

Graduating Thesis.

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Horticulture on the Farm.

A. C. Havens, '96.

Outline

I, Introduction.

II, Does it pay?

a, In money returns.

b, By supplying home needs,

c, By preserving health.

III, Influence of horticulture.

a, Educational,

b, Aesthetical,

c, Moral.

IV, What is required?

a, Industry.

b, Education,

c, Patience.

attention to this work, doing much toward showing that the highest happiness of the farmer is not in the possession of more and more land, but in the better culture of the smaller amount. "The majority of the American farmers have no garden worthy to be called a family garden". The little patch of ground set apart for that purpose is allowed to grow up to weeds, and become ^{an} eyesore to the whole family. The orchards of many farmers are in but little better condition, consequently the fruit is liable to be imperfect and uninviting. Even farmers who have good apple orchards neglect the raising of small fruits, for want of time and patience.

On many farms there seems to be no distinction between the barn yard and door yard. Old tools are left standing about the yard. The horses, cattle, pigs, and chickens are allowed to run about the door. Of course under such circumstances there is no chance for flowers or shrubs to relieve the dreariness of the

situation. "A more forlorn, lonesome, and ghastly sight can scarcely present itself to my imagination than a lone dwelling, standing like gloom upon the broad prairie, destitute of the surroundings of tree or shrub; no flowers smiling on earth, no birds to sing in air, no music among the leaves; treeless, shrubless a picture of despair. Even the well adorned cemetery, "Where the rude forefathers of the hamlet slept" has more attractions than such a home."

When we begin to talk about incorporating horticultural pursuits among the operations of the farm, one of the first questions the practical American will ask, is will it pay? In answering this we will consider first if it pays in money returns. The farmer who specializes in the line of one or two of the so called money crops is liable every now and then to meet with a failure, and then he has nothing to fall back upon. While one who has a great diversity of crops will nearly

always have something that will produce a fair crop at least. A man who has a good bearing orchard at such a time has something that will bring him a living, for, although the price of apples may be low yet there is always a market somewhere. There is nothing on the farm that will pay better for a number of years together for the same amount of land and labor than a well cared for orchard. Small fruits will nearly always find a market even in the small towns, if not in direct money in that which amounts to the same thing. For the storekeepers in these small towns will give trade for produce brought in. And thus the store supplies can be furnished from the products of the orchard and garden. Of course the farmer should not make a specialty of horticultural products unless he is very favorably situated, for that would be as disastrous as specializing in any other line.

But the money returns is not the only way that it pays. The supplying of

the farmers table all the year round with fruit and vegetables is no small item. It is suprising how much living can be got out of a small garden patch.

One man who owned a half acre lot in the city bought the fertilizers necessary hired the work done and planted twenty six dollars worth of plants. Keeping strict account of all the fruit that the family used from this garden, and figuring it in at the market price, he found that after deducting all expenses his half acre had given him a profit of one hundred and sixty dollars a year for five years.

Every farmer should have a similar plot of ground and keep it well tended. If he has he will find that it will pay, both in money, and in the health and

happiness of his family. Some may think that they can buy their fruit and vegetables as cheap as they can raise them. But they will not buy as much as they would naturally use if they were raised at home. Every farmer should be able to have fruit on his table three times

a day for three hundred and sixty five days in the year.

The enjoyment and pleasure of having a good supply of fruit and vegetables on the table at all times of the year is not the only gain. Fruit and vegetables make the most healthfull diet that can be imagined.

The importance of this is beginning to be realized, and when we all learn that every dollar of money or labor expended in the garden will save at least two dollars in butchers and doctors bills, we will surely take more interest in the work. The housewife who only has meat and potatoes and bread out of which to prepare her meals, cannot set an appetizing table three times a day even for a few days.

The educational, aesthetical, and moral influences of the horticultural occupation are of more consequence than the purely financial considerations. It is a means of education of the farmer, his family and his neighbors. One of

the first things a farmer can learn is that, "Nature never travels in a rut yet seed time and harvest are as sure as the sun itself." If he is to be successful he soon learns that there is a proper time to do certain kinds of work and that it is necessary for him to do the work when the time comes. As he watches the fruit grow beautiful as it nears maturity he is lead to consider that the useful is always beautiful. And if he is to present in the market a product that will sell well he must arrange it so as to show its natural beauty. He learns to be regular in his work, systematic in his methods, and careful in all he does.

The farmers children as they grow up surrounded with flowers and fruit will have their power of observation developed. And with the assistance of the parents they can gain more knowledge from the great text book, nature, than they would be able to

gain along the same lines by much hard study in schools. The farmers neighbors as they pass his well kept grounds and observe his thrift and success will learn to take more pride in the beautifying their own homes. The aesthetical and moral influence of horticulture cannot be overestimated. It seems strange that the occupations of men should be continually discussed as to their pecuniary benefit and but seldom as to their effect on the character of those engaged in them, when it is so evident that the occupation that engrosses our time for the greater part of our life will have a powerful effect upon our development. While nearly all occupations are honorable in themselves there is a great difference in the effect they may have on those who are engaged in them. There can be but little chance for elevating thought and development in the dusty factory or dark mines. The occupation

of the farmer brings him into the open air. and in touch with the beauties of nature. And he is a hardened man indeed who cannot see beauty in the blooming flower and growing grain. Of the many kinds of employment that have their origin in agriculture, whether in producing the raw material or working it up into marketable form there is not one that has a degrading effect on character. Yet the one that has the most refining influence on the character of man is horticulture. There is a love of the beautiful in each one of us, and we enjoy the sight of a broad field of wheat as it approaches maturity or the fields of corn as their broad leaves wave in the wind. The stretches of green grass, the stately tree, the lovely rose, appeal to our aesthetic taste, and our thoughts are lifted to the author of all beauty in thankfulness for his many gifts.

The farmers yard with its well kept lawn, inviting shade trees, and beds of lovely flowers will come to the weary traveler as he journeys, like an oasis in the desert in comparison with the many dwellings where no attention is paid to the beautifying of the grounds. "Art has no higher mission than that which changes a habitation which is bleak in situation and bare in surroundings into a beautiful and attractive home."

We can truthfully say that life in the country is tame in the extreme for one who has no taste for beautiful scenery. There is nothing in the tending of fruits and flowers to awaken in us our baser desires.

There would be something incongruous in the thought of a child brought up in a home made beautiful by the presence of lovely flowers, inviting shade trees, and green lawns. who should grow up a gross immoral man. It has been observed by one writer that

"A farmer whether north or south who devoted his time and labor to the raising of some one thing as corn or wheat, cotton or tobacco as a rule is not as intelligent, public spirited, refined or social as the small farmer who combines horticulture with agriculture." And we can say with another writer that, "When every farmer shall become a horticulturist in the true sense of the word Kansas will be distinguished for her beautiful homes, for the intelligence, integrity, and morality of her people."

The idea that some people have that anybody can farm whether they know anything or not is a mistake and always has been. To be sure they can work at farming.

But to be a successful farmer takes a man with some business ability and knowledge of his line of work.

This is doubly true of the farmer who would incorporate horticulture with his farming. First and foremost

Our homestead flowers and fruited trees
May Eden's orchard share;
We taste the tempting sweets of these
Like Eve, without her blame."