Soils and Crops

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SEEDING NEW MEADOWS.

One of the interesting and successful features of the Illustration Station work is the comparison between heavy and light seeding of timothy and clovers. When making surveys of many farms in each county where Illustration Stations are located it was found that most farmers were not sowing sufficient seed to give the best results. To illustrate the advantage of heavier seeding, particularly with clover, on each station a small portion of the field is sown to the usual amount used in the neighborhood, which is from two to four pounds of clover and eight to ten pounds of timothy, and the larger portion of the field sown with a mixture of clover and timothy amounting to twenty pounds per acre. Every illustration showed the heavier seeding to give the heaviest crops of hay. The difference in growth is so noticeable that farmers passing can see the line between the two lots to a foot. On several stations the clovers on the light seeded portions were winter killed, while the heavy growth formed a protection to the roots and usually withstood the severest winter and spring frosts. Several operators report one-quarter to one-third more hay on the heavier seeding and have a much better chance for a second crop of hay or seed the same season.

When seeding sandy or clay loams sow eight pounds of common Red clover; two pounds alsike and ten pounds of timothy per acre. In some cases it is advisable to sow two pounds of alfalfa in addition.

On heavy clay that is liable to be damp or on light, acidy sand sow eight pounds of alsike; two of Red clover and ten of timothy per acre.

On black muck or peaty soil sow eight pounds of alsike; two pounds of Red clover; eight pounds of timothy and two pounds of Red Top per acre. For a nurse crop on peaty soil, always sow barley.

SHEEP ON THE GENERAL FARM.

Sheep have one thing in common with poultry: a farmer is more likely to be successful with few than with many. In the beginning it is a very good plan to get only a few breeding ewes, and grow into the business as experience shows the way. One of the cheapest ways of starting a flock is to secure young western ewes and breed them to a purebred sire of the mutton breeds.

A purebred ram is relatively cheap, and without one a flock soon degenerates.

The early lambs are the most profitable, but the production of such lambs requires considerable experience and better equipment. It would probably be better for the beginning farmer to breed his ewes for late lambing.

Sheep are the natural prey of parasites, which flourish chiefly during the hot, dry months of summer. For this reason sheep should not be allowed to drink water from old stagnant pools, but should at all times be supplied with pure, fresh water.

Another summer precaution is to insure plenty of green feed. Pastures are likely to get scant in July and August, but the forehanded farmer will have a field of rape ready for them about that time. In the fall, rape which had been seeded in the corn field at the time of last cultivation, will also supply pasturage at a time when the grasses are short.

The winter care of the flock is the most critical, however. Proper shelter is highly essential, but expensive buildings are not needed. Sheep want to be dry under foot, and they do not stand drafts. They are amply protected against cold weather, provided the rain, snow, and wind is kept out of their sheds.

Proper winter feeding of sheep is quite an art, as too heavy, as well as too light feeding is harmful. It is essential that the flock go into winter quarters in a good, thrifty condition. Clover or alfalfa hay of good quality, together with an occasional addition of corn fodder, is all the ewes will need until about a month before lambing, if the lambs are to be dropped before the ewes get into pasture.

No grain ration has given more satisfactory results in many experiments, than a mixture of whole oats and bran. Both are easily available on the average farm. Either half and half or two parts of oats to one of bran is satisfactory, and each ewe should receive about half a pound of this mixture a day. When other roughages are substituted for the alfalfa or clover, it is best to feed grain all winter long. Do not winter a flock by giving them the run of the straw stack.

To keep the digestive tract in good condition root crops or corn silage should be fed, in amounts not to exceed two to two and one-half pounds per day. This succulent feed, combined with plenty of exercise, is the best tonic in the world. In dry weather it is advisable to feed the roughage some distance from the barns or sheds, so that the ewes will be forced to walk around considerable.

The closest attention must be paid to the flock at lambing time. Many lambs and an occasional ewe can be saved if the shepherd remains on the job. Then, when the lambs are about a week or two old, some bright day the ram lambs should be castrated. A week or two later all the lambs should be docked.

Lambs should be weaned when they are about three or four months of age. Unless this is done they will nurse until late in the fall, and cause the ewes to go into winter quarters in poor flesh.

Sheep should be sheared as soon as the weather gets warm enough so that there will be no further danger of catching cold. About a week after shearing, the whole flock should be dipped, as the presence of lice and ticks keep the flock thin.

The following are excellent rules for the guidance of beginners in sheep husbandry:

1. Use good purebred rams.
2. Select young ewes. Yearlings, two-year-olds, or perhaps three-year-olds, are far more desirable for starting a flock than older ones.
3. Discard broken-mouthed ewes and ewes with bad udders.
4. Choose ewes having good size, desirable forms, and dense fleeces.
5. Feed the lambs especially well throughout the first year because a sheep makes his greatest growth during this period.
6. Give the flock good care throughout the entire year.

Nova Scotia's Prettiest Girl.

The Bluenose province recently set about to select from its young womanhood its prettiest specimen. The choice fell upon Miss Lillian Corbin, of Weymouth, in the Land of Evangeline. The Halifax Herald is arranging to have her portrait painted and forwarded to the Prince of Wales.

TILE DRAINAGE IMPORTANT

The question of how close or how far apart lateral drains should be placed is largely a matter of the character and lay of the land. If the land is somewhat rolling, with fairly good drainage to the lower levels, with the subsoil somewhat porous, the lateral drain can follow the low ground with very good results. But if the surface is rather flat and of a texture which we commonly call "juggy," then it will be necessary to run laterals on to the higher ground and from three to four rods apart.

Not only is it of vast importance to have ground well drained in order to get on to it in early spring with the plow, and get the seeds in early; but there is a more important and far-reaching effect to be obtained by tile drainage. And that is the condition it puts the soil in for the reception of seed and the growth of plants. It is an old established fact that water and air will not occupy the same place at the same time. Many farmers have the idea that because they can not see water standing on the surface of their land that it is not wet enough to hurt it, but at the same time the water level may be two inches below the surface, thereby excluding all the air and becoming, as we say, "waterlogged," and remaining in that condition from the time the fall rains come until late in the spring. With the result that the ground becomes hard and clammy and the bacterial life, which is so necessary to plant growth, is almost obliterated as a consequence of being covered with water for so long a period. But on the other hand, if the water level can be lowered to a depth of about thirty inches the pores of the ground which were formerly filled with water become filled with air as the water recedes, thereby bringing more warmth to the ground and encouraging and developing bacterial life. And the soil when plowed, will break up loose and mellow, easy to prepare the seedbed, and will be in far better condition to receive seed and produce a more healthy plant growth than can possibly be obtained on undrained land.

Another fact stands out prominent as we lower the water level in our soil, and that is that our field plants will send their roots down deeper into the earth and thereby take up plant food that would not be available on undrained land because plant roots will not penerate water-soaked ground to any extent, but will spread out near the surface of the soil, then when dry weather comes and the surface dries out they are in a poor condition to withstand the drouth.

Tiled drainage will often pay for itself in one or two seasons.—E. G. Storm.

Says Sam: Grins keep the face from sagging.

Farming is a gamble but efficient methods make it pretty nearly a sure thing.

Man must do with his hands what the hen does with her feet if he wants good hatches from the incubator. Turn the eggs daily from the third to the eighteenth day. Three turns a day are not too many.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

APRIL 29

Ruth 1: 14-22. Golden Text — Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God—Ruth 1: 16.

LESSON FOREWORD—Ruth lived in Moab, the region to the east of the Jordan. The Moabites were racially closely related to the Israelites and, along with the Israelites, spoke the Hebrew language. But there was a perpetual feud between Israel and Moab over the possession of disputed lands and properties. Each was continually raiding the country of the other So in cleaving to Naomi, Ruth dared to live among not only a strange people, but a hostile people. She proved the strength of her quenchless love. Goethe has described the book of Ruth as "the loveliest little idyll that tradition has transmitted to us." The author shows a much more tolerant attitude toward foreigners than was customary among the Jews.

I. A DEATHLESS DEVOTION, 14-18.

The Bible depicts the lot of the widow as usually hard. Several alternatives were open to her. She might return to her father's house. If she had a grown-up son, she might live with him. The eldest brother of her husband might marry her, or she might be claimed along with the other property as part of the inheritance left by her husband.

V. 15. *Gone back to her people.* Orpah chose to go back to her father's house. Sometimes a widow was given a cool reception upon her arrival among her own relatives. *And unto her gods.* The ancient view was that each territory had its own god. If one went from one land to another, he passed into the jurisdiction of another god.

V. 16. *Thy God, my God.* Similarly Ruth, on entering the land of Israel, would have to become a worshipper of Jehovah, the God of Israel.

V. 17. *There will I be buried.* Cook says, "according to ancient thought, union in life meant union in death and in the grave; the members of a family had a common burying-place." There is even some indication that they believed that in the dwelling-place of the dead, families would dwell together as families. *The Lord do so to me,* etc. This was the regular formula of a solemn oath. The expression goes back to a custom which originally accompanied the oath. A sacrificial victim was slain and cut into two equal halves. These severed parts were laid on the ground and those who took the vow passed between them, using this oath. Upon violation of the oath, God might destroy them as the victim had been destroyed.

II. A SAD HOME-COMING, 19-22.

V. 19. *They came to Bethlehem.* Bethlehem had been Naomi's home before she and her husband and sons migrated to Moab, v. 1. *All the city was moved.* The arrival of strangers would set the town gossiping. Naomi's return without her husband and sons excited the curiosity of the Bethlehemites. *They said,* etc.. The Hebrew text indicated that this question was raised by the women of the town. It is a graphic touch, affording a glimpse into the life of an ancient Israelite town.

V. 20. *Naomi.* This name means "my sweetness" or "my delight." Compare with this Naaman, which means "pleasant." *Mara;* the Hebrew word for "bitter."

V. 21. *The Lord hath testified against me.* Such afflictions as had befallen Naomi could only mean, according to the old Hebrew view, that God was displeased with her. Prosperity indicated God's favor, adversity his displeasure. The problem of suffering was for long the vexatious problem with which Old Testament saints wrestled.

V. 22. *The beginning of barley harvest;* in the month of Abib, our April. Barley was harvested from mid-April till mid-June.

APPLICATION.

The book of Ruth may be described as a "short story" or more technically an epic idyl concerned with the simple domestic happenings of the long ago, and told in such beautiful, poetic language that our feelings are deeply stirred.

Why has this story of love and devotion found a place in the Bible? What was the writer's purpose when he penned it? There is some variety of opinion, but the most probable theory is that the author wished to show his fellow-Jews, who had become fanatical and bigoted in their attitude toward all other races, a picture of lovely innocence, human kindliness, and utter devotion to God, in the person of one who was not of their blood, but was an alien Moabitess.

From this story we learn the wideness of God's mercy. It includes all men, regardless of national boundaries. This is not an easily learned lesson, even to-day. The nationalistic feelings have surged up again with a sort of defiance. But after all, the whole race of man is of more importance than the nation. Nationalistic antipathies will continue until we all begin to have the same spirit, see things with the same eyes, look for the triumph of the same cause, serve one Master.

Times of Sowing Garden Crops.

The following classification of varieties as to time of sowing will, as Mr. W. T. Macoun, the Dominion Horticulturist, says, be found useful:

Seed to be sown early in spring—beets, carrots, lettuce, onions, parsnips, peas, radishes, kohl-rabi, garden cress, salsify, spinach, parsley, and leeks.

Seed sown in hotbeds (but plants will stand some frost)—cabbage, cauliflower, celery.

Seed to be sown after danger of frost is over unless protected—beans, corn, cucumbers, melons and squash. Seed of late cabbage is not sown until May, but the plants will endure frost, and seed of Swede turnips should be sown late, though turnips will stand frost. Where early potatoes are desired, they may be planted even when there is danger of their being frozen after they are up, as it has been found they will come on again after being frozen, and in places where the season is short early planting ensures the largest crops.

Seed sown in hotbeds (but plants will not stand frost)—melons, egg plants, peppers.

Ornamental trees and shrubs require the same care in planting as fruit trees and fruit bushes, and should be set out early for best results. In growing annual flowers for setting out, it is important to harden them off, as is the case with vegetables, if best results are to be obtained. There is a great advantage in time of blooming of using plants rather than seed of most annuals but Sweet Alyssum, Eschscholtzia, Poppy, Annual Gypsophila, Portulaca, and others should be sown in the open.

Plan to Plant Trees.

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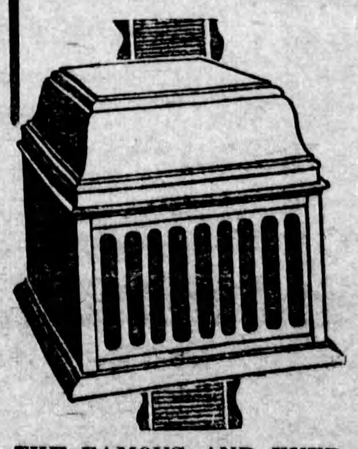

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