

Mutual Helpfulness.

Now that suitable domestic help is so hard to secure in the farmhouse, as well as in city homes, the thought occurs, cannot the members of the family, by a little thoughtful helpfulness, often lighten the labors of each other, and especially of the wife and mother, or the daughter and sister in charge of the housekeeping, on whom the weight of the work of the house, with its many cares and calls, sometimes bears heavily. Do we ever stop to think of the multifarious duties that lie every day in the way of the faithful and, generally, uncomplaining farm housekeeper, the cooking and preparation of three meals a day for a family, on schedule time, the weary washing of the same dishes three times every day in the year, and in a lifetime of years; the sweeping and dusting of rooms; the making of beds; making, mending, washing and ironing of clothes; the care of milk; the churning; the making of bread and butter; and, too often, the milking of cows, the carrying of heavy pails of milk; the pumping and carrying of water; the feeding of chickens; and, in most cases, the care of a family of young children, to be washed and dressed, the school lunch prepared, and all these, with many other things "too numerous to mention," as the auctioneers say in their handbills, to be performed every day by one pair of hands. When we think of it all, who with a heart of feeling does not regard the patient worker with sympathy and a desire to lend a helping hand, and a word of commendation when and where the opportunity occurs. Yet, too often, we fear, her work is regarded as a matter of course, no word of thanks or encouragement being spoken, and sometimes complaint made that things are not as they should be. It is true that in most homes where hired help is not kept, or cannot be had, there are daughters who help the mother with the work of the house; but as they must have schooling, the mother, ever thoughtful of the welfare of her children, will make sacrifices of her own strength to give them the advantages of education and accomplishment, and when their school days end, it is not unusual that they leave home to take up some employment by which to earn an independent living.

The thought that inspired the penning of this article was that if each member of the family would study to lend a helping hand now and again to the mother, sister or daughter who has charge of the housekeeping, her work might often be lightened and her life cheered, without any sacrifice worth mentioning on the part of the helper. It is a small thing for a man to do when going to the house, and passing by the woodpile, to carry in an armful of wood, or when going to supper to carry in a pail of milk, or to pump and bring in a pail of water, but it lightens by so much the work of the housekeeper, and will be duly appreciated. These are but a few things among many that might be mentioned in which helpfulness might be afforded. We know there are times when the men on the farm have to work hard, and are tired when the noon hour arrives, or at the end of the day, and there is then a valid excuse for their seeking rest, but it is not always so. There are some kinds of field work that are not tiring, and there are times when the men are not pressed with work, and might well

give a little time and help to the women who do so much for their comfort. Do they ever think what a relief it would be if, instead of sitting around the stove after supper, they would give a hand with the washing of the dishes, which the weary woman who has been on her feet all day must wash and wipe alone, the same old dishes, it may be, that she has washed three times a day for three hundred and sixty-five days in thirty or forty years, until the patterns of their colored designs have become photographed upon her brain, and, perchance, stare her in the face in her dreams. We know that, in most cases, the failure to take advantage of these opportunities for helpfulness are not the result of unkindness or indifference, but to the want of thought, and while this fact is some comfort to the wife or mother or sister, it should not be considered a justification of the husband or son or brother, or even for the hired man who has a heart of kindness or even a proper appreciation of the homely adage, "One good turn deserves another." One might easily enlarge upon this subject by suggesting when improvements are being considered for the convenience and saving of labor of the men on the farm, to give a little thought to lightening the work in the house by providing a water supply in the kitchen and bath-room, which would save many steps, economizing time and labor. Many farmers erect windmills and tanks for supplying water to their cattle in their stalls, and to save themselves or the hired man the labor of pumping, but seem to never think that, by a little additional expense, the wife or daughter, who ought to be as dear to him as his cattle or his own life, might share in these improvements and conveniences, yet many farmers, even in these days, when building a new house, make no provision for furnace heating or a bath-room, while they are quite willing to give good space to a parlor to be shut up and used only on special occasions, while the family must live in the kitchen to save fuel and coal oil. These things, we know, are not done or left undone from a spirit of meanness or of parsimony, in many instances, but, as we have said before, from thoughtlessness, but the mistake is there, all the same, and there should be some comfort in the thought that while we live "it is never too late to mend."

Soil Inoculation for the Legumes.

1. For many years we carried on experiments with cultures prepared in Germany, publishing the results in the Experimental Farms Reports. Although in certain instances it was found that the cultures favored the growth of the legumes—clover, beans, etc.—there was not sufficient evidence to justify us in recommending it for general use. The culture was found susceptible to light and heat, and under the best conditions of preservation its vitality could only be guaranteed for six weeks from the date of its preparation. It was felt that the matter was still in the experimental stage, and for the reason just stated it was not desirable to make any general distribution of the culture.

Since these experiments were made, the preparation of the culture, known as Nitragin, has been discontinued, owing, we presume, to lack of sufficient demand for the preparation.

2. We found, at all events in Ontario and the East-

ern Provinces, that failures to obtain a good catch of clover were due rather to deficiency of moisture, or an unsuitable mechanical condition of the soil, than to the absence of nitrogen-assimilating germs. The general though probably not universal presence of root nodules on the clover in Ontario and the East lead us to believe that special means for inoculation were not necessary, save, perhaps, in exceptional instances in the aforementioned provinces. It was due to these facts, we consider, that there has been no general demand for inoculating material.

3. Further, it has been shown that soil taken from a field growing a good crop of clover can be used as effectively for inoculating as the prepared culture, and such soil is not difficult to obtain in all the Provinces, save, perhaps, Manitoba and the Northwest Territories. Directions for using such soil have from time to time been issued by us.

With regard to the new preparation made in the laboratories at Washington, D. C., which it is claimed is more potent and more stable than the culture hitherto made in Germany, I would say that we are this year making experiments with cultures for clover and alfalfa obtained from Washington, and trust to be in a position to report upon them shortly.

Our experience and observation has shown that the necessity for inoculation is not so great as was at one time thought. We are led to believe that the existence of the bacteria that serve to fix the nitrogen in the legume is by no means restricted to small or isolated areas. In my recent tour through British Columbia I found these organisms present upon every root of clover examined, and I took especial care to obtain information upon this matter in all the agricultural districts I visited. The same stands true alike for the irrigated soils of the dry belt (Nicola and Okanagan Valleys), as well as for the Lower Fraser and the coast soils. The luxurious crops of clover observable in British Columbia almost everywhere this year convinced me that inoculation was not at all necessary in that Province.

My impression is that the severity of the winter, lack of sufficient moisture, and an uncongenial condition of the soil, or poor seed, will be found to militate more against successful clover-growing than any supposed lack of the nodule bacteria, though I would not say that artificial inoculation would not be advantageous in certain districts.

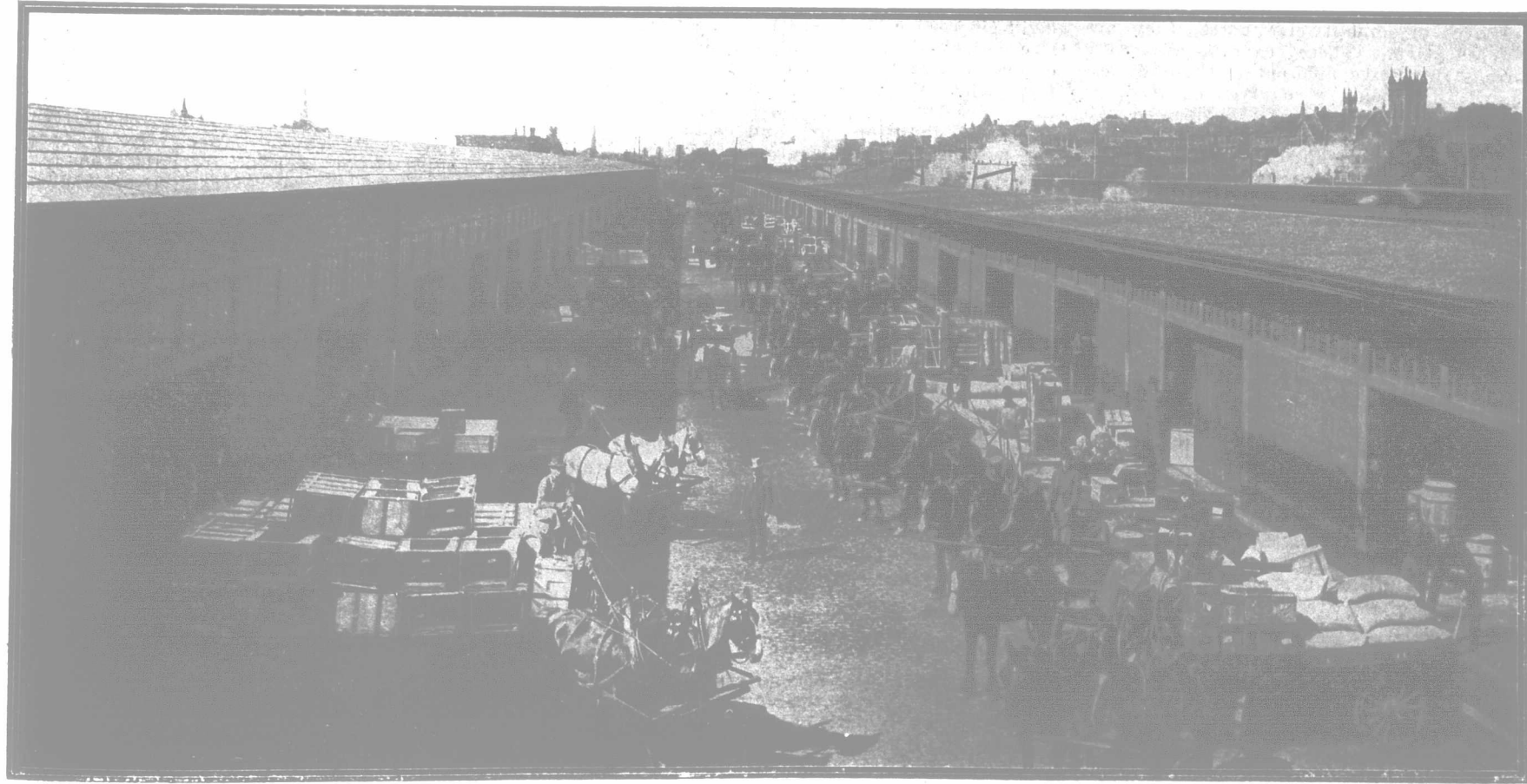
It would seem from enquiries received lately from farmers that there is an impression abroad that the benefit to be derived from the nitrogen-fixing bacteria can be obtained directly from inoculation of the soil, i. e., without the agency of the clover crop. This is, of course, erroneous. It is only through the growth of the clover (or other legume) and the subsequent decay in the soil of its roots (or whole plant) that the soil is enriched in humus and nitrogen. It is obvious, therefore, that where clover grows luxuriantly inoculation is unnecessary.

FRANK T. SHUTT.

Chemist, Dominion Experimental Farms.

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