The ground will be careful cultivation of the surface, including a thorough inter-[illegible] of the surface soil in and [illegible] the rows, and, if it would not be [illegible] exaggeration, we should venture to say that little scheme for [illegible] explanation will be attempted soon.

Shade Trees in Cultivated Fields.

In these hot July days it is pleasant to stretch one's self at full length in the grass under the leafy barriers which intercept the fierce rays of heat. And if the zephyr, laden with fragrance, gathered from the clover bloom, comes into into the shades to ravish the senses with sweetness of touch, delicious odors and the quiet music of its play upon the green leaves dancing in harmony with the delight, it is rural bliss. We could lie there and dream of Eden without fig leaves, if there were no necessities beyond.

But—and what a pity the disjunctive breaks so sweet a dream—even fig leaves, now-a-days, have no particular value as an article of attire, and shade, seasoned with east wind, is quite unnutritious. The sun will soon retrace his course to warm the southern hemisphere; the leaves will flutter and break from their branches; the clover bloom will be but a remembrance, and the zephyr will be a shrieking blast, against which fig leaves would be no protection. This is winter, for which we are to provide. We can have the trees, the shade and the pleasures which they bring—sweet dreams and all—aye, but again, we must, till the earth more or less, or some other dreamer more fortunate, will have the burden of our bread added to his toil.

A great spreading oak in the middle of a kitchen garden would be a nuisance to be speedily abated, because, so far as its influence extended, it would be antagonistic to the purposes in view. There could be no successful gardening beneath its branches, however nicely the spot might be adapted to dreaming. To just the same extent it would be injurious in any cultivated field. This is true of nearly all the common varieties of forest trees located in arable lands, although there are different degrees of damage to different crops, and some species are not very hurtful to grass. One of the worst of all, subversive of all the purposes for which lands are cleared, is the hickory. No good bite of grass ever grows under its branches, and a successful hill of corn, within the area shaded, would be a miracle. Yet, in traveling through this valley, or along the lower hill slopes, the eye never looses sight of fields robbed of so much of their fertility as these rapacious feeders can appropriate. There is no single argument for their preservation in the fields, if we except whatever of beauty they offer to the eye, and it is a vitiated sense which can discern beauty in nickeries occupying such locations. We might, perhaps, with nice regard to the small boy of the period, except the huge delight he has in the fall, perched on a flexible branch, thrashing, with a long pole, the leathery twigs for nuts, which, in nine cases out of ten, contain a speck of meat far too bitter to for anything but the aforesaid boy to eat. Even if we admit the beauty and respect the boy's taste, the tree is not in the right place. Along the highways, along the borders of farms or water courses, in parks or lawns, there may be trees, big or little, hickories, oaks, *et ilid omne genus*, with or without nuts, and we shall find delightful dreams under their branches, but let us extinguish the sentimentality which offers a senseless place for their preservation in cultivated fields. We say, "lead us not into temptation," and we send the plowman out with his furrow directed straight to the tough roots, and he swears; or, if he has too little energy for that exercise of mind, his horses break the harness, the whiffletrees or the plow, and our energies are aroused. Let us cut away the trees in these places as a means of grace, if we cannot be moved by profit; and, if we cannot get our dreams in these July days without, the forests invite us always.

The last dressing up of the potato field, due about now, can best be done with the plow, going down at least as low as the original plowing, stirring as much of the soil as possible. Then a careful dressing of the hills, removing all weeds and distributing fresh, loose earth in and about the hills. Barring the bugs, the rest must depend upon the weather, to say nothing of the moon, which some good old farmers regard as exerting a potent influence on the crop. It is, however, much safer to depend on the plow and the hoe than on the moon, at least until we understand its occult forces better. Notwithstanding the theories about full culture, we prefer a moderate hilling. We have tried both methods, and the latter has always produced the best results.

Dogs.

The query arises with the caption, what shall be said out of which may come a speck of good? The old maxim regarding silence, when nothing good can be said, hardly applies here. There are very good dogs, but their number is not great. If we consider the species collectively, there is not very much good. If we could separate the few valuable specimens from the sneaking pack of worthless curs, we should vote for the preservation of the former and the incineration of the latter in Prof. Doremus', and to save the horrors of asphyxia, we would suggest that the tank be quietly dropped in mid ocean.

Just now the public mind is alarmed about hydrophobia. Several terrible deaths have occurred from this terrible disease in New York city and in Brooklyn, within the past few days. Several other persons are in the agonies of approaching death, and a considerable number of other persons live in horrible expection of hydrophia, for they have been bitten by rabid dogs. The highest medical skill has hitherto been found incapable of furnishing alleviation for the intense suffering which precedes death from this disease, after it has once seized the victim. The disease is itself a horrible mystery, in the presence of which medical skill is simply powerless. There are several other places in this State in which dogs, believed to be rabid, have bitten persons and animals, and have then been killed. Even here, in this city, ten days since, a dog, presenting all the appearances of this dreadful horror, after persistent and desperate attempts to bite several persons, was killed.

Now, what should be done? In the State of New York the damage done by dogs is estimated at two millions of dollars annually. Will anybody try to show that they do a tithe of that sum in good? Shall we give sure heed to the abominable cause of unrestrained dogs? There is scarcely a neighborhood in the State in which the voice of everybody might not be obtained in favor of killing, or otherwise disposing of everybody's dog, except the sweet creatures which belong to the voters themselves. What is the use of laws for dogs, inasmuch as, with all their accomplishments, they cannot read, and their masters do not regard themselves as amenable to laws which, in their case, are never violated. Oh, no! It is the neighbor's dog which does all the neighborhood snarling and biting. As well make laws on temperance as on dogs.

We suppose it is settled that the nuisance cannot be abated. There must be hydrophobia, sheep-killing, frights and alarms, with all the minor evils. But what matters it if the dogs—sweet pets—are happy. What shall be done about it—what—to be sure?

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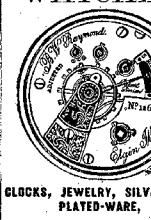

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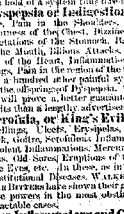

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