

4. If it become poisonous by non-cultivation, will the seed gathered from the poisonous ones, if planted and cultivated, become again fit for food?

5. Are there two kinds of parsnips—the garden parsnip, which is wholesome; and the wild kind, which is poisonous?

An answer to these would much oblige and help to decide a good many pros and cons between certain individuals, and

Yours very obediently,

INQUIRER.

We have been favoured by a scientific friend with the following answers to the above queries, and trust they will prove satisfactory to our correspondent:—

Answer 1. Certainly not. The wild parsnip is a native of England, where it is not considered poisonous: the roots of the wild plant are less succulent, more fibrous, and of a stronger taste than those of the cultivated variety. The garden parsnip is the native wild parsnip improved by cultivation.

2. It is not poisonous at any stage of its growth. As the wild plant is not poisonous, the cultivated variety could not become so when allowed to return to a state of nature.

3. The parsnip is a biennial plant; it produces a root and bears the first year, and flowers and seeds the second season; it dies as soon as it has ripened its seeds.

4. Already answered.

5. No.

In England there are several poisonous plants, the roots of which are occasionally eaten by poor people and children who mistake them for parsnips. Such is also the case in the United States and Canada; hence has arisen the idea that the parsnip, when permitted to return to the wild state, becomes poisonous. The plant, which I believe to have been the cause of the most mischief in this province is the *Cicuta maculata*, water hemlock, whose root is a most deadly poison.

The parsnip is not a native of N. America; it was introduced from Europe, and escaping from cultivation has become naturalized.

The only author, to my knowledge, who has ascribed any deleterious properties to the wild parsnip, is Dr. Bigelow. In his work on the plants of Boston, he writes:—"The parsnip in its wild state is abundantly naturalized in waste grounds. The root is materially changed by difference of soil. It becomes strong, acrid, and viscid." It will be seen that Dr. Bigelow attributes this supposed alteration in the qualities of the root not to the want of cultivation, but to difference of soil. It is certain that difference of soil produces no greater changes in the cultivated parsnip than it does in the potato, turnip, or carrot; why, then, should it cause so great an alteration in the properties of the wild plant? Moreover, the wild plant is generally found growing

about the fences of fields in the same, or similar soil, as the cultivated variety.

M. D.

STRANGLES IN HORSES.

To the Editor of the Canadian Agriculturist.

SIR:—Among the valuable receipts supplied by "*Knowlson's Complete Farrier*," I notice one in your December number as applicable in the disease known as horse distemper or strangles, and which is equally valuable in all cases of wounds, where the promotion of suppuration is necessary, and an effectual cleansing, without a too hasty healing of the sore, is desirable. My purpose in writing is to call the attention of persons compounding the ointment to the *modus operandi*. The ingredients, excepting the verdigris, should be melted in an earthen vessel and when sufficiently liquified and incorporated by stirring, should be removed from the fire and carried out of the house, and then have the verdigris added thereto; return it then to the fire for a simmering of a minute or two, stirring all the time; after which strain it through a coarse canvass while yet hot, and put away for use. The reason for not using the verdigris while on the fire is, that so sudden and violent an ebullition takes place at the moment of admixture that the other inflammable materials instantly boil over the vessel, with a chance of the loss of the whole and of a conflagration not easily subdued. The necessity for straining arises from the verdigris being frequently full of impurities, often containing particles of copper which have not been acted on by the acid in the process of manufacture; these, it must be evident, will irritate and aggravate the wound, and greatly retard the healing operation. In cold weather it will require warming at the time of application.

A NORTHUMBERLAND FARMER.

To increase the utility of our correspondent's directions, we append the receipt to which his observations refer.

Take yellow rosin and Burgundy pitch, of each one pound; honey and common turpentine, of each half a pound; bees' wax, four ounces; hogs lard, one pound and a half; and of verdigris, finely powdered, one ounce. Melt the ingredients together, but do not put the verdigris in till nearly cold, and keep stirring all the time till cold, or the verdigris will fall to the bottom.

SKILL IN FARMING.—Skill adds more to the profits of farming than hard work. In the article of butter, for instance, the same outlay is required, or nearly the same to make a hundred pounds of poor butter as would be required to make a hundred pounds of that which is good. But, when the two articles are marketed, there may be five or six dollars of clear extra profit in the pocket of the skillful dairyman. The importance of scientific knowledge is realized by those who have found such benefits as is noted above in nearly every department of their labor.