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SOLDIERS' GRAVES.

KEEPING THEM IN ORDER.

Some interesting information relative to the care of soldiers' graves in the various theatres of war has been given by Captain Arthur Hill, assistant director, Kew Gardens, and botanical adviser to the Imperial War Graves Commission.

He says that belts of suitable trees are being planted around the graves which are marked by a cross, at whose foot is a space for flowering perennials. In France alone there are between 1600 and 1700 of these burial places, and the work of keeping them in order is, of course, very great. In some isolated places, it has been thought best, while preserving the crosses, to level the mounds and make green lawns that can be easily mown and kept in good condition.

In the case of Chinese graves Captain Hill said some trouble was taken to find out the most suitable memento, and at length a long board was produced, with Chinese characters painted in vermilion. When they saw this however, the Chinese were very angry. They felt that they were being treated differently, and insisted on having a cross like the others. The difficulty of finding plants to suit the varying soils of Northern France and Flanders was accentuated by the practice of the diggers in the early days of the war in shovelling all the good soil into the bottom of the grave, and leaving all the bad soil at the top. Near the coast the soil consists entirely of blown sand, and it was almost an axiom of the French that good lawns were impossible there.

DISTINCTIVE FAUNA.

For the graves of overseas soldiers, the aim was to get commemorative plants from the countries represented. Canadians have maple trees, and the New Zealanders the olearia shrub and native veronias; for the Australians, they have been fortunate in getting hold of hardy eucalyptus trees; and for the Indian, cypresses, trees and irises and marigolds. In the case of the South African the problem was more difficult, since apart from annuals, the only flower that seemed capable of living in France was the "red-hot poker," from Natal. Captain Hill gave a vivid description of the great Somme battlefield, as he saw it in 1917—one great blazing sheet of poppies, covering thousands and thousands of acres. For a time being the sight of the shell-holes was obliterated, though, as a matter of fact, they were still filled with water, and it was only possible to walk round the edges of them. Nothing could be more strikingly beautiful.

HOUSING PROBLEM.

It will interest New Zealanders, the great majority of whom live in wooden houses, to know that very high encomiums are now being passed on wooden dwellings by English architects. One contends that a wooden house is far healthier than any brick or stone structure. "In a wooden house," he writes, "the walls are really a continuous system of ventilating ducts, and it is almost impossible for any moisture to penetrate inside the house or for any gases to accumulate, and in a climate very much wetter than the English houses are found to be as dry after being shut up for a time as they were before." Six-roomed one-storey bungalows, built of wood, are now being quoted in England at between £600 and £700 complete.



HORTICULTURE.

We are now past the Equinox and into the last month of autumn, and if wise in the affairs of our gardens will make every effort to keep our autumn work well up to the mark as it is so difficult to overcome if neglected now. Clean up regularly and cut and remove all dying tops and dead annuals. Keep the surface clear so that the seeds of any weeds that have escaped and fallen on to the ground may have a chance to germinate before being dug in. Seeds turned in get mixed in the soil at varying depths and become a nuisance for years by growing when brought near the surface by future working of the soil but as soon as they have germinated the seedlings turned in are gone for ever.

In the greenhouse cut back any soft wooded plants that you wish to get an early start so that they may break before winter, as if cut back later there is a danger of the cut stem dying back before shooting, so that it is best either to cut early or leave till the end of winter. Watch Cyclamen and water them with care to avoid damping off which often happens if the crowns are allowed to remain wet. Keep Cinerarias and Calceolarias free from green fly by fumigating or dipping in a solution of suitable insecticide. Sweet Peas, Gillardias, Carnations, Coreopsis, Caucasian Scabrous, and other autumn flowers are now going off, but can be retained greatly by keeping all dying blooms and seed pods cut off.

At all times the question of providing suitable foliage for use with cut flowers is difficult, but especially so as flowers get scarce and we wish to make a few go a long way. Gypsophila paniculata is always delightful with sweet peas and carnations, and can be retained and used even when dry, with good effect. Common garden asparagus is especially charming with sweet peas and suitable for almost anything. Those who grow it as a vegetable can draw their supply from their asparagus beds, but those who did not should certainly plant a short row, the best course being either to raise or buy seedlings and plant a fair number in a double row, about six inches apart each way, to permit of selecting, as the foliage varies greatly, some being graceful and lovely, whilst others are stiff and useless, others again seed freely when the scarlet berries become such a thing of real beauty which is enhanced when the foliage takes on its autumn tints first a mixture of pale yellow and green and then rich pure yellow. Then there are grasses, especially the perennial agrostis, which is useful from early summer to well into winter continually throwing up abundant tall feathery plumes. Divide it yearly at any time from May to October, never leaving it for more than two years at the most, and use it also for foliage in flower beds, planting roots from very small to medium, and it gives charming effects with any flowers, annual or perennial, and there is in it beauty when they are over. The foliage of the white perennial linum is also good all the year round, also periwinkle, both the plain green and the variegated, and for a grass like leaf the foliage of Iris Stylosa is excellent and can be had at any time of the year. There are also many shrubs with suitable foliage which will be referred to at another time.

GRATUITY ANOMALIES.

Almost every Association and Sub-Association affiliated with the N.Z. R.S.A. has made protest against the anomalies revealed in the War Gratuity Regulations, and both the Prime Minister and the Minister of Defence have assured deputations that such anomalies would be remedied as soon as possible. Those soldiers and relatives of soldiers who have not received their due because of lack of provision to meet exceptional cases will therefore be interested to know that the recent representations of the N.Z.R.S.A. in this matter has achieved results. The Government has now created an Anomalies Committee for the purpose of enquiring into and remedying injustices inadvertently caused by the present regulations, or lack of them, concerning paying of the gratuity.

The representative of the N.Z.R.S.A. on this committee is Mr R. J. F. Aldrich, secretary of the Wellington R.S.A., and the other members are Colonel J. Hutchen, Officer in Charge War Expenses; and Colonel J. J. Esson, C.M.G., Assistant Secretary and Accountant to the Treasury.

GARDEN NOTES.

THE ORCHARD.

PREPARATION OF THE SOIL.

It is now high time that intending planters of fruit and other trees at the coming season, set about preparing the land, and making all necessary preparation, so that there will be as little delay as possible when the season for transplanting arrives. One of the most important matters to ensure success in transplanting is to have the soil well prepared before hand, so that the soil, when broken up, will have time to thoroughly pulverise and sweeten. In far too many instances, little or no preparation is made until the time of lifting or until the trees are received, when holes are hurriedly dug (often in soil that has not previously been broken up), and the trees planted. This is not only unfair to the trees, but often an expensive experiment for the planter. It would be far better to defer planting for a season, than to plant trees in soil that no other crop would succeed in. The best method of preparing the soil, is to have it thoroughly broken up and allowed to lie and sweeten during the summer. It could, with advantage, be manured, and sown down in suitable green crop, which should be ploughed in when preparing the soil for planting. The amount of preparation required will naturally depend, in a great measure, upon the nature of the soil. This varies so widely in different localities that no hard and fast rule can be laid down. One very important matter, whatever the nature of the soil, is that there must be free drainage. In soils of a stiff clayey nature, though, drainage is most essential, as it is almost impossible for trees to thrive, no matter how favourable the situation, if there is not free drainage, when stagnant water is allowed to accumulate at the roots.

—Drainage.—

The want of good drainage, is, without doubt, the cause of many failures and disappointments; deep holes are often dug, much below where the ground has been previously broken up, and the trees carefully planted. Such holes, however, become so many reservoirs in which water accumulates. In stiff clay land it is always advisable to double plough, so that not only the surface, but the sub-soil is broken up to a fair depth, so that the trees can be planted without forming wells for water. In land of a deep friable nature, the soil cannot be broken up too deep, so long as the best of the soil is retained for covering the roots. In the matter of manures, the nature of the soil must decide. If the land has been well-worked, and previously cropped, very little manure may be necessary. In poor soil, however, manure is essential to assist in starting the trees into strong, vigorous growth. In applying the manure, it should not be placed in immediate contact with the roots, but should be well incorporated with the soil, and should be so placed, that the fresh young roots can derive the greatest benefit from its use, as soon as they start into growth. The situation best suited for fruit trees is that having a north or north-easterly aspect. But whatever the lay of the ground, it is in most instances necessary to provide some shelter from the cold south-west winds, that so often prevail, when the trees are in blossom. Too dense a shelter, however, is by no means an advantage, as a certain amount of exposure, particularly during the autumn and winter—assists to thoroughly ripen, and mature the wood. The different varieties of fruit trees vary in hardness, and will stand more exposure than others. For instance, the quince, apple, pear, and plum, are more hardy and will stand more exposure than the peach, nectarine, and kindred fruits; so that in planning out the orchard, this must be considered, and the trees arranged accordingly. Nature of the soil must be taken into consideration, for while most of the pip fruits succeed well in soil of a fairly stiff nature, most of the stone fruits do best in comparatively free open soil. In most sites selected for an orchard, the soils vary sufficiently to admit of most varieties of fruits being successfully grown, providing a little judgment is exercised at the time of planting.

Mr F. M. B. Fisher, addressing a meeting at Cardiff Exchange, when it was decided to form a branch of the Imperial Commercial Association, said his experience as a member of the Government of New Zealand, where nationalisation had existed for forty years, made him feel that nationalisation would certainly doom this country. They must combine forces to resist the attack on private enterprise. Mr Fisher is certainly living up to his maximum that consistency is the refuge of fools.

MOTORING NOTES.

A MOTOR-CYCLE WITH A HISTORY.

When the Expeditionary Force left New Zealand in 1914, the establishment of certain units included a number of Douglas motor-cycles, all of which did splendid work in the various theatres of the war. One of these cycles has been returned to New Zealand and bears unmistakable evidence of the hard usage to which it was subjected while "doing its bit" at the front. Its history is not a little interesting.

This cycle was used extensively for dispatch work in Egypt and was subjected to severe tests negotiating the sandy deserts in a burning Egyptian sun. The adventure of this motor-cycle did not end there, however, and when the N.Z.E.F. left to take part in the Gallipoli campaign, by some means or another, the Douglas was put on board a transport and arrived with the rest of the Force at the historic Peninsula. It was found impossible to use the cycle on the Peninsula, and it looked as if it had come to an untimely end. It lay on the beach for weeks, exposed to all sorts of weather and became well rusted up. Some thoughtful person, however, shipped it back to Egypt by a returning transport, where the mechanics at the New Zealand Motor Transport depot got to work, overhauled it thoroughly and soon had it on the road. It remained doing good work until the New Zealand Division left for France when it was appropriated by one of the Battalions for service in France. The war establishment of an infantry battalion does not include a motor-cycle, and it was only by a process of "wrangling" that it was safely landed in France. It was ridden from Marseilles right through France, ultimately reaching Armentieres, the first sector occupied by the Division. Here it did great work and only those who are familiar with the cobbles roads of Northern France can appreciate the strain to which it was subjected. How the rider secured his petrol, tyres, etc., for this "surplus establishment" cycle is a matter that does not court too much enquiry. All went well until the Division reached the Somme in 1916 when the "heads" found out that a certain battalion had a motor-cycle to which it was not entitled—thus infringing strict army regulations regarding motor vehicles—and a hard-hearted Assistant Adjutant Quartermaster General ordered it to be evacuated to England. But the Y.M.C.A. representative with the Division heard about this cycle and as he was in urgent need of motor transport, arrangements were made to purchase it. While the application for a permit to retain the cycle was being made, it was used by this representative, who found it extremely useful, notwithstanding the terrible mud of the Somme roads. But troublous days were ahead, for when the most important gentleman at General Headquarters, the Adjutant General, heard about this surreptitious cycle, he was very wrathful and ordered its immediate evacuation. It eventually reached Sling Camp minus many parts, and it looked as if its days were numbered. The mechanics got to work however, and soon it was on the road again, and strange to say could beat anything on the Plain for speed. It remained in Sling until a few months ago, when it was packed up and returned to New Zealand. As it now stands the old Douglas is very much of a wreck and is now only of a value as a souvenir. It has had a great war record, however, and furnishes striking testimony of what a Douglas machine is capable. At present the cycle is on view in Messrs J. O. Shortland and Co's. shop, Cuba street Wellington.

SILENT SUCCESS.

The man who does what "can't be done," And does it without any talking; Is the chap who rides in his new model car,

While the talker just goes on walking. A lone motor-cyclist, hot, goggled, dusty and hatless, stopped at a wayside inn for refreshments and ordered doughnuts and iced tea. "Two washers for a rut!" cried the waiter on his way to the kitchen for the tea.

POINTERS FOR WISE DRIVERS.

The Halifax Automobile Association recently sent out a bulletin that contains some very good "Safety First" advice under the caption, "Safety First and Always." It runs as follows:—
"Drive as if every other driver was a born idiot.
"Drive as if all children and most pedestrians were bent on suicide beneath your wheels.
"Drive as if every hill had a chasm at the bottom.
"Drive as if every curve was a high-wayman, a Bengal tiger and a stone wall.

FOR SALE OR EXCHANGE.

252 ACRES LEASEHOLD. Rent £36 16s per year; 16 acres oats, 10 acres ridged turnips, 65 acres turnips and grass; carrying capacity 300 breeding ewes, cattle and horses. Buildings: Four-roomed house, dairy, stable, barn, cow shed, shearing shed and sheep yards. Railway 3-mile, school 4-mile, P.O. 2 miles. Price £7 per acre. Owner would exchange for a small dairy farm or town property.

160 ACRES FREEHOLD.

20 Acres oats, 20 acres turnips, and a few acres maiden bush; balance grass. Four-roomed house, 8-stalled cowshed. Rail six miles; school and post office 1 1/2 miles, one mile to factory. Price £10 per acre. Owner would exchange for a town property.

If you wish to sell, purchase or exchange a property in any part of New Zealand, communicate with me.

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Perfect front and rear springing with wide mudguards. 26 x 3 Tyres.
It is sturdily built and has opened its career by establishing numerous records.

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EAST ROAD (handy to town)—32 Acres at £60 per acre.

FOREST HILL—175 Acres at £7; 420 acres at £5; 270 acres at £7. On easy terms.

ROSEDALE (North Invercargill)—15 Acres at £35; 9 acres at £40; 7 1/2 acres at £45. The cheapest suburban land on the market to-day.

WOODEND—Handy little dairy farm of 66 acres, together with all necessary outbuildings; handy to factory and rail; at £30 per acre.

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