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LETTERS TO A COUNTRY FRIEND.

Dear Friend,—I am pleased to have the assurance which your letter gives, that you miss and long for the companionship of your old friend. And I, as the days and weeks pass by, find that instead of missing you less, I miss you more and more, and am more and more convinced that, as I said in my last letter, no one else can take your place with me.

I continue to follow the same pursuits, to mingle with the same people, take the same walks, in fine keep in the same ruts generally, and might consequently be expected to miss the old companionship more than you would, who have new occupations and new surroundings in every respect.

One who has companionship with the great minds and the good of all ages, through their works, or who "in the love of Nature holds communion with her visible forms," and

"Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,  
Sermons in stones, and good in everything."

is, however, comparatively independent of other companionship, at least can find solace even when deprived of that of dearest friends.

Our old friend, the captain, says his better half tells him that a married man should not miss or long for anyone but his wife. I demur to this. No matter how intelligent, or wise, or entertaining, or how perfectly adapted to each other any couple may be, there must be others who could add to their stock of knowledge, give them valuable ideas, or present the old in new lights and dress. The captain's wife is a very fine woman, a very superior woman indeed—a Christian lady (what better can I say of her?) And he is a good fellow in his way, and in no way evinces his sense more than in his appreciation of his "dear little woman, the very best and most capable woman in the world, sir." Nevertheless, there cannot be much of real sympathy between this pair. He cannot and does not fully appreciate her—she is far away above and beyond him, intellectually and aesthetically, while in his pursuits, beating, horse-racing, etc., etc., she takes no hearty interest.

To us it is incomprehensible that two people so utterly unlike each other as these people are, should have chosen each other from out of their very large circle of acquaintances, to be wedded companions and friends for life.

Neither you nor I can comprehend the possibility of friendship, or happiness in companionship, wedded or unwedded, without mutual sympathy, or harmony of thought, opinion and desires.

Perhaps, indeed I am sure, that many would regard the captain and his good wife as affording an instance of "true marriage," in which

"Each fulfills defect in each."

Many men, many minds, and well! it is that 'tis so.

I am pleased to know that what I wrote in my last about the treatment of diphtheria has been of service through you to your neighbor's family. "When or where does the drug treatment come in?" Whenever and wherever it is the best treatment. The intelligent physician will not hesitate to employ whatever treatment will, in his opinion, be best calculated to restore health. The empirical employment of any treatment is most reprehensible. General rules or instructions for treatment are of little if any real service, indeed they are apt to be worse than useless without a thorough knowledge of the human system in health and disease.

Balance the circulation. This is the only direction of universal application, and it must be followed discreetly, as I have endeavored to explain. Some time in the future I shall try to reply to your inquiries concerning digestion and assimilation. Concerning land drainage. If you have conveniently accessible and good land, that does not require artificial drainage, I would recommend you to put your cultivated crops there next season. Draining is expensive work, requiring practical experience and skill, and you had better wait until you have studied the theory and the practice, the latter on other farms, especially at our Experimental Farm and Agricultural School. I believe that land drainage pays. The soils that most need drainage are the most productive, as a rule, when drained. Clay soils, for instance, which are, as you know, retentive of moisture, therefore cold and late, are strong soils, containing practically inexhaustible stores of plant food, are retentive of applied manures, and when properly drained, so as to carry off all surplus water, are far superior to naturally dry soils, which are comparatively deficient in plant food, and are not retentive of applied manures.

Then, again, water that stands in the land becomes unfit for the use of plants, favors the growth of vegetable parasites, and in evaporating carries off heat from the soil, occasioning enormous waste of solar heat that should be expended in warming the soil. Drained soil admits freely the fresh rains charged with warmth and nourishing gases, and the purifying and invigorating atmosphere. Strange as it may seem to you, drained land will stand prolonged drouth better than undrained land, because the former is rendered loose and porous or spongy to a considerable depth, and, like a sponge, holds a great deal of surplus moisture, which ascends by evaporation and capillary attraction, and is absorbed by the dryer upper soil. Then, again, the atmosphere, which is always more or less charged with moisture entering freely as already stated into the porous drained soil, carries with it and leaves a great deal of moisture. It has been also proved that drained land is at least 3 degrees warmer than undrained land similarly constituted and situated, and that crops growing on drained land are much less liable to be injured by frost than crops on undrained land.

Colo's system, which he terms "The New Agriculture," effects all that ordinary drainage can, and at the same time conserves the water in the drains to moisten the land as required. I shall endeavor briefly to describe this system in a future letter.

This is already a long letter, time's up too, and I must leave many questions unnoticed and many interesting subjects untouched.

Good-bye! peace and prosperity be with you and yours!

S. C.