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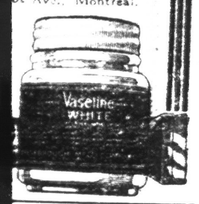

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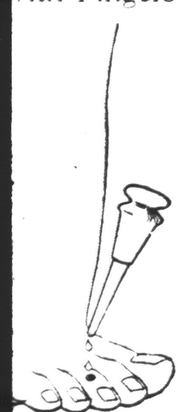

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Farm Crop Queries

CONDUCTED BY PROF. HENRY G. BELL

The object of this department is to place at the service of our farm readers the advice of an acknowledged authority on all subjects pertaining to soils and crops.

Address all questions to Professor Henry G. Bell, in care of The Wilson Publishing Company, Limited, Toronto, and answers will appear in this column in the order in which they are received. When writing kindly mention this paper. As space is limited it is advisable where immediate reply is necessary that a stamped and addressed envelope be enclosed with the question, when the answer will be mailed direct.

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A. D. F.: What is the value of corn cobs on soil, and which is the best soil to put them on? They are partly rotted.

Answer: Corn cobs as plant food are not of very great value, since they carry in a thousand pounds only 3.2 lbs. of nitrogen, 7 lbs. phosphoric acid and 6.6 lbs. potash. You can readily see that they do not contribute any great amount of manure to the soil. However, the effect on physical condition of sandy soils in working in decayed corn cobs is of considerable importance.

You would do well to work the corn cobs into a heavy clay soil if you have a choice of types, since the decaying cobs would loosen the soil and greatly benefit the aeration. If the soil is sandy the addition of cobs in the fall or winter would be of value, since the rotting cobs combined together loosen sand.

A. J. S.: Do you think a good stand of alfalfa on a good field of twelve acres will produce as much milk as twelve acres of good corn, put in the silo? I am having good luck raising alfalfa, and am inclined to believe I can do away with the corn entirely for the alfalfa crop, and it is much easier to raise.

Answer: It is difficult to compare corn silage with alfalfa, since alfalfa contains more protein than corn and is especially valuable as a dairy feed from this standpoint, whereas on the other hand, corn contains more carbohydrates. However, since you have asked for a definite comparison, the following figures may be of some guide: Figuring your alfalfa yield at three tons to the acre and your corn yield at ten tons to the acre the comparative contents of feeding material stand as follows:

Alfalfa, 36 tons: Dry matter 65,808, crude protein 7,622, carbohydrates (starches, sugars, etc.) 28,080, fat 648.

Corn, 120 tons: Dry matter 63,120, crude protein 2,640, carbohydrates (starches, sugars, etc.) 36,000, fat 1,680.

R. W.: I wish to sow about six acres of sweet clover for pasture next year. Is it near enough like alfalfa so that I can follow the same methods I have with alfalfa, viz.: Fall plow, work well into June and seed? This field is rough and of a light clay order. I expect to draw marl and cover at the rate of two yards per acre. Will the frost act on the marl drawn and piled on the field so that I can sow next spring with a lime sower? Is there any danger in pasturing sweet clover too short after the first year? If it gets a good top, should one pasture any the first year?

Answer: The method you outline for the growing of sweet clover could be modified to your advantage. I would recommend growing a small grain crop as a nurse crop and seeding the sweet clover just as you would seed Common Red or Alsike, sowing it at the same time as you sow the grain.

The addition of marl will scatter the soil and put it in good shape. The weathering of the soil should break it down so that it spreads evenly. Distributing it with a lime sower will certainly give it splendid application.

In getting your stand of sweet clover I would recommend your using about 250 lbs. of fertilizer to the acre, carrying 2 to 3 per cent. ammonia, 10 to 12 per cent. phosphoric acid, and about 2 per cent. potash. Apply this through the fertilizer-dropper of the grain drill at the same time that the grain and sweet clover seed is sown. Sweet clover is a very persistent plant once you get it established. However, sweet clover is a biennial, hence you cannot depend upon it to reproduce itself from year to year the same as alfalfa.

I would not advise pasturing sweet clover the first season it is sown. The second year it can be pastured or cut for hay as you choose.

L. B.: I have been wondering how to arrange for green feed for my flock of hens this winter but have none now. If sprouted oats is best, how shall I arrange to get them?

Answer: A good method of providing green feed for hens in winter is to hang up a couple of cabbage heads at a convenient height for the hens to pick off pieces of cabbage. If you do not have this vegetable, sprouted oats are a splendid substitution. Simply spread the oats in a box at a depth of probably half an inch, moisten same and keep them near heat, preferably in the sunlight. The oats will quickly sprout and form a thick matting, at the same time sending up shoots from three to five inches long. By cutting off a piece of the matted mass day by day you can keep your poultry supplied with green fodder.

Mr. Muskrat—A Good Pelt, and Easily Taken.

I well remember the time I caught my first muskrat. In fact, it was the first real fur-bearer I had ever taken. As I looked at the sleek pelt, speculating on its value (I probably received 15 or 20 cents instead of $3, which it would have brought two years ago), I had visions of great wealth to be made on the trap line. Of course, I never did sell quite as many furs as I expected, and so far great wealth has eluded me, but nothing ever gave me quite the thrill that the first muskrat did.

Muskrats are not hard to take. You can succeed, ordinarily, by placing your traps at the foot of slides or in the entrances of dens and houses. When the water is too deep, it is a good plan to build bases for sets of sod or stones. It is easy to scoop out excavations should the spots for sets be too shallow. Stake in deep water whenever it is possible. Better results can be had by having traps covered by two or three inches of water, for the animals are then caught by their longer and stronger hind legs, rather than by the shorter and weaker front ones. Fewer muskrats escape when this precaution is taken.

Most muskrats are trapped during the fall, when they move about freely. Their fur is best during late winter and early spring. Shot and speared skins do not command top values. If possible, get the game with traps.

Baits are not used to any great extent for this fur-bearer. When it is necessary to do so, remember that vegetables are the only attractors, outside of the patent scents, that get results. Parsnips are very effective because of the odor. However, potatoes, carrots, beets, and anything similar will serve. Just place your traps in shallow water, and put the decoys near, in such a way that the muskrats cannot investigate without being caught.

Most trappers pull up traps as soon as the ice gets strong enough to hold the animals. When the weather is not too cold, one can add many pelts to his collection by putting three or four pounds of coarse salt, in a cloth, [illegible]. This prevents freez-

[illegible] will suggest [illegible] on the line. [illegible] out with a little [illegible] muskrat trapping is not difficult, and even the beginner will take them easily after a few attempts.

Boys' and Girls' Swine Club Sale and Competition.

Boys' and Girls' Swine Clubs organized by the Dominion Live Stock Branch in conjunction with the Quebec Department of Agriculture had their first sale and judging competition in Montreal recently. Two carloads of hogs were shipped in from the Ormstown and Stanbridge East sections and were graded into selects, heavies and lights. Fifty members of the clubs accompanied the consignments. The prices received for the hogs ranged from $9.65 for lights to $11 for selects. Officers of the Departments addressed the boys in a practical way before the judging competition, which took place after the sale, and for which prizes ranging from $25 to $1 were given. Before leaving, the boys and girls were shown over the principal packing houses and stock yards, so as to give them some insight into the commercial aspects of the business.

Protect from Mice.

During some winters, mice are very destructive to fruit trees, even after the latter have been planted several years. Just before winter sets in wrap ordinary white building paper around the trunks, tying it with twine. Mould up the soil a little about the base to prevent mice entering at the bottom of the paper. A more permanent method, but one which costs more money, is to substitute fine mesh galvanized wire cylinders for the paper. This may be left round the trees until the latter are big enough not to need protection.

See that your farm tools and implements are under cover.

Do not talk disarmament and then give your children toy soldiers, guns and tanks.

One way of showing love is to keep the wood box filled.

The proportion of males which should be placed with a certain number of females depends upon the season. When we wish eggs for breeding at any other than the regular mating season in spring, we need to put more males in the flock than usual.

Advice for Gardeners.

The Dominion Horticulturist at Ottawa, in his last annual report, gives some valuable advice relative to gardening that might and should be well digested during the coming months and in preparation for next spring. He deprecates leaving the ordering of plants and seeds until shortly before they are needed, as then there is no time to test the germinating power of the seed, and because the early planting of most varieties is advisable if the best results are to be obtained. When planning what is to be ordered, lists of the best fruits, flowers, and vegetables should be referred to, and the lists contained in the report will be of much value in this connection. There is considerable difference in the strains of the same varieties of vegetables and flowers, and while the best may be a trifle more expensive, their selection will, as a rule, pay abundantly in the superiority of the crop. Good strains count much in tomatoes, cauliflowers and onions for instance, among vegetables; and among garden flowers the modern varieties are usually vastly superior. Another thing to be careful of is to make sure that exactly what is ordered is received. For this purpose it is as well to mark the order "no substitution." When ordering trees and plants, ask for their delivery by the earliest date which you are likely to be able to plant. If the ground is not ready, they will keep safely in a cool cellar for a day or two. This applies particularly to roses; but all trees and shrubs except evergreens suffer if planted late in the spring. Also avoid the rush, as small orders are liable to be shelved until large orders are filled.

Worry fills more graves than want.

The birds are your feathered friends; do you know why?

In scouring knives use a cork instead of a cloth. The next knives you buy, get the so-called stainless steel.

The man who would succeed at farming must be a fighter from start to finish.

Getting Hens to Lay in Winter.

If hens are to lay in winter they must be sheltered from intense cold and severe blasts. This must not mean that they are to be coddled in warmth, but simply housed in cheaply constructed frame buildings with glass and cotton fronts for ventilation and light. They need to be well fed. The Dominion Experimental Farm expert advises that rations should be composed of whole grain, crushed grain, some succulent feed, some meat feed, and a plentiful supply of grit and oyster shell. Don't feed all grain, but be sure to include such feeds as mash, meat scrap, sharp grit, oyster shell, charcoal, and plenty of green food. This expert gives the following as a useful guide in providing winter rations, as it contains close to the recognized proportions of protein and carbohydrates: scratch grain—300 lbs. wheat, 150 lbs. oats, 150 lbs. barley; dry mash (for feeding through a hopper)—100 lbs. bran, 100 lbs. oat chop, 50 lbs. barley chop, 50 lbs. shorts, 15 per cent. beef scrap, and 9 ounces salt. If skim-milk is available, the proportion of beef scrap may be reduced. If the hens become too fat, limit the time to a few hours that they have access to the self-feeder. Sprouted oats provide a desirable green feed in the winter. The Dpartment of Agriculture, Ottawa, issues a number of publications on poultry-keeping free to all applicants.

Growing Timber on the Farm.

Timber is essentially a poor-land crop. Steep slopes, poor soil, rocky land, unusual corners, gullied and wooded tracts—all these afford opportunities for growing timber profitably. A careful survey of the average farm will reveal a surprising number of spots of this sort which can be utilized to advantage. If they do not already have trees, planting them with the proper varieties will materially increase the value of the land.

There may be a greater thing in the world than loyalty, but just now we don't know what it is.

In the Forest City

Western Ontario Women's Institutes in Convention

By GIBSON SCOTT.

"There's something in it—there certainly is," ruminated a shrewd observer watching the gathering from the gallery.

"In what?" queried his companion a trifle impatiently. It was getting near dinner time.

"Why, in the theory that land which grows fine crops in the fields grows a crop of particularly fine people, too," said the other. "Just look at those girls and women assembling now. Aren't they the embodiment of pep and go and vigor of mind and body? I'll wager they will make things count for progress wherever they go—or come."

"You are probably right. I know they are rattling good cooks anyway about here. You see I married one. My wife's a member."

The little aside caused a nearby woman to smile. Men view the Women's Institutes from many angles, but agree in their praise.

Western Ontario, fruitful land of plenty, believes in itself, is proud of what it has accomplished, but is not self-satisfied. This one would gather from a survey of the program of the Seventh Annual Convention of the Women's Institutes of that area of our great province (and the fourth in the series of five autumn conventions being held this year) held in the beautiful Masonic Temple, London, in November.

"Make a survey of what we have done? Yes, by all means. The joy of good work accomplished strengthens the hand and makes wise the heart, but standing on the firm ground of solid achievement, let us study together efficiency in the branch, the district, closer co-operation with our University, our Agricultural College, our Government Departments of Health, Education, and above all, Agriculture, in which is our Governmental home, the Institutes Branch, presided over by that loved and veteran administrator, Superintendent G. A. Putnam, under whose guidance we have achieved world renown."

Such might be the summing up of the attitude of the four hundred or more delegates at London, from the opening address of the presiding and self-effacing chief officer, Mrs. George Edwards of Komoka. Chairman of the Convention Committee to the closing one of Miss Grant, Clerk of London Township, on Hydro Electric Power for the farm homes, and the Dominion President, Mrs. Todd of Orillia.

Girls and their interests had first place. Lucasville have organized a girls' athletic society for tennis, basket ball, and gymnastic work. At the close of a Government demonstration lecture course, the girls at both Ailsa Craig and Paisley organized Junior Institutes and, in addition to their own program, are co-operating with the Senior Institute and the Junior Farmers. Delaware put on its demonstration course in the summer holidays so the high school girls could also take advantage of the training in home nursing.

The educational side came in for much attention. The local school is a matter of warm interest to the branches. Chatham and Thames River each presented their schools with gramophones as being one of the best ways in which to help the children to an appreciation of good music. Some West Kent branches distribute seeds to the children in the spring and hold a flower show in the autumn, so developing a sense of beauty in home surroundings. Mapleton, Kingsmill, and a number of others are working for medical inspection and providing hot lunches for the school in winter. As Middlesex Institutes are the pioneers in medical inspection for rural Ontario, naturally this is a very live subject, that county at present demanding no less than four school nurses.

Many places have a woman on the school board or are actively co-operating with the trustees for school betterment, through the Home and School committees of the Institute.

This interest in education for the grown-ups was supplemented by an almost equally keen desire for extension education for the grown-ups. Much regret was expressed at learning that there was on file 200 applications from Institutes for the Demonstration Short Courses, which had to wait owing to lack of funds at the Institutes Branch. A resolution of appreciation was sent to the Minister of Agriculture for the services being rendered through this Branch of Government, coupled with the request for its maintenance and extension, particularly in its educational work.

Miss McNally of Macdonald Institute, Guelph, spoke on practical demonstrations which could be given by the members. There is a Packet Loan Library in connection with Macdonald Institute and Massey Library at the O.A.C., Guelph, which has been and is of great value to members of Institutes getting up papers and wanting reliable material. Such material can be borrowed for two weeks on condition that it is then returned for use elsewhere to the college.

Very keen interest indeed was exhibited in the Extension work for country communities being offered this year by their own Western University at London, as explained by Col. Brown, Director of the Extension Department. This University is arranging correspondence courses and reading circles and the matter aroused so much interest and questioning that circulars giving detailed information will be sent out to Western Ontario Institutes this year.

The efficiency of the Institute itself came in for much attention. "How to conduct a meeting in a correct and Parliamentary way," by Miss Yates of London, was followed by a demonstration of a model meeting put on by Mrs. Sutherland Ross of Embro, formerly assistant superintendent of Institutes, assisted by Miss Venner, secretary of Hyde Park Branch, and presidents and members of various Western Ontario Institutes. This feature was greatly appreciated.

A program-planning conference led by Miss Guest of Toronto brought out the following outline for this phase of branch work:

1. Study the needs of the branches. Are the members girls or women or both? Are they from village or farm or both?

2. Find out what the members want, taking suggestions for a study of the home itself under the heads: house-planning and building, furnishing, cleaning, food, clothing, finance, labor-saving, division of work, health, the garden, poultry, dairy.

3. The family: study of the children of pre-school age, of the public school age, 'teen age needs, the mother, the father, music, reading, friends, entertaining, choosing a vocation in life.

4. The community: the school, social life, recreation, games, the community hall and its wise use.

5. Service available from college and Government Department.

The program should be seasonable, balanced between the purely practical and the mental and social, should draw out as much local talent as possible, interest both girls and women, and consider community welfare.

A splendid demonstration of labor-saving household equipment was given by Mrs. Greer, Departmental lecturer, between the sessions, which kept many late for supper, so interested were they.

One of the best things of a crowded program was Making a survey of the Institute District by the Board of Directors," given by Mrs. J. McLennan, Sarnia, under the headings:

1. To ascertain the number, membership, condition of existing branches, and possible new centres for organization.

2. To discover valuable lines of work and study for the home and neighborhood.

3. Methods of discovering, developing, and using local talent.

4. Co-operation with the schools.

5. Giving help and inspiration to the branches.

Miss Chapman has always captured the hearts of her hearers with her sympathetic and suggestive talk on "Home Building."

Health was a matter of pulsing interest. Drs. Hill, Director of Public Health Institute, London, and McNally, of the Department of Public Health, being plied with questions after their very able addresses. A resolution was passed asking that applicants for marriage licenses produce a certificate of health.

A charming talk on music for country homes was given by one of the Western Ontario's favorite musicians, Prof. A. D. Jordan, followed by a bright series of sketches with readings from Miss Topley-Thomas on Western Ontario artists and authors.

A most pleasing feature of this convention is the cordial co-operation between city and country, the city tendering the delegates annually a civic banquet at which the mayor, members of the legislature, Women's Canadian Club, and business men vie with each other in welcoming the visitors, and city musicians join with those of the country in enlivening the proceedings.

The Sunday School Lesson

DECEMBER 11

Paul Writes to a Friend, Philemon 8-21. Golden Text—Matt. 20: 27 (Rev. Ver.)

Lesson Setting—The Epistle of Philemon was written by Paul from Rome, during his first imprisonment, probably about A.D. 62. It was addressed to Philemon, a resident at Colossae, an ancient city of Asia Minor in the Roman Province of Asia, where there was a church, to which Paul sent the letter, Epistle to the Solossians at the same time as the Epistle to Philemon. Along with Philemon are mentioned, in the address of the letter, Apphia, and Archippus, probably his son and his wife respectively. The letter to Philemon was written on behalf of his slave, Onesimus, whom Paul somehow had met and won to the Christian faith, and who now, at the apostle's bidding, was returning to the Master whom he had wronged by embezzlement and theft. "The letter," says Dr. David Smith, "has a peculiar interest as the only surviving specimen of the apostle's private correspondence; and it well deserves a place in the sacred canon." Renaus estimate of it as "a little masterpiece" is fully justified by its earnestness, tact and charm. It comes from the heart and pen of a perfect Christian gentleman.

I. The Prisoner, 8, 9.

V. 8. "After honest and affectionate praise of Philemon (vs. 1-7), the apostle now approaches the main topic of his letter." **Wherefore**; because of the good which Paul has heard about Philemon; he must live up to his reputation. **All boldness in Christ** (Rev. Ver.). Paul is careful not to claim any authority for him.self. The only authority he possesses, comes from Christ. **To enjoin thee**; "to command thee," as one occupying an official position, might issue orders to those under him. **That which is convenient.** The Greek translated "convenient" means primarily "having arrived at" or "reached." It then comes to mean "fulfilling a moral obligation."

V. 9. **Yet for love's sake**; Paul's love to Philemon and Philemon's to Paul, and, beyond that, the love that links all Christian souls to one another and binds them all to Christ. This is the principle that should rule the Christian in all his dealings. **I . . . beseech thee.** This is the language of love. It entreats, and does not command. **Being such an one**; that is, one who beseeches. **Paul the aged**; Rev. Ver. Margin, "an ambassador." If this is the meaning, Paul would appear as one with the right to command in the name of Christ; his exhortation would, therefore, have greater weight with Philemon. **Also a prisoner**; perhaps a hint that his own position was not much different from that of the one on whose behalf he was pleading. Paul desires Philemon to take back the runaway slave. It is as if he said: "If you hesitate to take him back because you ought, will you take him back because I ask you? And before you answer that question, will you remember my age, and what I am bearing for the Master?" (Maclaren).

II. The Plea, 10-16.

Vs. 10, 11. **My son** (Rev. Ver., "child") **Onesimus.** Paul seeks to disown Philemon's anger at the slave, who had wronged him, by tenderly describing Onesimus as his own child. **Whom I have begotten**; won to the Christian faith. The Jewish Talmud says: "If one teaches the son of his neighbor the Law, the Scripture reckons this the same as if he had begotten him." **Unprofitable . . profitable**; a play on the meaning of Onesimus, "Helpful" or "Profitable,"—I beseech thee for Profitable, who was aforetime unprofitable, but now is profitable.

Vs. 12-14. **Whom I have sent again.** It was not Paul's business to interfere between master and slave. It is clear that Onesimus was himself the bearer of the letter to Philemon. **Mine own bowels**; Rev. Ver., "my very heart." Paul identifies himself with Onesimus. Be kind to him, as you would be kind to me, he says, and when masters become truly kind in heart to their slaves, the root of slavery is cut. **Would fain have kept**, etc. (Rev. Ver.). Paul had work for Onesimus to do, and Philemon ought to have been glad to have him do it. Both master and slave were bound to serve Paul. **Without thy mind**, etc. Paul shows the utmost respect for the freedom of the individual, and realizes that forced service is contrary to the genius of Christianity.

Vs. 15, 16. **Perhaps he was . . departed.** Paul uses a mild word to describe the conduct of Onesimus. He does not say, as he might truthfully have said "ran away." **Shouldest receive him for ever.** As a slave, Philemon could possess Onesimus only "for a season," as a Christian brother his relation with him would be eternal. **Not . . as a servant** (Rev. Ver.), a bond servant") **but . . a brother beloved.** In the eyes of the world he would still be a slave, but his relations to his master would be changed. "In the flesh," as it has been said, "Philemon has the brother for his slave; in the Lord, Philemon has the slave for his brother." **Specially to me.** Onesimus had become very dear to Paul. Much more unto thee; because he is your property. There is a hint that the property relation involves more than mere ownership and receiving of service. Ownership should be a basis for Christian fraternity and its mutual ministeries. **In the flesh, and in the Lord.** All human relationships are sanctified through union in Christ.

III. The Pledge, 17-21.

Vs. 17-19. **Countest me . . a partner** (Rev. Ver.); a comrade, a sharer in Christian blessings. All claim to apostolic authority is laid aside, and Paul places himself besides Philemon as a brother. As **myself.** All that you would do for me, do that for him. **If he had wronged thee**; as Paul well knew he had, but again, as in v. 15, mild language is used. **Oweth thee ought.** The blunt word "stolen" is avoided. **Put that on mine account**; a half playful assumption of lawyer-like phraseology" (Maclaren). Paul had no idea that Philemon would charge anything to him, and probably could not have paid it, had it been so charged. **I Paul.** The use of his own name carries the weight of a binding signature. **Mine own hand**; so that he would be wholly responsible. **I will repay it.** In like manner Christ takes upon Himself all our debt. **Thou owest unto me.** Philemon's debt to Paul was infinitely greater than Paul's to Philemon.

Vs. 20, 21. **Yea, brother**; an affectionate appeal. **Let me have joy.** "May I have profit of thee," one might translate. The Greek word for "joy" is a play on the name of Onesimus (see on v. 11). **Refresh my heart.** (Rev. Ver.). This points back to v. 7. **What Onesimus has done for others he will surely do for Paul. In the Lord.** Both are his disciples and servants; therefore one should be willing to show any possible kindness to the other. **Confidence in thy obedience**; obedience not to any imperious command, but to a loving exhortation. It is when we trust others that they will do most for us. **More than I say.** It may well be that Paul had no mind that Philemon would set Onesimus free from slavery, though he says no word against slavery. But he has been laying down principles that make slavery impossible. If one is a brother he can no longer be a slave. So, to take another example the teaching of Christianity has done much to make the prohibition of the liquor traffic inevitable.

Application.

The epistle of Philemon reveals in a clear light the characteristic attitude of Christianity to social questions. Although St. Paul requests his friend to take back this slave and treat him as a Christian brother, he has no single word to say in condemnation of slavery as an institution. Why did he not condemn this slavery business? Because the time was not ripe. So deeply rooted was the institution of slavery in the life of the people that any words of condemnation would mean nothing. But St. Paul labored to establish a principle and the practice of brotherhood which grew and grew until it sloughed off slavery as a horrid thing, sloughed it off through legislation inspired by love. All honor to Wilberforce and others who strove to hasten the day of the Lord!