Laon

APPROACH TO THE CATHEDRAL.

LAON has never become a large town, but it has always been a place of strength. In 1913 it had little less than 15,000 inhabitants, but in Gaulish times it was already that Bibrax which Julius Caesar took in the year 57 B. C., and where no doubt the Romans established themselves and maintained the authority of Rome among the conquered. Many curious Gallo-Romanic antiquities have been collected in the neighborhood and are now in the museum. Up to the fifth century the collection was known as Laudunum.

During the Merovingian, the Capetian, and, in fact, in all periods of French history, says Henry P. Davray in Country Life, Laon has played an important role. Its geographical position caused it to be frequently besieged. Situated on the road from Paris and from the valley of the Seine to the middle valley of the Meuse, it is built on an isolated mount quaintly carved out in the form of a promontory which can be seen from a great distance. This mount forms a kind of V of which the point is turned toward the northwest. To the northeast the cathedral rises, and to the south the Abbey of St. Vincent. From a height of 330 feet above the valley of the Ardon it dominates a view which extends far in all directions, and there is not within a large radius a better post of observation. Moreover, the steep flanks of the hill made the entry easily defensible against the weapons of former times, though twice it has known the humiliation of capitulation to German forces, in 1814 and again on September 9, 1870—a date that many older inhabitants carry in their hearts today. In this fortified vantage point the early kings of France made their residence. Here, too, the church founded a bishopric about 500 A. D., which was steadily maintained until the Revolution.

Of Strategic Importance.

Laon was a place that all armies fought for with bitterness. The English during the Hundred Years' war, later the Burgundians and Charles the Bold, in the wars of the Reformation, the invaders of 1814, of 1815 and 1870—all regarded the town as one of their great strategic points. It was taken, ravaged, pillaged, burned a great number of times after long and difficult sieges. The garrison easily opposed a resistance, which often enough beat the besiegers.

For example, when Henry IV reconquered his kingdom from the duke of Mayenne and the Ligue, the town of Laon held him at bay for a long time in 1594. He took it less by force of arms than by a diplomacy suggested to him by his astuteness and cunning. In 1814, during that immortal campaign of France, when more than ever the resources of his genius were displayed, Napoleon tried to drive out Blucher and the Prussians. For several days he redoubled his efforts and finally abandoned the place. These details, which could easily be multiplied, prove the strategic importance of Laon.

Apart from its geographic position, which gives it military value, it has been the meeting place and crossing point of the means of communication and transportation which existed at all these epochs. The great highways of the district intersect at the foot of the mount, and when the railways were built in the nineteenth century the station of Laon became the junction of the lines from Paris, from Tergnier, from Guise, from Hirson, from Rheims and from Liart.

Where Railway Lines Meet.

The importance of possessing Laon for the Germans can easily be seen. There meet the railway lines coming from Germany by Luxembourg, Montmedy, Sedan, Mezieres, Charleville and Hirson; the lines coming from Cologne and from Aix-la-Chapelle, by the valley of the Meuse, Liege, Namur and Charleroi, and from Brussels, Mons and Lille, by Valenciennes, Maubeuge, Avesnes, Hirson and Vervins.

It is by these roads and railways coming down the valley converging toward Paris and the heart of France that the German rush was made. It was in utilizing our beautiful French roads, the convenient network of railways, and the canals from the north and the east that the Boches thought to reach Paris in a few weeks and paralyze all resistance and any offensive effort. "Nach Paris!" they cried, joyously, emptying the cellars of Champagne and Brie. Their career ended wretchedly on the banks of the Marne, and pursued by the armies of Joffre and the heroic little English army, they fell back precipitately to the banks of the Aisne.

After the bombardment of the Cloth hall of Ypres, the belfry of Arras, the cathedral of Reims, and a hundred other useless outrages on buildings celebrated for their beauty and their artistic and historic interest, there is unanimous fear in civilized countries that the retiring Germans will destroy the beautiful towns of Belgium and France. The town of Laon possesses some remarkable buildings, as well as museum, art and antiquity, and it has a library rich in manuscripts. Archeologists and tourists recognize the interest of the Palais de Justice, the Soissons gate, the Chenizelles postern. The destruction of the cathedral will be an irreparable loss. It was built in the thirteenth century, is one of the largest and has been better restored than any other in the north of France. Two towers, each 180 feet high, rise on either side of the porch.

The west front is—after Notre Dame de Paris—the most remarkable Gothic facade for its purity of taste. It is flanked by two towers, each 170 feet high, surmounted by little two-storied belfry towers, decorated with colossal figures of animals representing the oxen which dragged from the plain to the summit of the hill the materials required for the building of this beautiful monument. The nave is 360 feet long, 65 feet broad, and 80 feet high; the side aisles inclose 30 chapels. The pulpit is very beautiful.

Accounted For.

"The fellow I bought my car from said I'd never hear anything knocking about it."

"Well, he didn't expect you to take your wife in it, probably."

The Retort Courteous.

He—This bargain hunting shows your character. You are always looking out for something cheap.

She—Too true. That is how I came to marry you.

Must Guard Against Echo.

The possibilities of an echo have to be taken into account by the architects and builders of all public buildings, such as theaters, halls and churches, where persons are to speak and must be heard by others. Unless they are very careful the walls and ceilings may be arranged so that when anyone sings or speaks in the room there is such an echo that it interferes with the music or speaking.

The Red-Hot Purpose.

That which dominates the life, which is ever uppermost in the mind, generally comes somewhere near realization; but there is a great difference between a lukewarm desire and a red-hot purpose. It takes steam to drive the piston in the engine; warm water will never turn the wheels. The longings that fail of realization are usually just below the boiling point.—Orison Swett Marden.

New Dieting Advice.

An anxious young theological student once asked Henry Ward Beecher what was the best and most successful method of preparing for a lecture or sermon. The reply shot back in one sentence, "Just fill yourself chock full of your subject and then let nature caper!" And the best general advice for hygienic dieting runs along similar lines; just spread a liberal table and then let your appetite caper.—Exchange.

Was Still Hope.

Uncle was telling his two little nieces a story. It was a blood-curdling affair with himself as the hero. During the latter part of the fray, when it looked as if uncle would get the worst of it, Aunt Helen, sitting near, in order to lend reality to the narrative, pretended to weep, whereupon the eldest of the two children turned to her and said: "Don't cry, Aunt Helen; he isn't dead yet."

Themselves.

Women wish to be loved without a why or a wherefore—not because they are pretty or good, or wellbred, or graceful, or intelligent, but because they are themselves.—Amiel.

EFFICIENT EQUIPMENT FOR SHEEP FLOCK

(Prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture.)

For the farmer who wishes to keep a small flock of sheep in connection with other kinds of live stock, specialists in the United States department of agriculture recommend a building similar in character to the one described with illustrations in a new publication of the department, Farmers' Bulletin 810, "Equipment for Farm Sheep Raising." This building will accommodate ten horses, five cows and sixty-three sheep.

In order that the different kinds of stock may not disturb each other and to prevent drafts, the quarters for the horses, cattle and sheep are partitioned off. The cow stable is ceiled on the inside of the studs to make it warmer and to provide a smooth surface which will not collect dust. The rest of the barn has a single wall. The entire central part of the building from the ground to the roof is occupied by the hay mow, which has a capacity of 50 tons. It is reached through four hay chutes placed to make feeding easy. Storage space for 2,000 bushels is provided in the grain bins, so that the barn has feed capacity enough to carry the stock on full feed for five months.

Closed Sheep Shed.

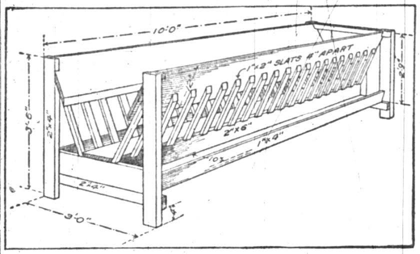
Another type of building discussed in the same bulletin is a closed sheep shed. This is especially adapted for farms in which the main barn has large feed capacity but not sufficient flood space for the live stock. The shed discussed in the bulletin allows 12 square feet of floor space per animal, and is sufficiently large to hold 26 sheep. In this type of building the feed racks run down the center of the interior, dividing the floor space into two large pens each 6 feet 6 inches by 24 feet. A combination hay and grain rack should be used and all the feeding should be done from the walkway in the center so as to avoid disturbing the sheep. A large door at the end of the rack is intended for taking in feed, for the storage of which no provision is made in this shed.

The windows of the shed should be hung on center pivots to permit entrance of air through their full size. Sheep demand an abundance of light and cannot possibly thrive where it is damp and dark. For this reason the number of windows must be ample. The doors used by the sheep are made in two parts, the upper half being hinged at its top to open upward and outward. With such door, an abundance of windows, and adequate roof ventilators, there will always be good ventilation if proper care is taken in the adjustment. Ventilation, it should be said, is one of the prime requisites for any type of sheep building.

Such a shed as this affords good protection for sheep under any conditions, and, if made 20 feet wide instead of 16 feet, may be used for winter lambing. The extra width enables detachable lambing pens to be set up next to the wall, leaving room enough at the rack for the other ewes.

Still another type described in the bulletin is a shed 16 feet wide by 24 feet long, open at the south side, and having feed racks along the other three sides. Such a shed will shelter 30 mature sheep, allowing 12 square feet of floor space per animal, and, when well protected by trees, will prove satisfactory for mature sheep in almost any section. In a cold climate, however, it does not furnish sufficient protection for winter lambing, although it may be used profitably in many sections in the South.

Persons who are seriously contemplating the erection of a building of one of these types may obtain working drawings and bills of material by application to the office of public roads and rural engineering, department of agriculture, Washington, D. C. As the supply of these drawings available for free distribution is limited, it is expected that no one will apply unless they contemplate the actual use of the drawings.



COMBINATION HAY AND GRAIN RACK FOR SHEEP.

FEEDING GRAIN TO SWINE ON PASTURE

Some Interesting and Valuable Results Obtained at Minnesota Experiment Station.

Feeding grain to swine on pasture has given some very interesting and valuable results at the Minnesota agricultural experiment station, as reported by R. C. Ashby, in charge of the swine work.

Mr. Ashby fed various rations to different lots of pigs, with some variation in cost, with considerable differences in the results obtained.

The largest profit was made by hogs self-fed on shelled corn and tankage, on rape pasture, at a feed cost of $5.64 for 100 pounds of gain. The profit was $217.79 per acre of pasture.

The different groups fed were as follows:

1. Three per cent of live weight in shelled corn, with alfalfa pasture.
2. Four per cent of live weight in shelled corn with alfalfa pasture.
3. Shelled corn self-fed, with alfalfa pasture.
4. Four per cent of live weight in shelled corn with two pounds of buttermilk per pig daily, and alfalfa pasture.
5. Four per cent of shelled corn with very light tankage ration and alfalfa pasture.
6. Three per cent of ground barley with rape pasture.
7. Three per cent of shelled corn with rape pasture.
8. Four per cent of shelled corn with rape pasture.
9. Shelled corn, self-fed, with rape pasture.
10. Shelled corn, self-fed, tankage and rape pasture.

The results from the feeding of these different rations is shown in the following table:

Rations Fed	Feed cost of 100 Lbs. Gain	Profit per Acre of Pasture	Profit Per Pig
1	$5.922	$105.85	$3.599
2	5.885	157.44	4.920
3	6.263	168.09	4.387
4	5.981	144.21	....
5	6.010	99.90	3.164
6	6.136	81.79	2.590
7	6.780	77.164	2.443
8	5.177	182.68	4.338
9	5.534	144.21	3.425
10	5.638	217.79	....

The number of pounds of pork production for every 56 pounds of grain fed in these various rations was as follows: 1, 15.46; 2, 15.16; 3, 14.25; 4, 15.92; 5, 15.62; 6, 17.44; 7, 16.49; 8, 17.35; 9, 16.34; 10, 16.83.

The prices used in counting up these results were: Shelled corn, 85 cents a bushel; ground barley, 85 cents a bushel; tankage, $55 a ton; buttermilk, 2 cents a gallon; hogs, 10 cents a pound. The profit shown by rations 7 and 9 was reduced owing to the fact that one pig in each lot proved unthrifty and had to be removed.

It should be understood that the profits here are simply the gross profits over and above the cost of feeding, the net profit to be arrived at by deducting the cost of labor with interest and other overhead charges.

In any event, the showing is exceptionally good. Work of this kind should go far to offset sensational reports about certain hog-feeding work not connected in any way with the experiment station, except in the misinformation of those circulating the reports. The profits are much above the average made by the farmer, though they are not in excess of records made by other experiment stations.

WATCH CROPS CLOSE FOR INSECT PESTS

Vigilance and Ample Stock of Poisons Will Beat Off Enemies—Make Daily Survey.

(From the United States Department of Agriculture.)

Be on the job against insect pests this season. Make your food contribution to the human family, not the insect family. Farmers who provide themselves with insect poisons and then keep a vigil for the first outbreaks of crop enemies will bring through the largest yields. Failure to detect an outbreak at its beginning and delay in getting combative material may be fatal to the crop attacked, is the warning of entomologists in the United States department of agriculture.

That a great part of the annual loss to grain crops due to insect injuries can be avoided by vigilance and vigorous action on the part of growers is not sufficiently realized, the entomologists say. Frequently insect outbreaks originate within a limited area, and when this is the case it is often quite possible to stamp them out before any great damage has been done. If the outbreak is general, then community action is essential to prevent the infestation from becoming widespread.

Watch your crops constantly. Make a daily survey of the fields during the most active growing season, if possible.

The Cow Barn.

Lots of windows are necessary. You must have light in the barn to kill disease germs. Sunlight is the best preventive of tuberculosis. Plenty of light saves much danger from doing chores by lantern light.

Protection.

The orchard and garden by all means should be enclosed by a woven wire fence. It means protection and when stock are turned in to clean up, such a fence meets a want.

Difference in Capacity.

There is a wide difference in the capacity of cows to consume food, and even a wider difference in their ability to convert the food into milk.

Farmer on Right Road.

Whenever a farmer can be induced to take pride in the animals he produces, he is on the right road.

Understand the Trees.

The more you understand trees the better you will prune them.

TIME IS RIPE FOR ADDING TO FLOCKS

Sheep Are Needed to Turn Roughage Into Profits.

EWE PAYS FOR SELF IN YEAR

Purchase of a Moderate-Sized Breeding Flock, Therefore, Should Be Safe Investment.

By GEORGE A BROWN, Department of Animal Husbandry Michigan Agricultural College.

East Lansing, Mich.—With the prospect that the corn crop, even if it doesn't fully mature, will at least produce a large amount of fodder, there are not a few farmers this season who must find a way for disposing of this roughage that will insure some returns. Roughage, unless fed to live stock, has little if any value. The problem, therefore, is one of finding stock to consume and convert this roughage into a marketable product.

On farms where there are too few animals at present to make away with the roughage supply, the far-sighted farmer will find it good business this season to either purchase young stock to feed out, or better still, if pasture is available, to establish a breeding herd or flock to remain permanently on the farm.

Some men are inclined to avoid handling sheep, but for the individual who has any liking at all for this class of stock, sheep are well worth giving some thought to this season. In the first place, wool and mutton are selling at high levels, with everything apparently in favor of these prices continuing for some time. When we consider that a breeding ewe will pay for herself the first year under careful management, the purchase of a moderate sized breeding flock should prove a safe investment. As much cannot be said of ewe lambs, however, and I would not advise their purchase for breeding flocks at present prices, when two years must elapse before their offspring will be ready for market.

But, in addition to these points mentioned, sheep as destroyers of noxious weeds have no equal. The absence of weeds on farms where sheep are kept is always noticeable. As a means of increasing fertility, also, sheep are a valuable adjunct to the farm, for sheep manure, aside from being richer in fertility ingredients than that of other farm animals, is better preserved in the winter and more thoroughly distributed in the summer.

Sheep can be kept almost exclusively on roughage, with but a limited grain allowance at certain seasons of the year. This leaves the bulk of the grain produced to be sold for domestic uses. Other important factors in favor of flock husbandry at this time are those of labor and the necessary equipment in buildings, both of these items being much less for sheep than with any other class of farm animals.

For the farmer who has good pasture land well fenced, a flock of producing ewes wisely managed should prove a good investment.

WOODLOTS FURNISH FORAGE

Hogs Make Good Gains Frequently on Acorns and Other Seeds.

East Lansing, Mich.—The woodlot has long been prized as a cool and refreshing place for foraging sheep and cattle, but it frequently happens that farmers forget that their hogs also might gain something from the browsing beneath the trees, it is said in a press bulletin just issued by the Michigan agricultural college. In foreign countries hogs are often fattened exclusively upon the nuts, seeds and roots they pick up and dig in the woods.

Hogs should be permitted to clean up the acorns. The razor-back of the South begins to fatten as soon as the acorn crop matures, but in this section the crop is usually left for the squirrels. The forage resources under oak trees in early autumn are abundant.

There need be no fear of hogs causing serious harm to the trees. They seldom eat the foliage even of seedlings and their rooting up the soil seems to better prepare it as a seed bed. Enough seed is overlooked by the swine to give abundant reproduction for another crop of trees.

Hog foraging in oak woods has another advantage in that many insects in the acorns and other seeds are devoured. In foreign countries this foraging is looked upon very favorably as a means of keeping down insect pests. In this country also it should receive more attention as a means of conserving the supply of other hog feeds.

WHEAT NEEDS PHOSPHOROUS

Application of This Element to the Soil This Season Would Help Crop.

By PROF. J. F. COX, Department of Farm Crops, Michigan Agricultural College.

East Lansing, Mich.—It is quite advisable now and then to take a ton or two of salt with some of the claims of miracle-working made by fertilizer men, who in selling fertilizers sometimes sell the farmer also. Despite these occasional exaggerations, however, there is nevertheless no question about the value of phosphates applied to the wheat crop at the right time, in right amounts. Phosphates should return to the farmer several times over what he spends for them, and this season their use is to be particularly recommended.

The beneficial element in phosphate fertilizers, of course, is phosphorous, and it is without doubt the most helpful substance that can be applied to the wheat crop. Wheat requires a large amount of phosphorous in order to fill out plump grains and to yield heavily, but Michigan soils as a rule are deficient in this mineral. The application of acid phosphate hastens maturity and increases the yield.

At the Michigan experiment station 200 pounds per acre on wheat gives a return of six bushels or over 600 per cent on money invested in fertilizer. Under average conditions about 250 to 300 pounds of acid phosphate should be applied at time of seeding, either broadcast or through a fertilizer attachment.

Acid phosphate is particularly effective when used to re-enforce manure. Twenty-five pounds of acid phosphate with each ton of manure will more than double its value and pay for the phosphate as well.

Rock phosphate is also valuable when used in this way. From 30 to 50 pounds of raw rock phosphate to a ton of manure, either mixed with it at the time of application, or used as a stable absorbent scattered in the stalls or over manure in the feeding yard, will render the manure much more effective. When nitrogen and potash are used in connection with phosphorous, a further increase is noted but at present prices the greatest net profit will come from the use of acid phosphate. Ammoniated phosphates likewise return a good profit, and where complete fertilizers cannot be bought at a reasonable price their use is strongly advised.

ONION BULBS CAN BE STORED

Should Be Fully Ripe Before Pulling and Well Dried Before Storing.

By R. E. LOREE, Department of Horticulture, Michigan Agricultural College.

East Lansing, Mich.—Onions must be properly matured, harvested and cured before they are ready for successful winter storage. August and September are the harvesting months, and crops grown from early sowings should now show signs of maturity. These become apparent in a weakening and shriveling of the neck above the bulb, and a yellow color of the tops. Bulbs to be stored should become fully ripe before pulling. The tops should be dead and the outer skin of the bulbs dry.

There are usually some scullions, or those with thick necks, which still remain green. These do not make suitable bulbs for storing. If they can be matured, it will be by pulling and giving the necks an opportunity to dry down.

As a rule, it pays to pull the entire crop when the larger portion of the tops have become dead. Delay in harvesting sometimes results in a second growth which injures the bulbs for storage purposes. The bulbs, after pulling, may be entirely dried or cured in the garden or field. If the weather is moist, however, the bulbs when partially cured may be removed to a well ventilated house or shed, where they should be kept for several weeks. They should not be put into winter storage until perfectly dry. The tops should rattle and crackle when handling.

Do not attempt to store soft and immature bulbs and bulbs with thick necks. Use or sell these at once because they do not keep well. Before storing, it is customary to remove a part of the top. When topping, leave at least an inch of the stem above the bulb. Bulbs which have been topped too close will sprout and become a loss. Handle carefully to avoid bruising and store in a cool, dry, well ventilated place.

FERTILIZERS NOT STANDARD

College Makes Analyses and Finds Many Deficient—Publishes List.

East Lansing, Mich.—A disposition to be "skimpy," particularly in the amount of potash they put into their fertilizers, has been found to be a quite prevalent fault among manufacturers of soil-improving compounds the Michigan Agricultural college has discovered during the course of examinations made in the past few weeks. The suggestion is therefore offered by Prof. A. J. Patten of the chemistry experiment station that buyers take the precaution of making certain they are getting what they are paying for. To assist them in this, the college has published a list of manufacturers, with the results of the analyses made of their products. This can be procured by writing to M. A. C.

In all, 518 samples were analyzed. Of these, 135 or 26 per cent, were found to be below guarantee in one or more constituents; and 92, or 17.8 per cent, were below guarantee in potash. Potash deficiencies were more numerous than either nitrogen or phosphoric acid, which indicates that because of the high cost and comparative scarcity of this constituent, the manufacturers are attempting to hew as close to the line as possible.

There were also 43 samples which failed to furnish an amount of plant food equal in value to that guaranteed, and in six samples the value of the plant food was found to be 10 per cent or more below the value guaranteed.

Coal Mine Found at Grass Roots.

A four-foot seam of coal, eight feet below the surface and only 30 feet from the main line of the United States railroad in Alaska has been discovered at Mine 175, not far from Seward.

Women.

The women of the old dramas and the old novels are not more womanly women than the tax-paying, self-supporting women of modern life.—Exchange.

Town and Country.

A town man occasionally can shape his business so that he may lie down beside it and take a nap. But a farmer, after his regular work has been attended to, always has a well to dig.—Topeka Capital.

Recruiting.

"You say the auto struck you and sent you flying?" "Yes, sent me flying." "Did it leave on it any distinguishing mark?" "Yes, a placard reading, 'Join the Aviation Corps.'"

FORTUNES MADE IN COTTON

Imperial Valley of California, a Desert Fifteen Years ago, Is Now Great Field of White.

In the Imperial valley of California they are making fortunes raising cotton this year—sudden dramatic fortunes. Everything about the Imperial valley seems to have the dramatic quality; its story would make a blistering desert where a buzzard could scarcely live. And then the government harnessed the Colorado river and the desert was veined with irrigating canals, and plowed and planted, and for the first time since the primordial floods subsided, a tint of green and growing things spread over the valley.

Cotton arrived in 1906. It came in the shape of a box of seed under the seat of a farm wagon driven by a Texas homesteader. He asked why they didn't raise cotton thereabouts, and they said because it wouldn't grow. And so, being from Texas, which is something like Missouri, he planted his little store of cottonseed, and it came up and opened its snowy bolls to the wonderment of all beholders. Furthermore, the next year it came up and bore again without another planting.

The Texan's little cotton field spread like a drop of butter on a hot pan. It clothed the barrenness of the desert in its fleece. And it brought to the men who owned the land more hard iron dollars than ever they had seen before. There are 50,000 acres of cotton in the Imperial valley this year and there are going to be many more next year. And even better than the cotton crop is the human crop, which this desert has borne; for it is peopled by men who own their own farms and are prosperous.

Two Great Men.

Enrico Caruso, the world-famous tenor, says he has found out that "no man is as great as he thinks he is."

"While I was out motoring one day," he continues, "my automobile broke down, and I sought refuge in a farmhouse while the car was being repaired. I became friendly with the farmer, who asked me my name, and I told him it was Caruso.

"The farmer leaped to his feet and seized me by the hand. 'Little did I think I would see a man like you in this here humble kitchen, sir!' he exclaimed. 'Caruso! the great traveler, Robinson Caruso!'"

Hard to Please.

"You are inconsistent," said the pretty girl.

"How so?"

"You are always making fun of our clothes. Yet, when we put on strictly utilitarian garments like overalls, you bewail the passing of feminine frills."

It's no mark of superiority to get drunk on drug store whisky in preference to the stuff that is to be purchased in a saloon.