

## SYMPHYTUM PEREGRINUM.

"It is a hopeful sign of a country when the country papers begin to advocate the cause of agriculture."—*Select.*

Dear Sir,—I observe that the plant Comfrey is gaining notoriety through the medium of the local or country papers. I am growing this plant, not as an experiment, but as a field crop. I propose now to give you a limited detail of my experience in dealing with this novelty the past season, and also to forward a sample of the hay, cut first of August, for your inspection, either superficially, analytically or alimentially, optional. I make no pretensions to originality in the manner of cultivation, but, as an act of common justice, I must acknowledge my indebtedness to kind friends for information on that head, especially to Major DeBallinhard, of Digby, who furnished me with plants and mode of propagation; also, to J. B. Bowser, of Grand Pré, Sec'y of King's Co. Agricultural Society, for a liberal supply of roots.

The ground allotted to my plantation, at present a quarter of an acre, is in close proximity with the manure port, an arrangement that saves labour in supplying the animals with forage, and fertilizing the soil. The manure pit located at one end of the stable is virtually a tank with cemented floor, and all surrounding liquids flow into it, together with the water from the roof. A liberal supply is generally at command for irrigation, as occasion may require, which, in a dry time, is of frequent occurrence. This diluting process may be at variance with theory, but practically it works well.

I commenced to propagate my plants the 25th of March, under glass, using a cold frame. The ground was prepared, when dry enough to work, by trenching in manure, a ton to four square rods, and plants set three feet apart each way. The interstices on a part of the ground, was set to lettuce, at the same time, of the Hanson variety, two plants occupying the intervening spaces. Comfrey, in manner of growth, is similar to horse-radish, and, like that plant, may be propagated by division of crowns, root-cutting, and root-lets. If it is the intention to give this plant high cultivation, I am much of the opinion that, from its great yield, four feet by four, would be little enough space between the plants. The intervening spaces could be, at the same time, set with an early variety of cabbage or cauliflower, at the usual distance, 24 inches apart, and lettuce at 12 inches. This arrangement would occupy the whole surface the first part of the season; also, a saving of fifty-three dollars would be effected in the purchasing of plants for an acre at the price agents are advertising to supply by the hundred. By the middle of June the lettuce would be disposed of,

and in July the cabbage would be going into the market or into the cows, whichever way considered most profitable.

In the summer management of cows in milk, I consider house-fed on cut grass, under any circumstances, preferable to pasture-fed, they soon take to a variety of forage. I fed one cow 25 pounds of lettuce, solid heads, as a noon feed for eight days in succession, and it held its own against the best of mixed fodder. When 30 pounds of Comfrey was substituted, a slight increase was noticed in the quantity of milk.

At present I am not prepared to pronounce Comfrey superior to clover in the production of milk, taking clover in its purity. I think it may be fed with less risk, and the yield per acre is much in excess. Clover don't usually get a fair "shake," it is left too long uncut, and one-third of the crop is often a meagre, musty mat. If Comfrey is required for hay, it should be cut at stated periods, any neglect would involve a serious loss, as going to seed for instance. Major DeBallinhard recommends an interval of two months. I am disposed to agree with him. That arrangement would allow of three cuttings, terminating the season about the 25th of September, and afford time for the plants to recuperate under a good winter's coat. Mr. Bowser cut his Comfrey the 24th of May, the last cutting the 22nd of October, making five cuttings; the product from one plant was 31 pounds; the area of ground by measurement five square feet, the yield per acre, 232 tons of 20 cwt. This statement may appear to be "painted," but it must be borne in mind that Mr. Bowser's farm is in the centre of what is called the garden of the Province, and it will be difficult to find a district with soil that can compare with the land of Evangeline.

I am a little curious to know what a man is to do who finds himself suddenly possessed of such a quantity of green fodder. If converted into hay, at the lowest estimate, it would be 25 tons. I find that the rate is seven to one, dried by external atmosphere, and, by artificial heat, eight to one. What I send to you is made out (of) doors, not barn doors, (so correct.) I have no doubt that it will be an acquisition to winter fodder. It does not appear to be liable to any kind of disease, nor injured by frost. Neither does any of the insect tribe trouble it as yet. Grasshoppers light on it, but don't stop, the spines tickle their feet, so they leave for more comfortable quarters.

Comfrey should have a special allotment, and be planted in some place not easily accessible, to ordinary culture; like artichokes, once introduced on good ground, it would be very likely to hold its own

I remain, yours, &c.,

W. H. O. HALIBURTON.

Wolfville, Jan. 6, 1880.

The specimen of Comfrey sent by Mr. Haliburton shows very well how rank a plant it is, and may be seen by anyone at the Provincial Museum. We possess botanical specimens of the true plant dried by Mr. French thirty years ago in England, where it had already become established as a wild plant.

## THOUGHTS FOR THE HOUR.

*A paper read by Sister Mrs. W. E. Starrett, before the Annapolis Division Grange No. 49, N. S., at the Quarterly Meeting, 1879.*

'Tis the last night of the old year, the holy midnight hour, and silence, like a gentle spirit, now is brooding o'er the still and quiet world; the earth is wrapped in his snowy covering; the moon rides as serenely, and the merry twinkling stars shone as brightly, as when o'er Eden's fair landscape they cast their friendly light. Within, every sound is hushed, save the ticking of the clock against the wall, for sleep, balmy sleep, has long since fettered the limbs and chained the eyelids alike of the strong man, the impulsive youth, and the helpless babe. It is a time for reflection; and busy memory, faithful to her trust, asserts her authority, and from within the deep still chambers of the heart come voices from the vista of other years, whose tones echo of the long ago, and bring to mind visions bright and beautiful, sad and tearful; and so faithfully does she portray those scenes that in imagination we live over events with vivid reality. Joys long since departed, sorrows we fancied long buried, come before us; sweet forms we loved and early passed to the better land mingle with us as in former days:

"The ghosts of forgotten actions come floating before my sight,  
And things that I thought were dead things are alive with terrible might."

As I sit alone in my reverie the taper has wasted, and from the smouldering remains of the fire, "imagination bodies forth the forms of things unknown, turns them to shapes and gives to airy nothingness a habitation and a name." In my imagination figures grand and knightly, weird and ludicrous, leap in blue and yellow light before my gaze; but in all this worthy throng one personage conspicuous for age and infirmity seems most to interest me.

In that bent form, that hoary hair, I recognize one who has long fought the battle of life, and from whose shoulders the burden is about to fall, I cannot mistake. It is the old, the dying year! In one hand he holds a staff, and in the other an hour-glass from which the sands of time have nearly run. With one eloquent with age and wisdom, I much