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AMONG THE FARMERS.

"SPREAD THE PLOW."

Correspondence on practical agricultural topics is solicited. Address all communications to the Editor of this department to H. H. HARRISON, Agricultural Editor, Oxford County, Maine.

New Diseases of the Potato.

(Dr. W. J. Morse, Plant Pathologist, at Farmington, N. H.)

The science of plant pathology has progressed sufficiently far to indicate that many of the fundamental factors concerned in the distribution and spread of diseases of plants are essentially the same as in the case with diseases of man and other animals. There is considerable basis of truth in such observations as these, "or they did not have diseases as these when I was a boy," but it is not necessarily true that the same diseases are mere creations of the imaginations of animal and plant pathologists. Not infrequently, however, the fact that during the past fifty years many important and far reaching discoveries have been made which have added to our store of knowledge. Electricity is not new, but man now recognizes and makes use of manifestations of this force not known to our grandfathers. Equally as important discoveries have been made relative to diseases of animals and plants as have been made in the realm of electricity or similar lines of science. Many so-called "new diseases" were simply not recognized in the past.

The rapid increase in trade, commerce and travel during the last half of the century is another very important factor concerned in the appearance of new diseases of plants as well as animals. A mailed article which is new for one locality, may have existed for years in some other remote part of the world.

Where considerable areas of land are given over to the cultivation of a single crop largely to the exclusion of all other crops, particularly if there is much traffic back and forth in the line of seed, planting, problems of plant diseases, control and spread are much more serious than in those sections where there is less specialization to crop production. Specialized agricultural industries, present plant disease problems comparable in nature to those experienced in large cities and parts of our country, may have existed for years in some other remote part of the world.

Blackleg, which has spread to nearly all the great potato growing districts of America, came to us in this way. It had been common in England and certain parts of Europe for some time. Canada was reported to be pretty thoroughly infested with it before it was recorded in the United States. The history of evidence that it was brought from there to Maine.

Blackleg was in and in many respects a serious disease, but it was not very easy and efficient means of its eradication and control. Now we are confronted by another undesirable European emigrant, powdery scab, which has come to us largely from Canada, although there is reason to believe that later investigations will show that it has been carried to this country by means of potatoes as well as by means of the soil.

Powdery scab has existed in Europe for many years, and, some twenty years ago, stated that it was well known to be of long standing in Great Britain and Ireland and to be widely distributed in many parts of the continent. The first report of its introduction to America came from Canada the latter part of 1912. The first in the United States, May, 1913, was from a grower in Vermont at this State from Nebraska and Massachusetts. Almost simultaneously with this Dr. Melbus of the Bureau of Plant Industry reported cases from Maine. Since then it has been found to be very common in nearly all portions of Canada and rather widely distributed in one section of our own state bordering upon the infected region.

Powdery scab may be confused with common scab. The individual spots produced by the latter when mature are larger and as a rule are nothing more than superficial ulcers which do not injure the keeping qualities of the tuber. Powdery scab first appears as minute pustules or wart-like bodies occurring in patches or scattered over the surface of the tuber. The pustules enlarge, become more numerous and finally cover the tuber with a ragged, ragged margin where the latter has been ruptured. If the top of the pustule is removed, a hollow filled with a dark colored powder having a slight olive tinge. If affected tubers have been handled considerably and farming tools have been rubbed off so that the dark colored powder is removed it may be difficult for the ordinary observer to distinguish between it and the small spots of the common type of scab. However, the arrangement, shape and size of the lesions often give a clue as to the nature of the disease. The powder may be rubbed off the tuber very easily to identify powdery scab by means of a microscope. The average observer soon learns to distinguish the two diseases without the aid of a microscope.

Potatoes affected with powdery scab show a strong tendency to dry rapidly and wither up making them worthless for use. Sometimes a decay will start where these spots are numerous. Where the disease is very severe another form may appear. We have not seen this form except on tubers grown in the greenhouse. One English writer stated that this form is more apt to occur in wet soils. In this stage the tuber is covered with a soft, watery, watery growth frequently at the seed end, these later developing a distinct, eroded, cankered appearance. Powdery scab is caused by one of the same molds which later are classed among the lowest living things on the border between the animal and vegetable kingdom.

Both infected soil and seed may cause the disease, one expecting that the seed, Ireland where the spore balls of powdery scab were able to pass through the digestive tract of a pig unharmed, making its passage a source of infection. Potato seed which would not be fed to stock without cooking.

There is some uncertainty as to how efficient germicides are in combating powdery scab. Some authorities claim that the seed in formaldehyde and then in a solution of copper sulphate, three hours in a one percent solution of copper sulphate, but the yield was materially reduced. No satisfactory results were obtained from soil treatment. Various forms of lime applied to the soil largely increased the amount of powdery scab.

The worst disease, or the most serious enemy of the potato known, is still uncontrolled on the mainland of North America. This is more of a tumor than a cancer, and tubers attacked by it are so cankered and decayed that they are so decayed in severe cases as to have no resemblance to a potato, being nothing but an irregular, rusty brown, coral-like mass. It starts at the eye, and in early stages is easily overlooked. Susceptible tubers should be washed and soaked in formaldehyde and then in a solution of copper sulphate, three hours in a one percent solution of copper sulphate, but the yield was materially reduced. No satisfactory results were obtained from soil treatment. Various forms of lime applied to the soil largely increased the amount of powdery scab.

Grain for chickens—Get some of the best of the grain, as it is a good digestion. Lime in some form must be supplied to the laying hen, to keep up her supply, which is so heavily drawn upon during egg production.

The little gap will work like a tiger bringing in wood and such things as you need in your garden. It is the job that must be done which takes the truck out of a fellow. Life a little bit with your little man.

Seven Keys TO Baldpate

By EARL DERR BIGGERS

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CHAPTER XV.

Woe in Number Seven.

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Well, he would show them yet. He got up and walked the floor. Once he had held his breath in the sweat of the night before, he would do it again. How? When? He did not know. His soul cried for action of some sort, but he was up against a blind alley, and he knew it.

He unlocked the door of No. 7. To go downstairs, to meet the sweet owner of the girl who depended on him, to confess himself tricked—it took all the courage he had. Why had it happened anyhow? Confound it! Had he not come up here to be alone with his thoughts? But, brighter side, it had given him the last card played. He shut his teeth tightly and went down the stairs.

Mr. Bland had added himself to the group about the fire. Quickly the eyes of Miss Norton met Magee's. She was trembling with excitement. Cargan, huge, red, cheery, got in Magee's path once more.

"I'll annihilate this man," thought Magee.

"He was figuring," said the mayor, "that was one thing he didn't have to contend with. No, sir, there wasn't any bright young man hunting up in the moonlight and knocking him in the mouth."

"He didn't get down to business until he had the money in his pocket," continued Cargan reflectively. "And it didn't get there. Now was lucky. He had it on the roof of his head. They could not get it with the power of the press."

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"You promised yesterday," he reminded her, "to show me the pictures of the diamond."

"So I did," she replied, rising quickly. "To think you have spent all this time in Baldpate Inn and not paid homage to its own particular cock of the walk."

"Behold," she said, "the diamond on a sunny day in July. Note the starchy grandeur of him, even with the thermometer in the clouds. That's one of the things the rocking chair fleet of mind in him. Can you imagine the fury at the approach of all that starchy grandeur? Theodore Roosevelt, William Fawcett and Richard Harding Davis all arriving together couldn't overshadow the diamond for a minute."

"You have given me a picture of a pompous little man who makes up for the lack of hair on his head."

"A bald head at a summer resort," he commented, "is something incredible."

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"It is possible to see the room where the diamond plays his famous game?"

"Step softly," she answered. "In here. There stands the very table."

"They went into the room at the picture of the diamond, and Mr. Magee quickly closed the door behind them. The time had come. He felt his heart sink.

"Well," said the girl, with an eagerness she could not conceal.

Mr. Magee groped for words and found his old friends of the mountain.

"I love you," he cried desperately. "You must believe I want to help you. It looks rather the other way now, I'll admit. I want you to believe me now. I don't know who you are to what this all means, but I want you to have it. I want upstairs determined to give it to you."

"Really," the word was at least 50 degrees below the temperature of the carroom.

"Yes, really. I won't ask you to believe, but I'm telling the truth. I want to the place where I had famously hid the money—under a brick of my fireplace. It was gone."

"Yes, isn't it?" Mr. Magee rejoiced that she took so calm a view of it. "They searched the room, of course, and they found the money. They're on top now, but I'm going."

He hoped, for he had seen her face. She—taking a calm view of it. No, indeed. Billy Magee saw that she was furiously, wildly angry. He remembered always having written that that beautiful woman were even more beautiful in anger. How he wondered if she had fallen into that error?

"Please do not bore me," she said through her teeth, "with any further recital of what you are going to do. You seem to have a fatal facility in this line. Your record of accomplishment is pathetically weak. And—oh, what a fool I've been! I believed. Even after last night, I believed."

"I know," he said helplessly, "you're terribly disappointed, and I don't blame you. But you will find out that you've done me an injustice. I'm going."

"One thing," said she, smiling a smile that could have cut glass. "You are going to do it. I know that you won't fail this time, because I shall personally see you through with it. You're going to stop making a fool of me."

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