

IV

Handy Book

# THE GLASSVILLE NEWS.

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### THE POTATOE DISEASE.

It is now about half a century ago, since the potatoe disease first made its appearance in Europe; and for very many years, the cause, puzzled the savants of time, for years it was believed to be due to an insect of the Aphide tribe, and the supposed insect was elaborately figured, and described; and, from its supposed ravages, was named *Aphis vastator*, however more recent scientific investigators have demonstrated that the disease is entirely due to a fungus known as *Peronospora infestans*, which develops with astonishing rapidity in warm, wet seasons. Many different panaceas have been tried as a remedy and a cure, without much appreciable reduction in the extent of its ravages. We have therefore great pleasure in placing before the public the best and most effectual remedy that has hitherto been brought into repute; and we think the experiment, and the conclusions are too definite to be overlooked, and should be made widely known for the benefit of the whole community. We have received from Messrs. Robert Veitch, and Son, of the Royal Nurseries, Exeter, England, a report of their experiments, which we here publish in extenso.

For the purpose of our experiment, we marked off a plot in our nursery, measuring 9 ft. by 60 ft., free and open in aspect, and almost level, the soil being rather a deepish loam, resting upon a bed of red clay. The shape being practically an oblong square, we plant 1 the drills the short way of the piece, and put in ten different varieties of potatoes some of them being kinds that had been in cultivation for many years; some comparatively new varieties of American origin; and two which have not, yet been put in commerce. We staked off 8 ft., at each end of the drills right across, leaving the middle (4 ft.) untreated. The 8 ft. at the top we treated according to the Jensen method of high moulding, that is, to cast up from between the rows soil sufficient to cover the haulm, and then flatten it down on the top of the drill. The object aimed at in this treatment is to prevent the disease, which first attacks the leaves, from travelling down the stem to the tuber. The 8 ft. at the other end of each drill at the bottom of the piece, we treated according to the formula given by M. Prilleux, with which most successful results have been attained in France. The middle of the piece, beyond the ordinary treatment of earthing up and hocking, we left untouched. In due course, first the early, then the middle crop, and then the later varieties showed signs of ripening, but a very remarkable thing was that while in every drill signs of maturity were as plain as could be, the decay of the haulm stopped short as soon as the drill ran into the 8 ft. treated by the new remedy. At that end the stalks were green and vigorous, so they continued until past the middle of September, while the upper part and middle of the drills had ripened off nearly a month before. The effect of keeping the plants growing for a longer time must have tended to an increased yield, thus proving the solution to be a stimulant as well as a remedy. On digging the different lots, although some were heavier croppers than others, and some more diseased (the "Dean" and "Village Blacksmith," both coloured sorts being the worst in that respect). The comparative results of the different courses of treatment tallied to a remarkable extent in all the sorts. The top piece, treated on the Jensen system was a

little diseased, but not much, the middle piece 4 ft. which was not treated at all, was very badly affected, whilst the bottom, which had been syringed with the salts of copper solution had escaped with an infinitesimal proportion of disease, in one case that of a new sort named 'Prodigious'—not a single tuber being affected, and in the case of the others no more than 2 to 4 per cent. Comparing the yield of sound tubers, the French remedy stands as six, the Jensen method four, and the 'trust-to-Providence' course as three in proportion to each other.

The formula we used was as follows:—3 lb. of sulphate of copper and 1 lb. of quicklime to 20 gallons of water, applied on the foliage at the rate of 14 to 150 gallons per acre. In preparing the solution, the sulphate of copper should be dissolved in a wooden tub, the quicklime slaked in another, tub, and, when thoroughly slaked, mixed with the copper solution. The solution should then be well stirred, and when the liquid is being drawn off for use it should be again well stirred to ensure an even distribution of the salts of copper. We applied the solution with a common garden syringe, but for a large area a portable bucket with a spray-nozzled hosepipe would be better. We only applied one dose, on the 24th. of July, after the disease had shown itself, but two applications are recommended, say, one about the end of June or early in July, and the second about the end of July or beginning of August. The conclusion we have come to as the result of our trial is, that if the solution is applied before the disease has appeared it will act as a preventive; if after that as a remedy; in any case it acts as an invigorator. And if, as was the case in our experiment, an expenditure of 5s. per acre for chemicals (that is the cost of the copper and lime) in preventing or curing the disease makes a difference of a hundred per cent. in the yield of sound potatoes, it is well worthy of a good trial by everyone interested in potatoe-growing.

### THE PIC NIC SEASON.

The Pic-nic season has commenced in good earnest, we remember the time when these days of rural enjoyment were called Gipsy Parties, and we have a distinct recollection of many a day's enjoyment that we have spent in that manner, and in the good old times when we were in the hey day of youth, there used to be a vast amount of pleasure in such gatherings, when after a drive of several miles through pastoral scenery, a secluded dell (which had previously been selected) was reached, when all abandoned themselves to the enjoyment of the hour. Of course the enjoyment was not entirely unmixt as the following stanza from a popular song of forty or fifty years ago, will show,

Now Mrs. Murray, plump and fat,  
And round as any brewer's vat,  
Down on some stinging nettles sat,  
Whilst at the Gipsy Party,  
I'm sure it would have made you grin,  
To see her scratch her bombazine;  
While Spriggs was wetted to the skin,  
Through sitting where the cows had been;  
Old Dickens he danced with the rest,  
I never saw man so distressed,  
For he squatted on a hornet's nest;  
Whilst at the Gipsy Party,

We have not heard of any such contretemps having occurred in our locality, but would imagine that mosquitos, black flies and midges, must have helped to make up for some of those pleasurable sensations which an old fashion Gipsy party afforded.