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THE PROFESSOR'S CLIMATIC SECRETS

FOR

NEW METHOD
OF SAVING THE POTATO CROP

FROM THE

Blight, the Scab and the Rot.

Invented by the Universal Farmer,

JOHN PLATTEN,

OF FORT HOWARD, WIS.

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H. H. ZAHN & Co., Printers,
Milwaukee, Wis.
1891.

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1.—Introductory.

For about two generations, or since 1840, millions of heads are at work trying to solve the question: How to save the potato crop from the so-called diseases, the blight, the scab, and the rot. In vain! Man seeks afar, for that which lies at home.

We call it the potato disease;—that is not correct—not true. The blighting of the potatoes is no more a potato disease than the sunstroke or drowning are human diseases. True, the sunstroke kills the man, so it does the potato. So does drowning kill the man as well as the potato, but the water in which the man drowns is no human “disease”, neither is the water in which the potato drowns—rots—a potato disease. And the potato scab is no more a potato disease, than burning oneself is a human disease. True, burning leaves a scar, and sometimes kills, just so the scab on the potato sometimes kills the potato, but all—the blight, the scab, and the rot, all come from without, from Climatic Influences. The only disease of the potato itself, is the hollow, and that is rarely very bad. But you see, reader, man may receive a sunstroke, be drowned or even burned without being sick. So also may potatoes get sunstruck (blighted), burned (scabby), drowned

(rotten) from climatic influences without any disease whatsoever. Among all the plants we cultivate none is as tender as the potato; it can neither endure great heat or severe cold. In its native home in the mountain gulches of Central America, from where they came to us, and where they are still growing wild, the heat never rises above 88 degrees, nor does it go below 54 degrees Fahr. In very hot countries the potato does not thrive. With us the summers are too short and too hot for the potato to properly mature. From year to year we see it deteriorate and it is becoming more difficult to raise a good crop of potatoes. Unless a change for the better is soon found, where will this end? Even now hundreds and thousands of farmers have no potatoes for their own use. But not even the potato crop alone, but other crops also are diminishing, while the human family is increasing fast. What is to be done? Is there no remedy for this decrease of crop? Yes—and—No. By the old method, No. By the new, very easy. But, says the farmer, if our summers are too short and too hot, where is the remedy to come in? We certainly cannot change the climate. Well, no; the Summer, the climate we cannot change. But we can, in fact we will have to adapt ourselves to the climate, as we find that the climate will not adapt itself to us, especially so with the potato crop.—Of late years it has become a custom to furnish teamsters in cities, who have to drive in the hot summer sun, with sun-protectors. In some cases these sun-protectors have reached even the farm districts, and why

should they not? What a benefit good shade is. Of late even the horses in large cities are given sunfenders. But our question now is : How to defend the growing potato crop on the field against the sunstroke (blight and the scab). Shall we build a shed over them? Certainly! for they cannot withstand 118 to 122 degrees in the sun, we must therefore give them shade. Build a shed, says the farmer; what an idea! Say, did you ever enjoy the shade of a tree on a hot, sharp, sunny day? Do you know how comfortable that feels, even more so than the shade in the house? Therefore, what will we do; plant a tree over every potato stock? That is exactly what we will do, and we will get plenty of sound smooth potatoes. But we will first prepare the soil.

2.—How to Prepare the Soil.

We will prepare the soil according to the best rules of science, as is very fully explained from page 1 to 24 in the "Professor's Economical Secrets." We will plough and handle the soil in the Fall before, so as to destroy the weeds and vermin, and drain off all the surface water. In the Spring we will thoroughly mellow the ground with the cultivator and harrow if necessary. Now we will draw drills or seed furrows for corn, 2—3 inches deep, and for potatoes 4—5 inches deep, taking care to get the drills (rows) very straight and of even width, 3—3½ ft. apart, and wherever the lay of the soil and the shape of the field permits, the rows are to run east and west. Now we will plant every other row with potatoes, and later (at the proper time) in corn, the other row, but still better if two rows of corn to every one row of potatoes.

By using the tall heavy leaved corn, such as Stowell's Evergreen sweet corn, etc., we will have the tree you wanted, 9—14 feet high, giving the potatoes the very best of shade during the great Summer heat, and crops of both potatoes and corn will be greatly increased. As I said before, the blight, the scab, and the rot are not diseases of the potato, but are caused

by climatic action on the potato, too hot and too wet being the cause. Against the heat we give them the shade of the corn, and against the wet we drain the land properly so that not a drop of surface water will stand on the ground. Where no corn is wanted quite an advantage against the heat is gained by planting on lands sloping to the north.

Where potatoes bring a good price, so as to pay for the extra labor, the following plan may be adopted: Let the rows run east and west and be wide apart, say 3—3½ feet apart, and in the rows the plants 9—12 inches apart. Now when the great summer heat comes we will run a plough between the rows throwing up a heavy furrow to the north, thus providing a kind of a ridge or protection on the south side of every row, and if this ridge is worked in very hot weather with an especially arranged cultivator or harrow to mellow and cool the ground, it will greatly benefit the potatoes. It is astonishing what can be accomplished when education and a determined will work hand in hand.

3.—Selecting the Seed.

When digging in the Fall, it is a good plan to select the best, largest, and smoothest tubers and keep them separate for seed next Spring, in a place, if possible, so cool that they will not sprout, and, of course, warm enough to guard against freezing. In the Spring two to six weeks (according to circumstances) before planting, bring the potatoes into a warm, light, airy room, spread them out thin so that the sprouts may start and may be as large as white beans, but they should be short and green. If they have started considerably, care must be taken not to break off the sprouts. If the seed-potatoes are large (as they should be) the seed-pieces will be cut so as to have but one eye (at most two) on each seed-piece, and the eye is to be at the upper end of the piece. Cut no flat nor slab-shaped pieces, but with a very thin-bladed, sharp knife, cut in two cuts an oblong three-cornered piece with the eye at the upper end. If the potato has many small eyes at the seed end and no strong sprout started, cut a thin piece off and throw it away.

4.—Spreading the Seed with Ashes.

It is the custom with some, to spread the newly cut potatoes with ashes. If one is ready to plant immediately and the ground is dry, and the weather warm so as to promise an immediate start for the potatoes, the ashes seem to be very beneficial; but should the ground be wet and the weather cool, the ashes are too sharp for the potato and cause rot before there is a benefit to the young plant.

5.—Rolling the Potato Seeds with Land-Plaster.

Giving the newly cut potatoes a coating of land-plaster affords them better protection against rot in the ground before having time to germinate, and it is also believed that it promotes their growth.

6.—Planting.

Lay the pieces 8, 10, 12, or 14 inches apart and very straight in the row. Cover by drawing over them the back of a harrow or other drag that will cover two rows at a time. As soon as they first begin to come through the ground, harrow them with a light and not sharp harrow, and thereafter cultivate as often as necessary. If thus planted, the ground properly prepared and handled with cultivator, there should be absolutely no hand labor except taking care of the potato-bugs. But in the shade of the corn the bugs will be far less numerous, as they like the sun and seem to dread the shade. (See "Professor's Economical Secrets"). Should the season be hot and dry, frequent stirring of the soil with the cultivator, as long as the horse can walk through, will greatly benefit the potatoes, but care should be taken in the later part not to tear up the roots of the corn.—Plant early, so that the crop will be well along before the scorching summer heat strikes them.

7.—Potato Digging.

Should the soil be hot and wet, the potatoes should be dug as soon as they stop growing, and stored wherever they will lie cooler and drier than in the ground where they grew.

8.—Guarantee.

I guarantee that the above described methods will yield from double to ten times more crop, than that which is harvested by many the old way, as well in corn as potatoes, especially the latter.

7.—Remarks.

When we look about us and see the most astonishing inventions made within the memory of men now living, the application of steam on land and water, the telegraph and telephone, electricity for light and motive power, the curative discoveries by Dr. Pasteur, Dr. Koch, and others for the benefit of Trade, Commerce, Science and Art, should we not reasonably expect that useful inventions would also be made in Economical Industries, in Farming? Why should farming go backward, while every other branch of science is going ahead at a galloping rate? It should not, but it is! Farming is going backward. We do not raise as much crop per acre as formerly. Statistics from Washington show the past season's crops (1890) to be frightfully low:

Gain crops 9 to 14 bushels per acre,

Corn " 19 " "

Buckwheat crops 14 " "

Potato " 57 " "

Hay " 1 ton " and that

is called "a big crop". Why so?! What is the cause?! There are many causes. The first and main cause is, a false notion which has taken root among our people. Since money has become over-plenty in our country, and since money instead of right and reason

rule supreme, there are many so short-sighted as to consider money the only object to aim at, and by misunderstanding the value and use of money not only burden their own lives, but the lives of others as well.

10—Money.

Money is a token of exchange; nothing more, nothing less. Money has absolutely no value within itself, no matter what it is made of—gold, silver, nickel, copper or paper; it only has value as we can get the necessities of life with it. A token, a sign, a mark of exchange, for food, clothing,—dwellings, etc. Here a remarkable example and proof. I have a brother who was sick at Atlanta, Georgia; he said to the Doctor: I would give \$10 for a glass of water from a certain spring in Brown Co., Wis. The Doctor would not believe it. Oh, him of little faith, said the sick man; had I seen it sparkle in a glass before me, I would have given \$20 and likely \$50 if I could not have had it for less. That of course is an extreme case, an exception, but it proves what I am going to say, and what I said above. But now, let us look at our every day extreme cases. Why should those who perform the hardest and most useful labor receive the smallest, in many cases most miserable small pay, while those who

perform, comparatively speaking, no hard or useful labor at all, receive more pay—great pay—enormous pay. Think of the laborer in the white cotton fields getting from 30 to 50 cents per day, while the man in the White House gets—in cash and emoluments—\$150 per day. Think of the man who works in the ditch for \$1.00 a day; if he is late half an hour, a deduction of one-quarter of his pay is made. Now think of the man who draws \$20, \$25, \$50 to \$150 per day; when these men go fishing, or on other pleasure trips, not only do they draw full pay for so enjoying themselves, but we the people also pay their traveling expenses. He who labors hard gets nothing, he who does no labor gets it all!

Is that right? Is it right? Is it justice? Is it Democratic? Is it the principle of a Republic? Is it "equal rights to all," of which we Americans boast so much? But how are you going to help it?

11.—Educate the People.

When the farmer will no longer furnish the food of the nation at less than half pay for his labor, when the pay of the useful hard labor in every branch is raised to a reasonable level and the pay of the comparative idlers (the easy work) is brought down to a reasonable level, then, and not till then, will we enjoy peace, harmony and plenty.

Yes, educate the people to first understand their own value, the value of others, the value of our *daily bread* and the value of the tokens, signs and marks, wherewith, and for which, we exchange one commodity for another!

One of the greatest, yes, the very greatest, mistakes on earth is that regarding money—the value of money. Many make great exertions to get money for the purpose of having money, and consider themselves rich because they have money, enjoying neither health, comfort, nor happiness, but watching with fear and trembling over their money, lest it be stolen or get away from them, all the while not knowing that money has *no value* (is much worse than worthless) until given out, paid from one to another, when it represents just what can be gotten for it, and no more! Another very great mistake is, that the more money there is in a country the more prosperous the people, the better the prices for commodities and the higher the wages of the laboring people. That certainly should be, but is it? Exactly the reverse is the case. Proof of this is, that today, with largely more dollars in the United States than there were cents in 1840 to 1850 (some say there are five times more dollars now than there were cents formerly) the farmer does not get as much money today for his beef cattle as he did then, and the laborer gets less than three times more wages. Think of that: 100 to 500 times more money in the country, and the farmer gets less for beef, pork, butter, eggs, etc., and the laborer only about double to three

times more ! If there were less money in the hands of the BIG (4) FOUR, they could certainly not control all of the meat markets of the United States, paying the farmer only $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 cents for fat beeves, and making their own price on meats, lard, etc., and compelling the butchers throughout the land to take meats from them. The same is true of all other combines; if they had not so much money they could not do it, could not crush the people of so powerful a nation as ours under foot, and the more money we have under the present system—the more will the people be crushed, and the people themselves furnish the power that crushes them.

12.—The Mill-Stone that Grinds the People.

Bank Comptroller Lacey reports October 2, 1890, gross deposits \$2,023,502,067. Over two billions of dollars on deposit; of course the banks loan this money out to combines—sharppers—who use it against the people, respectively, to make more gain, and as no gain ever can come out of idlers who produce nothing, the people are the sufferers. But, cries out the money-power again, how are you going to help it? I say again, by EDUCATING THE PEOPLE.

Educate them to make better use of their money, use it themselves right and left for useful purposes,

improvements of every description, thereby keeping the money in circulation among the people instead of piling it up into the hands of combinations. In the one case it will do the public good, in the other harm. Educate the farmers to get more money by raising full crops by new methods which are much easier, as we kill the weeds and the vermin in advance and guard against drought and wet in advance, and then make use of the money on hand by keeping it on the move for useful improvements. One dollar passing ten hands one day represents \$10, while that same dollar kept ten days represents just 10 cents per day.

Example. — If we had two single dollars, one having the faculty of passing through ten hands every day, the other of passing from one owner to another only once every ten days, the first would be worth to commerce just ninety-nine times more than the latter. Money must be circulated to be good — to be useful. Dead money is a good deal worse than no money.

If people only knew that money is their servant, how eager would they be to keep that servant employed. It is well known that an idle servant brings no gain; why then will people let dollars lie idle for weeks — for months — for years — and so lose their *services*? Ah; you never looked at it in that light! All business-men look at the dollar in that light, why not the farmer? Should he make a labor slave of himself while his servant — the dollar — rests? Of course he should not, but only too often he does. Farmers often wonder why butchers get rich in a few

years. They take too much profit, says the farmer. That is not it; but they turn their money once every month and so take twelve profits a year, while some farmers keep their money twelve years without using it. Take that together with everything else that goes against the farmer, and then ask: Is it a wonder they are going backwards? Just as soon as the farmer works on the same principle as the merchant — uses his money as fast and as often as he can, makes use of every improvement bringing better crops — better profits, learns his trade as mechanics learn theirs — scientifically, raises more crop at less cost of money and labor, finds new crops to raise, both for family use and for market, learns to have a good family garden which is so very easy to have and which brings more clear profit for one acre than wheat-raising brings from ten acres, learns to raise and prepare for market flax, then his condition will change for the better.

Speaking of flax, it is said by those who raise it to cost per acre the same as wheat to raise it, to give \$20 worth of extra labor per acre,—or about \$30 for raising and preparing—and to sell—the ready flax (lint) from \$60 to \$75, leaving a profit of from \$30 to \$45 per acre; it grows here in Wisconsin on any land where wheat will grow. For a complete description of the manner of cultivating and preparing flax for market, the profit on same, etc., see the “Professor’s Economical Secrets”, page 99 to 109 in the German book; it will also appear in the English later.

Another very great and profitable improvement for the farmer is the Silo, fully described in the German book (will also appear in the second edition of the English); these, together with a great variety of new methods that never before appeared in print in any other work, make the "Professor's Secrets" most valuable to all people toiling for honest living. People who have read the Secrets and are working thereby pronounce them as **TRUE IN EVERY WORD AND EVERY ARTICLE WORTH MORE THAN THE WHOLE COST.** The price (which formerly was \$5.00 for a written letter) is now reduced to \$3.00 for the first and second printed edition. All having bought the first at \$3.00 will have the second mailed to them free. The two together now make a book of over 200 pages. The first edition of the English has 104 pages, has been out over two years and pleases greatly.

Country Dealers can greatly increase their popularity and trade by giving every customer one of these little books (full potato crops) as a present. I will make them so cheap that the increased trade will greatly outbalance the cost.

Price.

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“ “ “ “ two copies, \$1.50.

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