

Efficient Farming

THE MEANING OF GOOD SEED.

Good seed may be defined as follows:

- 1.—Seed belonging to a variety which is superior in the following respects, viz.:—
 1. Suitability for the conditions under which it is to be grown.
 2. Yielding power.
 3. Purity.
 4. Quality of product for marketing or feeding purposes.
 5. Hardiness.
 6. Strength of straw or stalk.
 7. Ability to resist disease.
- 2.—Seed which in itself is superior in the following respects, viz.:—
 1. Vital energy.
 2. Size and development of kernels.
 3. Uniformity of sample as regards size and development of kernel.
 4. Maturity.
 5. Freedom from disease.
 6. Freedom from other damage of any kind.
 7. Freedom from weed seeds.
 8. Freedom from seeds of other cultivated kinds or varieties.

Choice of variety is a matter which deserves the most careful consideration. During the past few years, there has been a rapid increase in the production of new varieties by our plant breeders. These varieties are distinguished not only on the basis of such things as yield, dates of maturity, quality, type of kernel, strength of straw, etc., but on their adaptability to different conditions. Certain sorts thrive better on clay soils than do others. Some varieties will make a fairly good showing on relatively light soils, whereas other sorts would give very meagre yields. Again, some varieties are better suited to thrive under drought conditions than are others. The difference between varieties in respect of their relative abilities to withstand, or resist, the attacks of rust is becoming more pronounced each year as progress continues to be made in the production of more resistant types.

The Experimental Farms and Agricultural Colleges are going very valuable work in testing different varieties in various ways, so as to be able to furnish farmers with information as to the varieties which are likely to prevail on a given farm. Growers are therefore strongly urged to keep closely in touch with these institutions.

The Central Experimental Farm at Ottawa has worked out a very simple plan by which any farmer can obtain valuable information on his own farm regarding the relative suitability of different varieties of plants for which characterize his farm. Such a scheme is highly recommended as it is only by testing varieties on the farmer's own farm that he can be sure that he is not trying to grow a variety which is not suitable for his conditions.

The vital energy of the seed of the variety decided upon should be determined by a careful germination test. Seed should be plump and large for the sort and as uniform as possible as regards size and development. While small seed and even shrunken seed in the case of wheat may, under ideal conditions, produce reasonably good plants, yet the fact that ideal conditions are not to be depended upon makes it unsafe to risk using seed which is lacking in development. Well developed seed contains more food material from the young plant developing from the germ will have to draw upon. If this food supply is scant and the season is unfavorable at the start, the growth is liable to be weak.



These oxen of Haliburton, Ontario, are so well-trained that they can be driven by the seven-year-old boy shown in the photograph. The animals are used in a lumber camp to break down soft places on the saw-log roads.

FOR HOME AND COUNTRY

The Essentials in Women's Institute Work.

Before we can decide what are essential in Women's Institutes, we must consider the purpose for which Institutes are organized and the features of the work which have made them so popular and valuable that they find them not only in rural communities in Ontario, but in many other parts of the world.

They have become one of the largest and strongest organizations of women in existence to-day. Why? Because they stand for all that is essential in the foundation of empire—the home and childhood particularly. The Women's Institutes in Ontario are part of a great co-operative educational system which has for its aim the betterment of home, school, community and country. We might also add the betterment of womanhood. "In our co-operation, we in the Institutes form a great league of women for peace and advancement, not by laws of force but by laws of educational growth."

This success depends upon co-operation between not only members of branches, districts and Federation boards, but between members and the Dept. of Agriculture with which we carry on so effectively.

If we are to achieve results we must follow the line spoken of by our War Minister, forging every link in the chain that there can be no weakest link. The Women's Institute has been called "the great school of the grown-ups." It is the university in which the homemaker has an opportunity to complete her education, to develop her talents and assist all members to achieve their best.

What do we mean by education? It is that training which develops our powers, not only physically but mentally, to accomplish with a minimum amount of labor a maximum amount of results. In other words, it is that training or growth of powers which enables us to fill our place in life efficiently and to serve our generation. It is training which broadens our outlook, that we may value things of life at their true worth. It makes us better homemakers, more logical. We see that work is honorable, and glory in our ability to accomplish results.

The Women's Institute is a finishing school for homemakers, the university of those upon whom the prosperity of nations rests. We all realize the truth of the statement that no nation can rise higher than the standard of the homes of which it is composed; especially in this true of the homes of the "landed gentry." These are homes upon which the world depends for its maintenance, the homes which are sources of our national wealth. They are the homes which add fresh vigor to the great centres of population.

Should the system not be deemed suitable, it is our opportunity to mould public opinion so that in our schools we have not only the best but also the best paid teachers, and to assist with our sympathy. It is imperative that all should have opportunity to cultivate the talents already possessed.

What is essential in a Women's Institute to fulfill this work? That we have women, interested in ideals, who are loyal and broad-minded enough to forget the petty, personal trifles of life and unite in a great effort to raise the standards of life. We must have co-operation in teaching the nobility of labor, that homemaking is the first profession and agriculture is the second.

To know that in unity there is strength, and with that strength much can be done whether in branch, district, provincial association, or Dominion Federation. To-day the Women's Institute is recognized as a great moulder of public opinion, and our responsibilities increase as our membership increases. Laws are only the outcome of public opinion placed in a tangible form. It is therefore essential that those who represent your branch, district, province, represent you in spirit as well as in name, and that the closest union should exist between all parts of the work.

When we view the great work already done, we may feel proud of what we have accomplished. The reason we feel so is because our ideals of home and country, the love of these are in every land, so that we find the Women's Institutes are fast encompassing the world.

The value of our organization does not depend upon our numbers so much as upon the union of all the parts of which it is composed. It depends upon loyal support of our own organization, in branch, district, federation.

Federation, to be successful, is linking up, not for strength, but for service. The word "Service" should be our watchword. Ours is the grand unity of womanhood; ours is an opportunity to render service to others that they may enjoy what it has been our lot to enjoy. We have worked to do in the nationalizing of new Canadians-in-the-making.

The Sunday School Lesson

February 15.

Jesus in Gethsemane, Mark 14: 32-42. Golden Text—Not what I will, but what thou wilt.—Mark 14: 36.

CONFLICT AND VICTORY.
INTRODUCTION.—From the upper room, Jesus and his disciples pass to Gethsemane. Threading their way through the city streets, they issue from one of the gates, and all is still. They descend the steep side of the Kidron valley, and then follow the path to an enclosed olive-garden on the other side, where, according to the Fourth Gospel, Jesus was accustomed to resort. Here the last great conflict of the Master's life takes place. Hitherto, in speaking of his death to the disciples, Jesus had made the bright side appear. He had represented the Cross, as Professor Allan Menzies says, "not in terms of God, as a service freely rendered for the members of the kingdom, as the opening act of the new age." But now, when the Supper and the exaltation of the great and the betrayal is at hand, the natural recoil takes place, and in the gathering dusk of the April evening, in the tense stillness of the garden, we see the Master on his knees, making great and earnest supplication to God. There is deep and anguished conflict, but there follows peace and radiant victory.

We may compare with the Agony in Gethsemane the earlier scene in Jesus' life, where he battled with the tempter in the wilderness. Jesus had driven from him the captivating dreams which his age held of short and easy ways to the kingdom of God. It was a severe trial, but it was victoriously sustained. When Jesus left the wilderness, his mind was made up to take the path of absolute surrender to God. This was the first act of the great drama, and now in Gethsemane we see the last. We see Jesus "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

CONFLICT AND VICTORY, 32-42.
V. 32. "They came to a place which has the name Gethsemane." Gethsemane means "oil-press." Evidently the olive-garden had a place for pressing the berries into oil. In the garden Jesus, who is bearing a heavy burden on his heart, makes the disciples sit down, while he goes on into the leafy darkness to pray.

V. 33. "Jesus must pray alone, but even so he yearns that at least some of the men who alone in all the world have any sense of what is happening, should be near him. For this purpose, he selects Peter, James, and John, who have been his sole confidants in other experiences, notably the Transfiguration. Never before had these trusted followers seen the Master break down, or confess to mortal agony, and therefore, we may imagine with what awe hearts they saw the change which now came over Jesus. It was, we read, appalling in its form. "He began to sweat as it were blood, and his face became like a drop of blood." V. 34. The disciples not only see this change, but their ears are startled by the confession, wrung from the very soul of Jesus, "My soul is sorrowful even unto death." Grief, terrible as death itself, has seized Jesus, and is breaking his heart. We feel, therefore, the source of that grief was; not merely the physical shrinking from agony, but the deep darkness of the world's sin descending on his spirit. In this agony, we witness the disciples to be near, to sympathize and yet they cannot fully enter into his sufferings.

V. 35. Jesus goes a few paces farther on—Luke says, about a stone's cast—and then, falling on the ground, he prays that the "hour"—that is, the undergo—"might pass from him, if that could be."
V. 36. "Abba, Father," he cried—"Abba" is the Aramaic word, "Father" is its translation—"all things are possible unto thee: take away this cup from me." Cup is an Old Testament expression for any experience, whether of good or of ill, which is measured out to one: "this cup" means the present agony of Jesus' soul. The physical nature of Jesus' real before this agony, and he would faint if he were not sustained by the Father's will is the only way he will choose, and therefore he adds: "Nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt."
V. 37, 38. The answer has not yet come, but Jesus, rising from his knees, finds them sleeping—Luke says, for sorrow: the strain had been too much.

VALENTINE SANDWICHES AND CAKES

Even if the party is to be a very small affair, we will want to know how to make the refreshments for it interesting and attractive, so here are some very pretty and very good little sandwiches that are not at all fussy to make and carry out nicely the spirit of the anniversary of the good old saint.

Valentine Sandwiches. Cut white of graham bread in thin slices and spread with softened butter, then mix enough currant jelly, raspberry jam or other red-tinted jam or jelly with cottage cheese to make it quite red, first carefully creaming the cheese until it is soft and delicate, and seasoning it nicely with salt and a little sweet cream.

Spread the bread with the cheese filling and press the slices together sandwich fashion, then with a heart-shaped cookie cutter, cut the sandwiches into hearts. If the cookie cutter is not available cut a bread-and-butter slice, place up the bread-and-butter slices, place the pattern on the top and cut around it with a sharp knife, through all the bread.

Other fillings may be used in these sandwiches if preferred. Cream cheese to which chopped candied cherries are added will be tasty, or we may prefer simply a red jelly or jam.

Heart Cakes may be baked either in small heart-shaped pans, or in a thin sheet and cut with a cookie cutter or after a paper pattern. Here is a recipe that will make very tempting little cakes: 3 eggs, 1 cupful of sugar, 4 tablespoonfuls of cold water, 1 cupful of flour, 1 teaspoonful of baking powder, ¼ teaspoonful of salt, 2 tablespoonfuls of hot melted butter, 1 teaspoonful of vanilla.

Beat the eggs thoroughly, add the sugar and vanilla and beat till like batter, then add the water and beat again. Sift flour, salt and baking powder together and whip into the cake. Last of all fold in the hot butter. Bake in a moderately hot oven.

When the little cakes are cool spread them through the centre and spread a lemon filling or a tart jelly between them, then put them together and cover with an icing made by mixing a paste of the finest confectioner's sugar and the juice from canned strawberries or raspberries. If it is possible to obtain some of the little red cupid darts usually shown in the shops at this season, insert one of them in each cake.—C. B. K.

A PAIR OF VALENTINES

Mother's tired eyes smiled at her tall daughter over the soft pile of apricot crepe, but the girl noticed nothing special.

"Did the girle come out right, mother?" she asked.

Mother lifted the lovely fragile thing. "I think so," she answered. "Do you want to try it on?"

"Do!" Celia cried.

She pulled off her blue tricotine and slipped the apricot crepe over her head. It wrapped as softly as a cloud about her young white shoulders; her face above it seemed to bloom into lovelier color, her dark hair to steal a new sheen in contrast with the vivid soft brilliancy of the gown. She tilted the mirror on the bureau and advanced across the room to see herself full length. Her bright face became serious as she gazed.

"Don't you think the left side looks a little queer, mother?" she inquired. "Something about the way the folds hang there?"

Mother looked from the figure in the mirror to the one outside. She could see nothing wrong. But she knelt beside her daughter, altering and planning.

It was half an hour before the folds hung to Celia's satisfaction. Then once more the dimples came back to her face. She kissed her mother between the tired eyes. "There won't any girl have such a lovely valentine as mine!" she declared.

"As she danced out of the room she met Letty coming in; the little sister was carrying a cup of tea, and her eyes were hostile. "I heard what you said about a valentine, and I can just tell you that your old valentine's killing mother! I'd like to know what you're doing for her valentine; that's what I'd like to know!"

"I'd wait till I knew the facts before I accused people," Celia replied coldly, but her eyes looked startled and ashamed. Of course she was going to send mother a valentine. She would go without her new gloves till March and buy sweet peas; mother loved sweet peas.

When mother opened the box and found the card. "From your Big Girl Valentine," her face looked as if she had come into some marvellous fortune. She showed them proudly to Letty. The little sister filled the flower basket with water for them and then slipped silently away.

Half an hour later her mother found her sobbing passionately. "Why, Letty!" she cried.

Little sister would not look up. In her hand was a crumpled bit of paper. "I wa-wanted to send you a valentine so, and I didn't have any money!" she sobbed.

In a flash mother understood; she loosened the paper from the reluctant fingers, spread the paper and read: "I love you hard, I love you true, and I'll wash dishes every night for you."

"Letty dear!" mother cried. "I'm going to keep this as long as I live." Lifting her flushed, tear-stained face, little sister saw in mother's eyes the same transfiguring light that the sweet peas had brought.

Making Maple-Sugar and Syrup.
Making maple-sugar and syrup is the next thing to be considered—have you any maple trees? If you have, here is a short cut:

If you have not already bought spiles and buckets and feel that a cheaper way is necessary or desirable for spiles, take a piece of basswood or poplar (do not use pine, it has a taste), saw the wood in pieces about four inches long, split it into sections about one inch square, and bore a hole lengthwise through each with a one-quarter-inch bit. White one end round to fit into a three-quarter-inch hole and cut a notch in the other end. Use the three-quarter-inch bit to tap your tree, then drive the spile firmly into the hole. Now take your empty fruit jars and fasten a piece of light wire to the top, leaving a loop at the top to hang them on the spiles, using the notch in the spile to keep them from slipping off. Your sap drops into the jar even if there is a wind. Do not leave any of the sap in the jars on cold nights, as it will freeze and sometimes break the jar.

I have made all the syrup and sugar we could use the whole year round, by tapping and collecting sap in this way. It is a clean, neat and convenient way, and costs nothing except a little wax, as almost every one has empty glass jars at sugar-making time.—T. H. W.

Live Stock Prices.
Figures supplied by the Live Stock Branch at Ottawa show a general increase of prices for all lines of live stock at the five principal markets in Canada, for December, 1924, compared with those for the corresponding month in 1923. At Toronto the average increase, taking every kind of cattle into consideration, was 35c per hundred, for swine \$2.95, and for sheep \$1.43. At Montreal the increase was, for cattle 34c per hundred, for swine \$1.41, and for sheep \$1.15. At Winnipeg the advances were 22c for cattle, \$1.15 for swine and 84c for sheep, and at Edmonton, 56c for cattle, \$1.40 for swine and 49c for sheep, all per hundred.

The St. Valentine Wind.

BY IRENE S. WOODCOCK.

Ruth had quarrelled with Rosalie for the first time since they had been playmates. And now St. Valentine's Day was coming and she could not send her valentine that she had bought so joyfully only a few days before.

"I don't care," Ruth said as she put her other valentines into envelopes. But she knew that she did care a great deal. She sat and gazed at the valentine that had been intended for Rosalie. What should she do with it?

"I know what I'll do," she decided. "I'll just take it with me when I go out to carry the other valentines, and perhaps I shall think of some one to give it to."

She and Rosalie had always carried valentines round together, and she felt queer and lonesome now as she started off alone. It would not be nearly so much fun, she knew, to ring bells all by herself and then run and hide. She gave a deep sigh.

As she passed Rosalie's house she looked toward it out of the corner of her eye. Was Rosalie there, or was she, too, going forlornly round alone, carrying valentines?

By the time Ruth had finished running up and down the village streets, slipping her valentines under door and ringing bells, she was quite out of breath. There was only one valentine left—the one that had been intended for Rosalie.

"I suppose I might just as well take it home," Ruth said sorrowfully.

The second time she passed Rosalie's house she tried to go by, but somehow her feet lagged. What would happen if she ran up the walk and rang the bell? Would the door fly open, she wondered, and some one shout, "Valentine! I caught you!"

Ruth hesitated a moment; then, as she started to walk on again, something unexpected happened. The wind, which as night fell had been blowing harder and harder, came swirling suddenly round the corner of the house and snatched the envelope from her hand. Away it went high into the air, whirling and circling. It flew straight over the fence and into the yard of Rosalie's house. Up, up into the air it went, then down again it fluttered and landed right at Rosalie's door!

Ruth was so astonished that she stood stock still in surprise. Then she pushed the gate open quickly. She must get back that envelope, and in a hurry, too!

There it lay right on the doorstep. Somehow it seemed to be in just the right place, but it must not stay there.

As she stooped to snatch it up the door flew open. "Valentine!" a voice cried joyfully. "I caught you!" Some one seized her and drew her into the hall. It was Rosalie.

"I saw you pass," Rosalie said, "and I hid behind the curtain and watched. How I hoped you had brought a valentine for me! Then when you came into the yard I knew you had."

A VALENTINE

What can I send you, for old Winter's reigning?
Snowflakes are flying past my window pane;
Bare the friendly wildwood, gone the nodding blossoms.
Sad the empty meadows and the winding lane.

Yet are memories fadeless, precious beyond telling.
Friendship links together days of shade and shine.
Some of May's soft laughter and the Summer's glory.
These I offer: take them, for a valentine.

—Alix Thorn.

Oh, merchant, show me all your stock,
I want a valentine
To send the sweetest girl on earth,
So give me something fine,
Pink satin and forget-me-nots,
Or silver lace and blue,
Or verses on a gilded—
Nay, none of them will do.
For rings and hearts and doves and darts
And rosy garlands gay,
And wedding bells and spangles bright
Are pretty in their way
But would not please her—she is such
A pert capricious elf,
So I had better go instead
And offer her myself.

—Minna Irving.