



THE PRICKLY COMFREY.

Our illustrations represent a plant now much recommended, by the French scientific journals, to farmers, as yielding large quantities of excellent forage. It is known as the prickly comfrey, its botanical name being *symphytum asperum*. With regard to the rapidity of growth and amount of herbage yielded by it, the *Journal de l'Agriculture de la France*, of October 7 last, says: "Two sets put late into the ground in the month of May, in a fairly deep soil but of poor quality, gave on September 29, the one 7,150 lbs. forage, and the second 3,950 lbs. The height of each plant was 15 inches, diameter 32 inches. The appearance was that of the small engraving, Fig. 2, which was drawn from nature at the Botanical Garden, Kew, in England. Two cows, to which we offered the leaves freshly cut, ate them at once, in spite of their roughness. The quantity of water is 88 per cent, and the proportion of nitrogen 0.4 per cent in the green state, or about the same as in green Indian corn. The total of nitrogenous substances is about one-third, a remarkable richness, justifying the high opinion cultivators who have tried it have formed of the plant. The sets we experimented on were sent us by M. A. E. Ragou."

The *Journal d'Agriculture Progressive* says: "We persist in recommending this plant, chiefly for small and middle farming; those who farm on a large scale will probably adopt it all in good time. The price of the plant is high; but we must not forget that a thousand plants will yield from fifteen to twenty thousand the year following, and that the planting of these sets, the original price deducted, does not cost more than pricking out cabbages, and less than does planting potatoes."

The following letter, dated October 30, from Culloor, in Malabar, Madras Presidency of British India, was received by *Land and Water*, from the pages of which we select the engraving:

"Thus far I am glad to be able to report most favorably on the progress of the comfrey roots I brought out with me here for the Tambracherry Coffee Estate Company. I have them planted on a low, marshy soil, in ridges three feet apart, taking care previously to have the soil broken up two feet deep, and at subsoil of the ridges making a good coating of cattle manure mixed with jungle soil. By this cultivation the roots will not only have considerable depth of soil to grow in, but in the event of having a dry season, the manure, being placed at a fair depth under the top soil, will tend to make it moist for a very considerable time. I was greatly surprised at the quick germinating qualities of these roots, which, in several instances, had not been planted more than forty-eight hours at about three to four inches below the surface. I also found, after a voyage of six weeks from England, on opening the case, that the roots had germinated a little. The comfrey has now been planted about ten days, and promise well. I only hope our cattle will take to it here, as, being so quick in growth, it will be invaluable, in my opinion, here on coffee estates as a standard food for cattle: grasses being often difficult to obtain during some seasons of the year. I shall advocate its trial to my agricultural friends in England. I am surprised it is not more generally grown. To a dairy farmer it would be an acquisition. I confidently expect to get here a crop every two months, if not more frequently."