

KING CORN.

How the Farmer Can Double His Great American Crop.

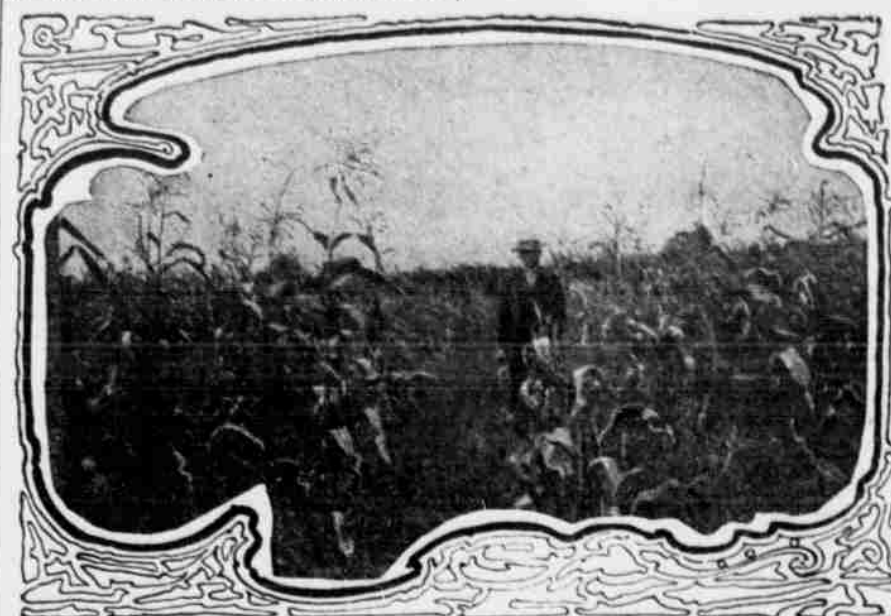
Corn planting time! The United States this year will have over 90,000,000 acres planted to this king of crops. For this enormous acreage 15,000,000 bushels of seed will be required.

Probably but little thought is given by the average farmer to the germinating quality of the seed used, for he has so long been accustomed to getting a "stand", under ordinary favorable conditions, varying from 60 to 85 per cent., that many have come to think a more complete stand impossible. Yet experiments have shown that barring unfavorable weather at planting time, the work of germs, wireworms, and the like, there is no reason why a stand of corn should be less than 95 per cent. Of recent years, however, conditions have much improved, and never before has there been such a demand for seed corn of high vitality. Some of our best farmers are beginning to realize that one of the greatest factors in profitable corn production is the use of seed which will show a high per centage of germination.

If each corn grower would give a little time during the early spring to the testing of the seed, the vitality of each individual ear of corn intended for planting could be readily determined. The poor ears could then be discarded, and the millions of bushels of seed corn which fail to grow each spring could be very profitably converted into pork and beef. Of the 15,000,000 bushels of seed corn which will be planted this year, it is almost certain that from two to three million bushels, or nearly 20 per cent. of the corn first planted, will fail to grow as a result of the low vitality of the seed. Thousands of acres will have to be replanted either in their entirety or in part, and many thousands more will grow to maturity with an imperfect stand.

There are any corn growers who can not produce the equivalent of at least two such ears to every hill? How many grow 80 bushels of shelled corn per acre?

The time required to test individual ears for vitality is very small when it is considered that 12 or 15 ears will furnish enough seed to plant one acre. Experiments have shown that if a few kernels (preferably six) are taken from different parts of an ear of corn and all are found to germinate well—that is, to produce good healthy sprouts—practically all of the kernels on that ear will likewise show strong vitality. On the other hand, if the part of all of



WHAT MAKES THE CORN AVERAGE LOW.

The kernels tested fail to germinate or show only weak sprouts, the proportion will be the same for all of the kernels on such ears. And the experienced corn grower will be not a little surprised to find many a fine looking ear of corn among his selected seed, the kernels of which will not sprout at all.

Better Now Than Not at All.

Germination tests should be made five or six weeks before planting time, but even if it is necessary to stop the plow in the field, it is far more profitable to have a good stand of corn on 19 acres than it is to have a poor stand on 20 acres, thereby saving the time and labor necessary to prepare the ground and to plant and cultivate the additional acre. Yet many farmers are every year planting and cultivating 3 or 4 acres in every 20, for which they receive comparatively no returns.

In making the tests it is essential that each ear tested should be given a number and all kernels taken therefrom given a corresponding number so that after the tests the faulty ears may be thrown out.

Many kinds of germinating boxes and methods for testing seed corn have been described in various publications, but the Department of Agriculture has designed a simple box which is believed to combine most of the advantages, and give good results in the hands of almost any operator. The box would be about 1 1/2 or 2 inches deep inside and the length and width such as to suit the needs of the individual farmer, but it should not be made water-tight. Instead of filling the box with sand, soil, or sawdust, as is commonly recommended, the seed bed is made of heavy cotton flannel or similar ma-

terial, using two or three thicknesses of cloth in the bottom of the box and one or two thicknesses of cloth for covering the kernels after the frame has been filled. The cloth at the bottom should be marked off into squares 2 inches each way, and numbered, each one of which is to be filled with kernels from ears which are given a number corresponding to the square used.

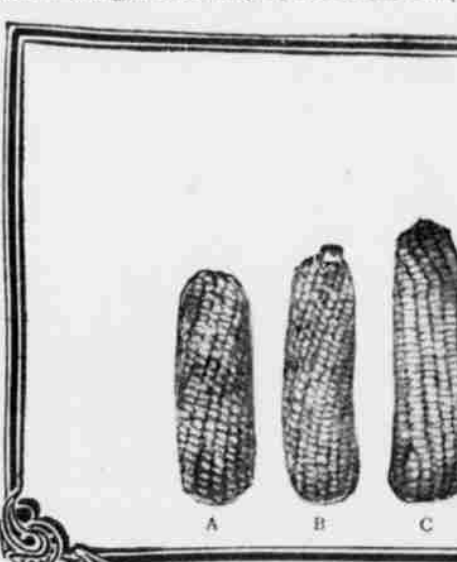
A Very Simple Test.

For use, first wet the cloth thoroughly by soaking in water, and then place the half cloth, double thickness, which has been marked in squares, in the bot-

cover the box with a piece of glass, or other tight material, to prevent the evaporation of the water from the cloths, and set the box aside for a few days to await the results of the test. Where only a limited number of ears are to be tested, a similar germinating apparatus may be made by using cloth between two dinner plates. Ten inch plates will give ample space for the testing of 18 or 20 ears at one time. It is important that the ears be numbered or arranged in the same definite order as the corresponding tests in the germinating box. One of the most satisfactory methods is the use of a rack as is generally used for drying seed corn. This is generally a piece of 2 by 2 inch piece of pine which extend on all four sides long nails, each of which is numbered. After the kernels from the first ear have been placed in square No. 1 of the germinating box, the ear is shoved on nail No. 1 of the drying rack, and so on. These racks can then be

suspended in some suitable place and there need be no fear of the ears being mixed while the germination test is in progress.

The kernels in the testing box should begin to germinate freely about the third or fourth day, but the counting should not be done until the sixth or seventh day, or until most of the shoots or stems are from 1 to 1 1/2 inches long. This part of the testing must be done with considerable care and requires good judgment, as kernels will be found in all stages of development. If the six kernels in any one square in the germinating box show six good healthy sprouts, the ear



CAN NOT YOU GROW TWO EARS LIKE "E" TO EACH CORNHILL?

which they represent should be taken for seed. There will also be cases in which all six kernels have germinated, but will be lacking in vigor. While these kernels might produce a good ear of corn, the chances are that they will never develop, or else will produce but a barren stalk. It is only necessary to remember that all ears showing dead kernels or weak or poorly developed sprouts must be discarded and only those used for seed in which every kernel tested has given a good healthy sprout. The ears which have shown a perfect germination are now ready to be butted and tipped and shelled for planting. In order to insure further uniformity in planting it is advisable to sort the ears before planting into two or three grades, according to the size of the kernels. This grading may also be done by screening, if more convenient.

Remarkable Results of Government Tests.

The Department of Agriculture recently made tests of seed corn furnished by farmers in the corn producing States, and of the 3,322 ears tested, 1,906, or the startling percentage of more than one-half, were unfit for seed. These samples were taken from ears picked for seed by good, careful farmers, and are evidently much above the average. The average germination of the 1,906 poor ears was only 77.7



From "Farming." A BUNCH OF FINE SEED.

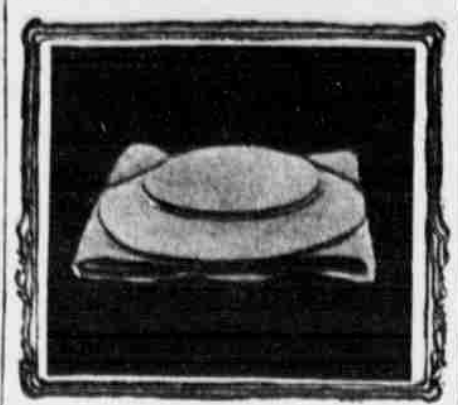


POOR, SMUTTY SEED.

tom of the germinating box. The kernels from ear No. 1 are then placed, germ side up, in square No. 1 and so on. When all of the squares have been filled, fold the other end of the cloth carefully over the kernels. If during the sampling the cloths have become dry, sprinkle them well with water

per cent., while the average germination of both the good and the poor ears, the seeds of which would ordinarily have been used for planting, had not these tests been made, was 86.3 per cent., showing that 13.7 per cent. was gained by discarding ears of low vitality. Granting, however, that the

samples tested are representative of the present supply of seed corn, the testing of every ear and the subsequent rejection of poor ears will increase the stand 13.7 per cent. This increased stand would mean an increased yield of 298,140,695 bushels, with a value of \$100,739,912.91 calculated on the basis



COMMON DINNER PLATE FOR SEED TESTERS.

of the average yield and price for the last ten years.

A full description of how to make tests is found in Farmers Bulletin No. 253, by J. W. T. Duvel, which can be had from Members of Congress or the Secretary of Agriculture.

WOMAN'S ADVICE TO FARMERS.

Miss Edith Urney, an Iowa hospital specialist, states that many of the inmates of eastern insane asylums are sons and daughters of the farmer pioneers. They have been brought up to lives of idleness and luxury or suffered from monotony of country surroundings. In either case the direct cause for mental derangement is the lack of diversified work for body and mind. The pioneers of the country had no time for brooding over imaginary troubles and were happy. But they neglected to map out the proper courses for their children and in treating them with kindness have paved the way to insanity.

The cities present numerous cases of physical and mental wrecks of young persons brought on by dissipation and strenuousness in the battle for commercial supremacy. Farmers warn their sons and daughters of the dangers that lie in their paths when leaving the farms, but often forget to correct the evils at home. They give their children all the benefits of schools and colleges and leave out the essential fundamental principles of life. Too many are left to remain in idleness because they are taught in

schools and at home that manual labor is not honorable. There is no reason why farm life should become monotonous to any one residing within the boundaries of ordinary civilization. The rural mail carries the daily papers and magazines to the farm door yard; telephones place the farmer in direct communication with the outside world; railroads open the channels of trade to every commercial port; yet there is a life of monotony on many farms. The places are not improved, the owners follow the fashions of their forefathers, they do not adopt new methods in any line and their children become discouraged.

Formerly there were 2,034 salaried officials and employees of the factories where now there are only 360. The falling off in the number of wage earners was 81 per cent. The capital invested in 1900 was \$29,782,659, whereas in 1905 it was \$5,847,803. The production in 1900 amounted to nearly 32,000,000 bicycles and was reduced in the five years to little over 5,000,000.

OLDEN DAYS OF WHALING.

The days of the old-time whaling fleets when more than two hundred full-rigged ships sailed out of New Bedford harbor on three and four-year voyages to the most distant and dangerous seas, were over more than half a century ago. The right of Greenland whale of the Arctic waters with his mouth full of whalebone and his cousin, the sperm whale of tropical waters, bearing in his head the precious spermaceti, were practically exterminated by those all-daring, iron-nerved, keen-eyed Yankee skippers. Their splendid ships, the Annie B., the Mary Jane, the Blue-Eyed Susan great lovers of their wives and sweethearts, were this race of gentlemen adventurers—rotted at the wharves or were degraded to service as coastwise and with them vanished a world of romance and adventure. No men, in no time, more truly than they, "went down to the sea in ships."

But when the pennant of the last old-time whaling ship was hauled down forever, there still proudly swam the oceans the vast orca or rarer whale, greatest of all his mighty kin. To the sailing fleet of the old days, the orca was an almost impossible prize because of its tremendous speed. It was practically unmolested, and multiplied exceedingly in both North Atlantic and Pacific waters.

It was the abundance of this leviathan, measuring ninety feet in length and weighing almost as many tons—bulking larger than a whole herd of elephants—which was the inspiration of the modern whaling industry.

At least one American has succeeded in London Journalism. Ralph D. Blumenfeld, late of Milwaukee, is the editor of the London Express.

Artificial pumice stone is now made from a mixture of sand and clay.

About one billion feet of timber in the Black Hill forest reserve has been killed by the Black Hills beetle.

JOURNALISM IN CHINA.

Dialect Newspapers Increase Gulf Between Provinces.

United States Consul Anderson, at Amoy, has made a report on journalism among the Chinese. He says: "It is rather surprising, in view of the comparatively small population of foreigners in China, how many large publications there are in foreign languages. The prices they obtain for their publications and their work probably explain the situation. Shanghai has five daily newspapers, three morning and two evening papers; one is French. It has six foreign weeklies, one German. It also has four Chinese dailies and a large number of Chinese weeklies.

"Practically all of the foreign papers sell for 4 1/2 cents gold per copy. The subscription price is about \$15 gold per annum, postage extra. The Chinese dailies sell for about 1/2 cent gold per copy. In addition to these publications there are many religious papers, mostly in Chinese, published by the mission authorities.

"In the south Hong Kong dominates the publication business, and as it is a British colony, English publications might reasonably be expected to lead, but on the face of the record the Chinese predominate. There are four English dailies, the Post, the Telegraph and the Mail, both evening papers.

"There are six Chinese dailies, and, as in the case of Shanghai, there are a large number of publications designed to fill various wants in South China, a Portuguese weekly and the Government Gazette being among them. In nearly every port of importance in China there is an English publication of some sort.

"The publication houses, as a rule, both newspaper concerns and concerns for general printing only, are fairly well equipped for their work. Some of them attempt work in the line of high grade magazine and book publishing, and while it is not always an unmixed success from a technical typographical standpoint, it demonstrates that the Chinese workmen, who do most of the work under foreign supervision, will in time acquire considerable merit in this line of effort.

"It is rather interesting to note that China at present seems to be passing through much the same process with its newspapers and other publications that many parts of the United States have passed through. All over the empire native newspapers are being started in the colloquial dialects, and are more or less local in character.

"It is unfortunate in many respects that the publication of newspapers in the several local dialects has developed so generally. While such publications will afford means of educating the people of the empire in some lines, they also furnish the means for deepening the gulfs, dividing the several provinces which differ in dialects. Each newspaper center, if it performs its natural mission, will develop its own language in its own field to the exclusion of a language which might in time become common to all China."

BICYCLES ON THE WAN.

Over Three Times as Many Factories in 1900 as at Present.

Statistics furnished by the Census Bureau at Washington show a marked decrease in the manufacture of bicycles. Since 1900 the business has fallen off 65 per cent., the number of establishments being reduced from 312 to 97.

New Zealand exports annually \$35,000,000 worth of kauri gum. It is used in the manufacture of varnish.

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