

Home and Farm.

Blots on Household Matters by a Delaware Housekeeper.

[America's Agriculturist for April 1.]

Turns of a Griddle—I had seen for some time a statement going the rounds of newspapers, that a turnip used in rubbing the griddle, while cooking griddle cakes, would give the desired smoothness and do away with the unpleasant smoke. I doubted it, but a trial soon convinced me that the statement was correct. I found, however, that at times it was necessary, when beginning, to put a very little grease on the turnip, but this made no appreciable smoke.

PUTTING AWAY TUSS—A very little thing, yet worth knowing. One week my regular washer woman could not come, but sent a substitute. When she returned, on the following week, I found her tugging away at a nest of tufts, finding it almost impossible to pull the inner one from the encircling outer one. "I never have this trouble," said she, "when I put the tufts away myself." "How do you avoid it?" I questioned. "Why, do you not see she has put all the handles in a straight line, and set them away so that the two handles shall come together. Then, if they do swell, I can have thorough use of the handles, and with them the tufts are soon separated."

RIGHT AND LEFT—My little boy was left-handed, and found, by experience, that school life would be particularly irksome to him if that defect were not remedied before he began school. It was useless for me to try to persuade him to draw pictures on his little slate with the right hand. That hand was really weaker than the other; he could not guide it. So I made little pictures on the slate, nothing intricate, then rubbed them off with my fingers till only the dark outline could be seen. These I required him to trace. The weak hand that could not originate a line could, little by little, approximate the rubbed outlines. Afterward, by the same plan, I taught him to write the letters of the alphabet, and by the time he was old enough to go to school, he had learned to use the right hand.

MENDING A CARPET—My dining room carpet was only a rag carpet to begin with; later it had become a ragged one. I was contemplating it reluctantly one day, knowing that the state of my purse would not allow me to replace it just yet with a new one. I could think of no way to mend it, but by heavily stitching it in place.

In the middle of my dilemma, an experienced old lady entered, who suggested paste instead of tacks. "I have repeatedly put maulin patches over the carpet with paste," said she, "and it is surprising how well it holds." I took the hint. Patches are not, in their nature, beautiful, yet a patched garment is decidedly better-looking than a ragged one, and the same is true of a patched carpet, and my patches were so easily applied and proved so adhesive, that I rarely swept the room without a mental benediction upon the one who suggested it.

CUTTING HOT BREAD—One day company arrived unexpectedly. Supper was just over, and no bread had been left. I had just taken from the oven some delicious-looking light bread, but it was too hot to eat. We live in a country place, where there is no baker. In my bewilderment I happened to remember that in Mrs. Whitney's cook book "Just How," she suggests heating a knife, in order to split open a hot short-cake. Why, thought I, may not smoking hot light bread be sliced with a hot knife? It is the cold surface of the steel applied to the warm dough that produces a disagreeable clamminess. I heated my carving knife and tried it. The bread sliced beautifully, and as I piled it up to bring to the table, I put it on a plate upon which I had laid a fresh napkin, for the contact of the hot bread with the cold plate would have produced the same sodden clamminess on the surface of the lower slice. Of course, I would not recommend the slicing of hot loaves except upon emergencies. As a frequent diet it might prove injurious, but not more so than other warm breads.

BABY TENDER—My baby was creeping all over the floor, and I had no nurse for her. There were times when she drove me nearly distract. When I was busiest, it seemed to me she crept into the most dangerous places. Just imagine a woman, busy preparing dinner. Except herself, baby is the only occupant of the room. She opens the oven to taste the roasting beef. Just as her entire energies are directed to the operation, baby takes advantage of her stooping position and creeps up on her back. She can not dislodge the child, and it is with extreme difficulty that she replaces the hot pan without an accident. I frequently found myself in such positions. At last I thought of a remedy. I procured a dry goods box, or such a box as shoes are generally packed in; its dimensions were as follows: Depth, half a yard; width, 15 inches, and length, one yard. This I put in one corner of the kitchen. Whenever I was particularly busy, I caught up the darling and boxed her. She might dislike her close quarters, might struggle to get free, but at least she was safe. But in a little while she did not dislike her prison. She learned to pull up by the sides and look over; she took her first steps supported by its sides which were at a convenient distance apart; by and by, she would walk from end to end in her efforts to be near me as I moved about the room. But it is a clumsy affair. I shall have a much better one for the sitting-room. It is to be made of the same dimensions, but simply a skeleton, except that the door is to be solid. Upon this frame, which is to be very smooth around the top, I shall tack wire mesh, the entire structure to be on casters, that I may easily roll it about, a long flexible strip is to be tucked from side to side, like a basket handle. From this I shall suspend the toys I find amusing, and I rather think my homemade baby-tender will be a comfort. Some bright babies of Brussels carpet, which I have been saving, will, when nicely bound, come in place as a rug for baby's box.

Earth Hints for April. [American Agriculturist.]

CROPS—The soil of a young orchard may be kept in cultivation until the trees begin to bear; grain should never be grown, except Indian corn, but potatoe and root crops are the best.

EARLY POTATOES—should be put into the ground at the earliest possible date. When started in boxes they may be greatly hastened; in planting take care that the tender sprouts are not broken off. The soil should be light and warm for early potatoes.

OATS—Early-sown oats in our hot climate are, as a rule, better than the late-sown. Our climate is not so favorable for oats as the cooler northern and northeastern ones. Oats are heavy and plump, and seed from Canada, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick will produce well for two or three years. By using seed from these northern localities, oats may be grown in the Middle States weighing from 35 to 45 lbs per bushel.

PLANTING—In setting a tree take time to do it properly; spread the roots evenly and to their full length, and so work in the soil among them that there will be no hollow places. Water may be used to carry the soil among the roots—not dashed in by the pail full, but showered from a watering-pot. Do not stamp the soil down around the roots, but firm it carefully with the foot. The tree should be set no deeper than it stood in the nursery.

BARLEY—A fine condition of the soil is indispensable for this crop. Old barley growers know all about this, but many want to grow barley because it is a profitable crop when successful. It will succeed in any good, well prepared soil, but a mellow clay loam which can be brought to good tilth is

to be preferred. But good crops of bright grain may be grown on lighter loams if in good heart. It may be an excellent soiling crop to follow clover, and as a change from oats. We prefer to sow thickly, say 2 1/2 bushels per acre, but opinions vary in this respect, and from 1 1/2 to 2 1/2 bushels is the range.

SWINE—Corn is high, but so is freight, and as 300 pounds of corn may be carried in a pork barrel, it is a question if it will not pay to feed 50 cent corn to four cent pigs. Every bushel of corn fed relieves the market of a surplus, and makes the remainder more salable. This is to be considered. Also the fact that there is a kind of pig that may be fed the most profitably, and that one kind is the one to discover and choose. Hereafter farmers will save their profits, in all probability, as is done in other manufacturing business. Animals are living farm machines.

CURRANTS AND GOOSEBERRIES—Prunes at once any that have been omitted; abundant manuring and mulching will increase the size of the crop and the fruit. So soon as the leaves are of much size the "worms" may be expected. Examine the under surface of the lower leaves for the eggs, and destroy all that are found. When hibernation is over, spray the bushes with water, a tablespoonful to a gallon of water, a table-spoonful to a half pint of water. It is better to first spray the bushes with a little boiling water before adding it to the pail containing the cold water. Keep stirred.

INSECTS—Destroy the eggs of the tent caterpillar, which are to be found in small, closely fitting rings or bands near the ends of the smaller twigs, and may be cut away. Many insects harbor beneath the loose bark of trees, and by scraping this off and washing the trunk and limbs with a solution of soft soap, much good may be done. To prevent the ascent of the wingless females of the canker worm, use heavy brown paper bound closely around the tree's trunk, and then smear with cheap printer's ink or tar. The bands will have to be re-coated at frequent intervals during the season.

ASPARAGUS—The old ideas about the elaborate preparation for an asparagus bed are out of date. It is as easy to make a bed for asparagus as almost any other plant, and nothing pays any better for the little trouble. Set the new beds so soon as the plants can be had, giving it a generous manuring and putting the crown about four inches below the surface. Rows two feet apart, with a foot between the plants, is a good distance for the family garden, but if room can be spared the distance may be increased. Let the plants grow until the third year before cutting. The coarse litter should be raked from the old bed to make it smooth and clean before the stems begin to come through the ground.

THE TREES—It is assumed that trees were ordered some time ago; they should be at hand ready for planting. It is the custom at nurseries to take up and heel-in a large stock of the kinds of trees most called for, this retards the growth and allows them to fill late orders. If there is a nursery near at hand it will pay to make a bargain, if possible, to help dig the trees yourself, and thus secure a larger share of the roots that belong to them. If trees, in a long journey, become dry and shriveled, bury them, root and branch, in moist earth for a few days, when they become plump again. In unpacking the trees, look to the labels, as some may become detached and would otherwise be lost.

COWS—Gargot and abortion trouble the dairymen. We believe in prevention. The former may surely be prevented by due care. As soon as the udder contains milk, it should be relieved by drawing off a part of it, if there is any tendency to hardness. These diseases are often a consequence of weakness. A fat animal may be weak for want of food. When a cow's time approaches and the feed is suddenly reduced, disturbance of the system is caused. Circulation becomes irregular and congestion occurs in the most susceptible organs. The udder is the principal one of these at this period, and an attack of garget is very sure to occur. This may not always be so, but long experience and observation convinces us that it generally is. The remedy is obvious.

ORCHARD AND NURSERY—Whoever sets out an orchard, of course does it with the expectation of a return in fruit. No one plants corn or potatoes without first considering if the land will give him a crop; if the soil is not in the proper condition he knows that he must make it so, or lose his seed and his labor. Much less than corn and potatoes can fruit trees make a crop on nothing. The trees will struggle along, do the best they can, but such orchards do not pay, and "run out" early. Unless the land is sufficiently fertile for an ordinary farm crop, it should be made so; no soil too wet for such crops will answer for fruit trees, which, to succeed, need well drained land. The plowing should be as deep as the character of the soil will allow, and the sub-soil plow may generally follow the other with benefit.

CORN—This is one of those crops which require a warm soil and which suffer from a late frost. But the ground may be prepared in season to help on the planting afterward.

As good a crop may be grown on stubble as on sod if the right method is followed; and this is simply to give sufficient manure and thorough cultivation. One hundred bushels per acre may be produced, and this means double or treble pay for the same labor.

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