

FARM ORCHARD AND GARDEN
BY **FETRIGG**
CENTRAL POINT
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Russia, the worst plague stricken, is also one of the worst rat ridden countries in the world. Added to this there is widespread a disregard for sanitation which goes hand in hand with the rest and makes a terrible situation.

If looked into a bit many a case of so called luck will be found to be traceable to pretty good head work and a good deal of energy and application, while many a case of bad luck is due to shiftlessness and bad management.

Probably the biggest cheese ever made has lately been "cast" by a Wisconsin cheese factory. It weighs 2,400 pounds, required one milking of 2,100 cows to make it and is to be on exhibition at the national dairy show to be held soon at Chicago.

No higher word of commendation can be given of any home than to have said of it that the boys and girls of the neighborhood like to gather there to spend some of their evenings. It is an accomplishment, by the way, of which any homemaker may well be proud. The country needs more homes of this kind.

True, it's an old fashioned plant, but for the housewife who has little time to give to floriculture the geranium is one of the most satisfactory. It is a thrifty grower, free bloomer, no pests bother it, while if one gets slips of the finest kinds beautiful blossom effects may be secured. The requirements are rich soil and plenty of water and sunshine.

Graham bread takes its name from the fact that in the year 1794 a Connecticut doctor of the name of Sylvester Graham started a crusade in favor of making bread from whole wheat or brown flour. He gave lectures and wrote books on the subject, and so much emphasis did he lay on the new bread that from that time on to the present it has been known as "graham."

There are reports of late to the effect that a gang of tree peddlers, claiming to be working in co-operation with the forest service in distributing hardy catalpas, are circulating among the farmers of the country and taking large orders for these trees. They have been looked up, have been branded grafters, and if any of them should have the brass to come on our premises set the dog on him.

As showing the capacity of some of the well known pests to reproduce themselves may be cited the San Jose scale. A single female, which gives birth at one time to an average brood of 400 young and produces several such generations in a season, is estimated to be responsible as progenitor of 1,600,000,000 females. In view of such an outpouring of spawn as this, it would not be surprising if the horticulturist lost heart notwithstanding the aids at hand in the shape of parasitic bugs and spraying concoctions.

A friend who has fifteen or twenty acres in potatoes this fall has several mornings of late been finding a bushel or so of the tubers pulled out of the hills and lying exposed to the sun. While he has not, so far as we know, set a watch at night to see just who these "diggers" are, he has found the most hills molested where the fat white grubs have been very plentiful. Putting two and two together, it is probably safe to assume that this field was in meadow or sod last season and that the disturbance of the hills is the work of shunks or badgers, which view the white grub as a very luscious morsel.

Two years ago, following attendance at a big state fair where there was a fine display of pure bred beef cattle, the writer of these notes commented upon the fact that prevalent standards adhered to in the judging of the beef breed seemed to result in both sires and dams being put in a condition of flesh not only abnormal, but entirely detrimental to their continued usefulness as breeders and producers. A thick blanket of fat, like charity, can cover several bovine weaknesses; hence breeders of the heavy types would compete on a far fairer basis were their show animals not only expected to be, but required to be, in average breeding condition. More recently the need of the adoption of this more rational standard has been expressed concretely by a leading breeder who has won many blue ribbons at stock shows and who asserts that "three-fourths of the finest bulls in the country are ruined for breeders by being fattened for the show ring; fat cattle should be shown only in a steer class." This puts the thing in a nutshell. It is strange that breeders have been so slow in awaking to the importance of this simple fact.

MacMahon's Spy

By RYLAND BEALE

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When the Prussians invaded France Marshal MacMahon sent out Lieutenant Boyer, a member of his staff, to secure information of the enemy's numbers, his equipment, routes of march, etc. Young Boyer was just nineteen years old, possessed a peachy complexion, not even the downiest beard and was chosen from a number of volunteers because he could be successfully disguised as a girl. When he was made up to represent a demoi selle of the middle class all the officers of the staff declared that he made the prettiest woman they had ever seen.

Soon after his departure Lucille Demarest (young Boyer) stopped one day at a house on a road that the Prussian army was expected to pass and said that she had started to go to visit a married sister who lived farther eastward; but, hearing of the coming troops, she was afraid to go any farther. She begged that she might be taken in till the army had passed and the road would be clear. Her request was granted, and she was temporarily received into the family.

There was in this house Jules Poucher, a lot of a fellow, who must needs fall desperately in love with the so called Lucille. Lieutenant Boyer, instead of being pleased with the young man's attentions, was in dread of them, fearing they would betray him. But the more he snubbed the fellow the more he persisted. Then came the Prussians, and a general of division made his headquarters for a couple of days, waiting for that portion of the army to which he belonged to come up, in the very house where Boyer was stopping.

Boyer desired to secure some place where he could overhear any conversation that might take place in the general's room. There was no adjoining apartment to which the spy could gain access, but the cellar offered a very convenient method. Watching till the general's quarters were temporarily vacant, having procured an auger, he bored a hole in the floor.

As luck would have it, that very evening the general called his brigade commanders to his headquarters for instructions. Boyer saw them coming in and went down into the cellar, taking care that he was not seen to go there. He was standing on a box with his ear near the hole he had made when the cellar door opened and down came Jules Poucher with a candle for an armful of firewood. There were but two rooms in the cellar, and Boyer could not effect a hiding. Being in the room under the general's quarters and fearing to be heard by those above, he advanced to meet Jules.

"Why, what are you doing down here alone in the dark?" asked the latter.

Boyer, thinking the young man sympathized with the French cause, concluded to tell him that "she" was there to learn Prussian war secrets.

Now, it happened that Jules that very day had offered the Prussian general some information concerning the French army for a consideration. He didn't care if Lucille gave information of the Prussians to the French; but, seeing a good opportunity to press his suit, he resolutely set to work to do so.

"Give me a kiss," he said.

"Wait a moment and I will," replied Boyer. The lieutenant looked about till he found a bit of wood about two inches long. Then, returning to Jules, who had set down the candle, Boyer let drive a blow, taking Jules under the chin—a boxing feat he had learned in the army athletic training school—and landed him on the floor. Before Jules knew what had transformed a beautiful girl into such a fury Boyer sat on him, pulled open his jaws and inserted the stick he had secured for a gag. There was a clothesline in the cellar, and before Jules had time to recover from his surprise Boyer seized it and got it around his captive's body outside his arms. Having secured these, to tie his legs was a comparatively easy matter.

Jules was now in a position where he could neither interfere with the spy's movements nor make a noise. The latter mounted his box, put his ear to the auger hole and listened. He heard enough to learn the route that would be taken by the Prussians in the advance and the dates of their probable arrival at Metz, which was principally what Marshal MacMahon wanted.

Meanwhile Jules sat on the floor looking at the object of his love with increasing wonder. He still had no suspicion that his Lucille was a man, but he considered her a mighty strong woman. As soon as Boyer had learned all he cared to know from above he got down from his perch. He had feared that, wood being needed, some one would come down for it. So he gathered an armful, and as he was about to pass out, remembering how Jules had bothered him with his attentions, bade him adieu with a few sturdy kicks, which the fellow could neither resent nor complain of.

Boyer went upstairs, put the wood down in the kitchen, walked out of the door and was not seen again in those parts. He reached Marshal MacMahon's headquarters, donned his uniform and reported the information he had gathered.

Then at the mess he made a good story of how he had served the man who would be his lover.

Notwithstanding that it will be late in the season and will not prevent seed distribution it will be well worth while to take a couple of hours off some afternoon and cut those weeds along the roadside that escaped attention during the busy days of July and August, for by so doing the trouble incident to drifting snows will be considerably reduced.

Greeley county, Neb., has a Red Polled cow that has the unique distinction of being the mother of two sets of triplet calves, all of which are at present alive and thrifty, or were a short time ago, when her picture was taken with the entire bunch about her. From the standpoint of numbers, at least, this strain would seem to be worth while perpetuating.

The poinsetta, which was named after Joel Poinsett of South Carolina, is a shrub of Mexican origin which makes a very interesting and attractive house plant. The leaves are remarkably large and smooth and show a most interesting variation in outline, while the bloom is equally unique, the yellow blossom being borne just above a circle of beautiful crimson bracts or small leaves. The plant thrives under average conditions and has no pests which molest it.

During the past month cotton has seen the highest prices recorded since the civil war, a price of \$18.90 per bale being bid therefor on the New York Cotton Exchange. This unusual price level was in part due to a general price inflation characteristic of all commodities, but even more to the issuance of the government cotton crop report, which showed a decided deterioration—about 5 per cent—in the condition of the crop from the showing of the preceding month.

The man who knocked the head out of a four dollar barrel of apples and just beneath found a message put in by the grower, "I got 75 cents for this barrel of apples—please let me know what you had to pay for it," uncovered in very simple manner two of the factors that are chiefly responsible for the present high cost of living—the profits exacted by the transportation companies and middlemen. The problem is certainly one that deserves investigation of a very thorough type.

For those who may not have had the fact brought to their attention it may be of interest to know that, while one may sell a relinquishment of his claim to a homestead, such sale does not convey title to the purchaser, but merely gives him first chance to enter the claim as a homestead. In case one does thus sell he forfeits thereby the right of entering another homestead, but he does not lose this right if he simply abandons the claim and allows the title to revert to the government.

The family boar, the pig, wild deer and occasionally game birds, like the imported pheasants, appear on the list of garden marauders, but not until the other day have we seen the snapping turtle, known to every boy who fishes for bullheads, put in this list. A Mississippi valley farmer noticed that something was raising bob with his tomato patch. He set a watch one night and found that eight or ten big snapping turtles came out of the nearby creek and feasted to their fill on his big juicy tomatoes. He also found that they had been going from these when the supply was short to his cabbage patch. It would seem about time for him to negotiate with some city cafe for soup stock.

Azoturia, a disease to which horses are subject and some of the effects of which are shown in the permanently swollen legs of so many otherwise good horses, is due to a clogging of the system—particularly the kidneys—with more albumen than they can oxidize and eliminate. Some horses seem to be more prone to the trouble than others, but in the main attacks of the disease are induced by the continuation of a hearty ration during a period of idleness to horses which have been doing heavy work, and acute cases are often precipitated by driving too fast or putting to too hard work horses which have been standing in the stable. The disease is much more likely to occur with horses fed a ration of clover, alfalfa or other feed containing considerable amounts of protein. It is for this account that wild hay, timothy and oats are preferable to other feeds.

In an instance that came under our notice the other day a county turned down a consignment of \$20,000 worth of cement drain tiles, large size, for the simple fact that quite a portion of the first thousand feet collapsed shortly after being covered with earth without waiting for frost, wet weather or other disintegrating cause. This failure was not due to the fact that cement tile may not be made so that they will be satisfactory and durable, but that the tile in question were not thus made. The incident simply emphasizes a suggestion made in these notes not long ago that there are a number of incompetents engaged in the manufacture of cement tile who not only use gravel with dirt or clay in it—and hence unfit—or scrimp in the amount of cement which goes into the mixing machine. Cement manufacturers need more thorough organization, not for the purpose of meeting the competition of the clay tile men, but to put out of business cement tile manufacturers, either greenhorns or knaves, who cannot or will not make cement tile that will stand up and do the business. As we have said before, a good cement tile is as durable as a good clay tile, but a poor one isn't worth a continental.

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