

Garden Farm and Dairy for a Leper Asylum.

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When I was first given charge of the Leper Asylum at Naini, each leper was fed, clothed, given medical attention and menial service for less than Rs. 4/- per mensem. They were hardly treated as human. There was nothing for them to do except look at themselves and their neighbours. The leper asylum at Naini was about as quarrelsome and unhappy a place as one could imagine. I decided to try gardening for the lepers, not so much for what they could get out of it, but to relieve the monotony of life. At first the lepers would not do anything; they raised a thousand and one objections against work of any kind, but I persuaded them, gave them seed and water, and laid off small plots. I offered money prizes for the best gardens. Each leper was allowed to have for his own use all the produce of his garden. When the leper realized this last fact that whatever he grew was his own, gardening became popular. It made for better health and better social conditions in the asylum. Discipline was much easier. It prevented lepers from wandering about so much. It tended to anchor them. It also cost some money. Irrigation water was necessary for at least six months of the year. Seed and fertilizer were also necessary. For a number of years the Ladies' Garden Club of Princeton, New Jersey, has sent us a generous supply of garden and flower seeds. Lepers from all over India have been in the Naini asylum. They have brought vegetables from their homes and thus introduced several better varieties than anything local. After these gardens were well established, fruit trees especially guavas, mangoes, lemons, and oranges were set out and the lepers get the produce. Again the milk supply became a problem as the medical side of the work developed not only for the children, tainted and untainted, but also for the adult lepers, who were especially weak and ill. To-day the Naini Asylum owns a good herd of Sahiwal cows said by some authorities to be the best dairy breed in India.

The Agricultural Institute has imported bulls of the leading dairy breeds. The leper asylum herd has had the benefit of this and within a few years the asylum should have one of the best dairy herds in India. Murrah buffaloes also are kept. Every child between two and twelve years of age gets half a pint of milk each morning and evening. The doctor prescribes it for the Leper patients, and any

surplus is sold to the lepers at two annas a seer (a seer is equal to 2·2 pounds), which is about half the bazaar rate for bazaar milk. Frequently cheap skim milk is available. Then the children have it in addition to their whole milk ration. The Leper Asylum garden supplies them with fresh vegetables nearly every day in the year, though both the boys' and girls' homes have their own gardens. The boys' home has pure bred chickens and rabbits.

In addition to the gardens worked by the lepers for themselves, the asylum has a garden and orchards to supplement this supply, to provide for those unable to work gardens and for the children's homes. It farms about fifty acres of its own land and rents more than fifty acres besides. This grows grain for the lepers and fodder for the dairy herd and work oxen. There are two silos, each holds about 300 tons of silage, and both are filled each year. All the manure is carefully conserved. The latrine stuff is trenched. The land is gradually increasing in fertility. On some of it crops are regularly grown four or five times as large as were grown when the asylum took the land over. This farm is run at a profit.

The effect of garden, farm and dairy upon the lepers is all to the good ; it adds interest to life. For those lepers able to work, there is work at sowing time, for watching crops, and for harvesting, threshing and cleaning grain, herding the cattle, helping with cutting the silage. A leper is able to earn anywhere from $\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 annas per day, depending upon his ability and pressure of work. This cash earned enables him to have a few luxuries that cannot be provided by the asylum authorities.

It costs time, effort, thought and money to provide this garden and dairy, but it is well worth all it costs in the enrichment of the physical, social, and spiritual life of the institution.

In Lighter Vein.

A SCHOOLGIRL'S ESSAY ON A LEOPARD.

“The Lerpard has on its body black spots which looks like round black soars. The people who catches the soars on them keep very ill, it is called lepardsy.”—*From “Punch.”*