

The escutcheon of England displays the lion and the unicorn; the French adorn their coins with a rooster; Russia, Germany, Austria and the United States unite in allegiance to the eagle, and all these countries are loyal to their chosen emblem. Were one to design a seal for the state of Iowa there would be no hesitancy in the choice of the principal figure. Instead of the present confused landscape wherein the patriot with the flag, a wheat field and the Mississippi River jostle one another, there should be one simple figure; on a field of gold, a hog, rampant, with an appetite, rampant. So far as is known no injured Independence day orator has as yet concluded his address with the words, "And the foundations of this great commonwealth, rest, ladies and gentlemen, upon the Hog," but should we do so, it is unlikely that any Iowan would take exception to the statement. Why should he, indeed? Our English ancestors honored the boar's head, why should we not accord some recognition to the plump, complacent porker, endowed by Nature with an amazing appetite and abundant leisure for making the best use of it?

The hog is a much maligned animal; the Old Testament denunciation of those animals which split the hoof and do not chew the cud, has rendered him unpopular <sup>as food</sup> in many quarters, and some who have tried to drive hogs contend that each animal still retains a share of the seven devils that entered into his scriptural forbears. His manners and his personal habits receive a goodly share of criticism, "piggish" has become a synonym for "greedy", and "dirty as

a pig" is a most common comparison. We have here - 2 -  
a glaring instance of an animal condemned unparadoxically  
for lack of one single quality; the hog is not lovable, his  
most earnest advocates dare not assert that, and because  
he is not lovable we suspect him of all the vices,  
sloth and filthiness, gluttony and stupidity. The  
farmer who calls the hog filthy censures himself, true  
the hog can exist and even thrive after a fashion in the  
midst of filth, but if he has but half a chance he  
proves the best housekeeper of any of our four animals.  
He wallows in the mud not because he loves dirt but  
because it is his nearest <sup>possible</sup> approach to a bath, and because  
in this fashion he keeps himself healthy. The up-to-date  
breeder of swine provides a cement lined wallow, which  
prevents the formation of a mudhole and the hog bathes  
with great satisfaction. He avoids if possible any  
contamination of the straw which forms his bed, the  
female, before the birth of her litter, will carry straw in  
her mouth and make her bed most carefully in one  
corner of her stall. A neglected pig pen is an offense to  
every nose for a goodly distance round about, but so is a  
neglected horse barn or cow barn, and the blame, in  
every case, is to be placed not upon the innocent animal  
but upon the lazy and ignorant owner.

The reason, I believe, for the general lack of appreciation  
of piggyish intelligence, is that it is usually manifested  
in so perverse a fashion. What animal is more clever at  
finding the weak points in a pasture fence, more  
adept at reaching the precise point of yard or garden  
where he will find most food - and do most damage.  
or gifted with a more fiercer ability for avoiding  
capture? They soon become familiar with their

attendants and manifest like or dislike in a very amusing fashion. There was once a Poland-China hog, which had been made much of from earliest pig hood by a fond mistress, whose usual procedure was to scratch Bonnie Brier Bush with a stick. Bonnie had grown so expectant of this feting that she always lay down directly her mistress appeared. One day she discovered a weak point in the fence and in company with seven other hogs departed in search of adventure. The hired man followed, he easily found the strays, but in vain he harr, he shouted, he cajoled, he swore, he could not drive the runaways back to the pen. Finally in despair he sought the aid of Bonnie's mistress. It was raining hard and had been raining for so long that trees and grass gave out water like saturated sponges and the road was a morass. However, equipped with rain coat, rubbers and umbrella the lady ventured out, she called Bonnie, Bonnie responded with enthusiasm, she came up the road, she started to cross it, but in the very midst of the mud she suddenly lay down, stretched out her legs with an expectant grunt and waited to be scratched. There was no alternative, her mistress waded out and stood in the mud, in the midst of the pouring rain, holding the umbrella and scratching Bonnie with a stick, until at last the satisfied beast got up and placidly followed her back to the pen, while the other hogs, deserted by their leader, trailed meekly in the rear.

If the mature hog is not prepossessing in appearance the piglets are fascinating, they are so tiny and delicate, almost ludicrous in contrast to the huge mothers, their little tails curl up so tightly and they

course with such fever, pushing, begging, tumbling<sup>4</sup> all over one another. There are always one or two in a litter conspicuously larger and stronger than the others and these always get the best places, while the runt, if there be one, must content himself with the leavings of his sturdier brothers.

The presence of the hog on Iowa farms, however, is the result not of aesthetic nor of sentimental but of economic considerations. From precept and experience the farmer has long since learned his lesson, even the rich black soil of the prairies is no inexhaustible mine of fertility, he must return to the soil in the form of manure the elements which he takes from it in reaping his great harvests. The simple and natural method <sup>of doing this</sup> is to feed his grain to stock instead of selling it as grain. To buy cattle and prepare them for market is a business in itself and requires a particular and specialized skill, it requires too a larger capital than is available to many farmers and the money must remain invested for a considerable period of time. The answer to the problem is as simple as the hog seems to have been created for this very emergency. Even in this day of expensive pork and thorough-bred hogs the initial outlay need not be large, four or five brood sows mean a good start and can be secured for a hundred or a hundred and fifty dollars. The number of pigs to a litter will average six, the eight is very usual and litters of ten or twelve occur not infrequently. If one wishes to go to the trouble of caring for fall pigs, the sow may be bred a second time, and the market is very likely to be tight at the time when the fall pigs are ready to be sold.

If the mother is to be bred again the piglets are weaned<sup>5-</sup> at the age of six weeks by which time they have learned to drink milk, pick up oats, shelled corn or ground feed and have become quite independent. They have lost too, most of the disease of pighood and are fast acquiring the less admirable traits of the mature animal. It is just at this age that the gourmand most admires the pig, if he be daintily reared and garnished with roast apples and sausages. Roast sucking pig is a delicacy, however, which seldom appears on the farm table. The potential value of the pig completely outweighs his present gastronomic value in the opinion of the arbiter of his porcine destinies. In the next six months he will convert a certain quantity of corn, oats, mill feed and alfalfa into approximately two hundred pounds of marketable flesh, with the least possible expenditure of money and energy on the part of the farmer. It is the rapidity with which the hog becomes marketable which renders him so very desirable to the farmer, and it is his appetite for corn which has made him so important a factor in the corn belt.

Even as the climate of Iowa is adapted with the greatest nicety to the growing of corn, so is the pig adapted to the consumption of the crop. True he needs a small proportion of other elements, nitrogenous foods, for corn alone forms a diet with an excess of fats and starches, but always he is willing that corn should form the principal article of his diet and his appetite for it never flags. There is one very simple system of feeding hogs, whereby the hog harvests the corn, obviates the necessity of storing it by eating it as fast as he harvests it and himself spreads the manure upon the

land. Under this plan, which is known as "hogging down" the corn, the field is fenced with woven wire fence and the hogs are let into the field while the stalks of corn are still quite green. They devour not only the ears of corn but a goodly portion of the leaves and the stalks.

Every farmer has his own very positive opinion as to the breed of hogs best suited to Iowa conditions, altho' all unite in preferring the heavy breeds, known as the large-types. The three most popular breeds are the Poland-Chine, the Duroc Jerseys and the Chester Whites, and each has its ardent advocates, who argue that it is superior in many points - the rapidity with which it matures, its size, the size of the litters, health, and <sup>and</sup> dozens of other respects. There are periodicals too, which trumpet forth the praises of a particular breed, with endless details as to breeds and owners. There is, also, an elaborate system of registration whereby the pedigree of a certain animal may be traced to the "fourth and fifth generation" and much farther. The choice seems in reality to be determined by the locality in which a man lives and is influenced by the choice of his neighbors, or else decided purely on a color basis, the farmer choosing his breed according to whether the glossy black hide and white joints of the Poland-Chine, the cherry-red of the Jerseys or the sometimes immaculate pinky-white of the Chester Whites makes the strongest appeal to him. The black Berkshire hogs are sometimes seen, and there is a growing interest in the breed known as the mud-foot hogs which are said to be immune to cholera.

Cholera is the sword of Damocles which ever hangs over the head of the farmer who raises hogs

extensively. At any moment, without warning the plague may strike his herd and the "fleece mothers" with few plump litters, which are now described as "so many coupons waiting to be clipped" die one by one while their helpless owner must stomach his losses as he may. It is not unusual for a man with a herd of thoroughbreds to lose animals aggregating seven or eight thousand dollars in value, and precautions seem unavailing, the disease strikes clean herds and dirty ones alike. During the most recent epidemic a system of vaccination was adopted which in some cases had excellent results, in others, perhaps because improperly used or because of some defect in the serum it seemed quite inert.

There seems to be no way of telling what route the disease will take, or what farms it will strike. One herd in a neighborhood maybe quite destroyed, while the others are unharmed, or in a neighborhood where practically all the hogs die, one single herd may escape. The farmers are careful about driving up to an infected barnyard, but as the germ could be carried with equal ease by dogs or crows, this seems a somewhat unavailing precaution. The hogs which die are saturated with kerosene and burned to prevent the possibility of future infection and in an infected district the air is sometimes quite filled with the unmistakable odor of burning flesh, from dozens of these funeral pyres.

Whatever the losses from this source, the farmer never becomes discouraged in this venture and if

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He loses most of his herd one year the next sees him  
with pens newly painted, or perhaps rebuilt after  
the latest and most approved design, starting afresh  
with a herd of squealing piglets.

In this as in every other business there are times of  
deep discouragement, but to counterbalance these  
come many pleasures. The large litters of lusty  
sucklings in the spring time, the sturdy piglets  
which crowd each other about the troughs in the  
early summer give pleasure as all healthy young  
things give pleasure; and when in the crisp evenings  
of autumn the long cry of "Poo-e-e!" "Poo-e-e-e!"  
brings the heads of young shoats racing up over  
the rustling heaps of leaves to the feeding place,  
all one size, all fat and sleekly, nearly ready for  
market, the heart of the farmer swells within him.  
He feels the satisfying sense of a task accomplished,  
these plump shapes so soon to be converted into  
money for him, and into ham and bacon for hungry  
folks are the concrete evidence of its accomplishment,  
the tokens of comfort and luxuries for his family during  
the winter. He expresses these emotions in words, too,  
this less romantically than the <sup>sentimentalist</sup> ~~southern~~ might  
wish; meeting his neighbor at the top of the Gull,  
he stops his horses and they chat while the horses,  
influenced by the keen air, stamp and start and  
pull restlessly at their bits. They discuss many  
things; this man's sick horse, the other's new plow,

and as they are parting our former says with quiet-9-  
pride, "Say, Jim, I've got as likely a lookin' bunch of  
shoats as you ever see, better come an' look at 'em  
before I turn 'em off."

apud eam  
di vacans  
pluribus  
notatus  
annus  
aut delens