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EDITORIAL.

THE SIMPLE WAY.

In this day and age we are trying to simplify things. Time was when the learned agriculturist was versed in complicated formulæ, indulged in abstruse reasoning, and advocated elaborate methods of farming and stock husbandry. In lieu of useful knowledge, his capacity for these things was impressive, seemed to vindicate his scholastic training, and gratified his conceit. But great minds are those which can grasp and expound essential points clearly, unconfused by intricacies of misty and irrelevant thoughts. Wherefore it happens that the gospel of agricultural science is yearly resolving into its elemental simplicity, and our greatest, safest and most respectfully-heeded teachers are those who emphasize the fewest but most important principles, and advise the simplest methods in all things. A few illustrations will suggest many more to the thoughtful reader.

It is not so very long since agronomists argued for rotations extending over six or eight years, and embracing nearly as many crops. Their reasoning was good, but their method was too complicated, involved many divisions or fields, was too easily upset, not sufficiently adaptable, and, worst of all, was not readily comprehended by the lay mind. Later men, grasping the essential facts of the rotation idea, reduced the cycle to one of three or four years. Their philosophy was easily understood. Clover often to improve and enrich the soil; cultivated fodder crops after clover to utilize the plant food in the clover sward throughout a long growing season, to clean the land and to bring it into fine tilth for a succeeding crop of grain. The barnyard manure was applied before the fodder crop of corn or roots for much the same reason that the corn was made to follow clover, viz., to insure a large vegetative growth. Manure applied directly to grain crops is liable to stimulate too late and heavy a growth of straw. Manure applied a year ahead of the grain crop is more liable to induce a heavy production of grain. The grain crop was seeded to clover and left one or two years for meadow or pasture. Anybody can understand the reason for such a rotation; anybody can follow it, varying now and then, if necessary, without disarranging his general plan. In the long run it gives fully as good results as the other way, and five people will adopt it for one who would study and work out an elaborate system. The simplest rotation is the best.

Many of the stables built a few years ago were fearfully and wonderfully made inside. We have simplified them greatly. The favorite style to-day for a cow barn is to have two long rows of stock facing. Between them is a feed passage, and on each side of it a drop of several inches constitutes the front of the manger. A plank or scantling on edge keeps the feed from getting under the cows' feet. A horizontal scantling overhead, and a swinging stanchion beneath it completes the necessary fittings, except where water troughs or basins are provided. Between the cows there may be partitions, or they may not. Behind the animals is a drop of six or eight inches, from which the floor slopes gently up to the passageway behind. Simplicity here in plan, mangers and floors. It is a kind of simplicity, too, that insures convenience. For beef cattle, many go one better, and dispense with stalls entirely, herding them in comfortable pens, or, as in Halton Co., in a stable bayard at one end of the basement. Dehorned and stanchioned, they are better off thus, make better manure, and are more easily attended to than if stalled in the old way.

In feeding, it is beginning to dawn upon us that no amount of expensive preparation of foods can extract more nourishing quality from them than they contain. For instance, in the corn district we used to cut and husk our corn, then cut up the stalks and shell and grind the grain. It meant a lot of work. Now we slash down the crop, run it through a cutting box and blow ears and fodder into a silo, where it keeps in the best possible condition for feeding. The silo simplifies the work of caring for the crop, saves waste, and enables us to obtain better results than in the old way. There are those who say, also, that sheaf oats will give better returns than the same amount of crop in the form of chopped oats and threshed straw. The difficulty in preserving the unthreshed crop from rats might be an objection to using it this way, but the experience of these men is worth pondering.

Not less important are the changes in farm homes. We used to build large houses, where furniture molded in unused rooms, while our wives drudged to keep them in order, and the family lived in kitchen and sitting-room. When the housewife broke down, search was made for a hired girl, and because young women demurred at the thought of accepting the wages and social status which domestic service seemed to imply, a servant-girl problem arose, and we thought the world was surely awry. Finally we began to ask what was the sense in trying to keep up such large houses for the mere sake of appearances. Now we are building more modest but comfortable homes, adorning them more with trees and grass and flowers, while inside we seek comfort rather than show. In these sensible houses, wives and daughters—where there are any—can attend to the work without making drudges of themselves, and the servant-girl problem is solved in the only satisfactory way short of the millennium, to wit: by dispensing with it entirely.

Nowhere has the revolution been more thorough than in the science of keeping well. Formerly a sick man was dosed with mysterious concoctions of drugs by doctors who looked wise and got paid for it. Their profession was truly termed "practice," and their subjects not misnamed "patients." To-day we understand that nature works the cure, and the doctors assist in the process. Leaving surgery out of view, the doctor is now employed to diagnose symptoms, watch developments, advise, and, in critical stages, to apply necessary stimulants for weak organs, but, as a general thing, the best doctors give the least medicine. Some, whose patients will not be satisfied that they are getting the worth of their money unless dosed with formidable prescriptions, will administer some harmless drugs, knowing that imagination plays a large part in all cures, and if a man believes there is virtue in drugs, they wisely give him drugs so that his imagination may get in its work. But these same doctors are shrewd enough to take little of their own medicine, and it is a standing joke among the profession how many people come to them with fancied symptoms of alarming illness, and being given a bottle of harmless, colored water, take it and come back cured, certain they have obtained the worth of their money. Doctors whose standing is such that they can afford the expensive philanthropy of educating the public a little, will tell you there is far more in nourishment and in nursing than in doctoring, and that for most of the ordinary ills to which human and other flesh is heir, rest, change, cleanliness, sunlight, a little fasting and a gentle physic will do more than many thousand dollars' worth of medical attendance. We are learning the simple way. Ours is an age of common sense.

FORMALIN IN AGRICULTURE.

Seven years ago we entered a village pharmacy to procure a few cents' worth of formalin to treat some smutty seed grain. At that time the uses of formalin were so few and the demand so small that the druggist had to think for a while to remember whether he had any on hand. Since then its agricultural uses have multiplied, and to-day formalin is the most important article that can be kept in the farmer's drug closet. Its virtue lies in its antiseptic, disinfectant, fungicidal and preservative properties, which adapt it for so many purposes that an enumeration of some of the more important will be useful for "The Farmer's Advocate" readers. In passing, it may be worth while to note that formalin is simply a forty-per-cent. solution of the gas formaldehyde in water.

USES.

1. For treating seed grain to destroy the spores of smut. Either of two methods may be used, sprinkling or immersion; the former is the simpler of the two. It consists in sprinkling with a solution of one pound (a little less than a pint) of formalin to thirty-two gallons of water.
2. Treating seed potatoes to destroy the spores of scab. Soak the tubers for two hours in a solution of 8 ounces of formalin to 15 gallons of water. It is advised to plant within two or three days after treatment. This treatment is quite as effective as and very much safer than the use of corrosive sublimate, which was formerly advised.
3. A solution of one part formalin to ten parts water, is said to make the best treatment to prevent joint-ill in colts and white scours in calves. Both of these diseases are caused by specific bacilli, which enter the system through the navel cord of the newborn foal or colt. Washing the cord 3 or 4 times daily with the solution, disinfects it completely, at the same time causing it to shrivel and dry up, thus preventing the admission of germs.
4. For certain forms of calf scours (those not due to mistakes in feeding or mechanical irritation), an internal administration of formalin has been found a satisfactory cure. We recently published an item which related the experience of a man who saved a calf's life by feeding it from a nipple on new milk, in each pint of which he had put a tablespoonful of a solution made by diluting half an ounce of formalin in 15½ ounces of water.
5. For thrush in horses' feet, cleansing and occasional dousing with a solution of one part formalin to five or six parts of water, is said to be the best treatment yet tried.
6. For disinfecting houses, to rid them of the germs of contagious diseases, formalin probably has no equal. The plan used to be to vaporize the gas by heating in a special apparatus, allowing the space to be disinfected to become filled through the keyhole of a door or some other orifice with the pungent, searching gas. Lately, a simpler means of using formalin has been devised. Formaldehyde candles may now be purchased, which, being simply lit and placed in the room, will disinfect it without further trouble. The candles, we believe, are somewhat more expensive than the vaporized liquid, but are more convenient to use.
7. Formaldehyde gas is used by nurserymen to disinfect their stock of San Jose scale and other fungous and insect pests. A load of trees or bushes is hauled into the house, which is then filled with the gas.
8. Formaldehyde is an efficient preservative, and has largely displaced alcohol as a preserving liquid for anatomical specimens, a dilute solution being much used in medicine and surgery, in