

We have received from a gentleman who from his position has had exceptional opportunities of watching the origin and progress of the Union a letter congratulating us on the capital way in which the Journal is maintained. We are indeed thankful for such appreciation and shall do our best to deserve it in future. The work is not light but we hope that with the help of our numerous readers, a regrettably small proportion of whom are contributors, the present standard will be maintained.

An  
Appreciation

### **The annual routine of a ryot in South Canara.**

Though the title is comprehensive I confine myself to a particular village, namely, Belenji of Karkal Taluk, which is located about 25 miles distant from the coast line and borders the Western Ghauts. The soil there, is chiefly laterite. The rainfall is very heavy—about 150 inches in some years—and commences about the first week of June. The soils are fertile and the money-lender is satisfied if he gets 4% interest on his investment. The land is classified into :—

- |                 |                                             |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------------|
| 1. Bettu lands. | } (a) Bana Bettu.<br>(b) Thale Neeru bettu. |
| 2. Majalu.      |                                             |
| 3. Bailu.       |                                             |

1. Bana bettu is land which depends for water entirely on Bana (=sky) i. e., rain. Thale Neeru bettu is land which has some source of water at the Thale (=head) of the bettu land.

2. Majalu lands occupy an intermediate position between the Bettu and Bailu lands.

3. Bailu lands are those which are abundantly supplied with water. These are either single, double, or treble cropped, according to water facilities.

The ryot begins to plough the nurseries—which must of course be fertile, in December. This is also the period for the cultivation of

**Suggi** (=second) crop. About three ploughings—lengthwise and crosswise—are given in a month from December onwards till about March-April, when sowing of seeds take place. Thus in all about 15 ploughings are given. Clods are crushed after each ploughing, the chief object being to thoroughly pulverise the soil. About 100 head-loads of manure are then applied per acre and this is ploughed in subsequently. During the last ploughing seeds of unsprouted paddy are dibbled behind the plough. The levelling board is then passed after which the field is marked out into furrows which serve later on as drainage channels.

If the season is favourable with heavy showers, which continue for sometime, the ryot begins ploughing his bettu lands, because the rain is too heavy for his wet land cultivation. The field is ploughed and cross ploughed once. It is left, after levelling, in that condition for about 5 or 6 days by which time, the weeds ploughed in, would have begun to rot. The ryot then ploughs the land for second time. Manure which was previously removed from the loose-box and stored in a pit is applied to the fields either at the time of the second ploughing or reserved till the third ploughing, when transplanting begins. The last ploughing is invariably followed by levelling done by the feet of the ploughman.

Weeding commences when all the fields have been transplanted. A cooly woman pulls out 60 bundles of seedlings and transplants the same in clumps of 4 or 5 and gets  $1\frac{1}{2}$  seers of rice (Rs. 0—4—0) for her work.

After the transplanting season is over, the estate is usually fenced. This is done by male coolies with thorny branches. As there are very few live fences, fencing is taken recourse to annually. The coolies go to jungles merely to bring bundles of wild fibrous plants for fibre.

There is complete rest for the land holder till the month of October when harvesting is done. This long slack season is utilised by the ryot as period of recreation. He takes part in organising hunting parties to ward off wild boars and deer which if left without

any molestation often visit at nights and nip off the growing shoots and paddy earheads. The lifting of cattle in these parts is not by professional rogues as in some parts of Malabar and other districts, but by tigers and leopards.

This is also the time when a large quantity of manure is prepared. Several bundles of green leaves are brought daily early in the morning and spread uniformly in loose-box shed. In a few days the shed is filled to the brim with several layers of manure and this is now and then removed from the shed and stored in a pit outside the shed.

Every land holder besides owning working animals (bullocks and buffaloes) maintains a small herd of bulls, cows, and heifers of an indifferent kind. There are two compartments in the shed—one for the working animals which are tied and the other for the miscellaneous animals just mentioned above. These are not secured by means of ropes but are allowed to roam about freely in their own box. It is here, more than on the grazing ground, that the evil effects of indiscriminate breeding take place. Castration is unknown to the ryots and even the old method of mulling is resorted to only when the animals have attained some size.

The local breed, as it exists, is a nameless one; but here and there where people live by hiring carts, a mixed breed of Mysore with the local cows can be seen. It is because of this, that Mysore bred bulls are brought down from parts of Mysore, where cattle fairs are held.

The expenses of the ryot on the feeding of cattle is very meagre. Working animals are, during the working period only, fed with boiled horsegram given in the evening after work—rice conjee in the morning before work and either green grass or chaffed paddy straw well boiled in water, rice gruel and rice bran water. This latter stuff is fed twice daily, morning and evening. Not much attention is paid to other animals and they are only now and then given paddy straw. A large quantity of paddy straw is wasted in thatching houses.

Labour is becoming, of late, dearer and dearer, though not more costly than in some of the large centres of business. Low caste people are bound down to some of the fortunate ryots to work for them. They live in huts provided by their master. The whole family works for the landlord on his land. The land holder, in return, pays them in kind and gives them food and clothing when they are disabled by illness. They are treated for all intents and purposes as members of the same family though of course they are of different caste. But time has changed and is changing and the good old customs of rural parts can remain, in such happy terms, no longer. These people have heard that by migrating to other parts they can secure higher wages for their work and consequently an enormous number of coolies annually pour into the borders of Mysore where they are paid in cash. The coolies are blinded by this payment of ready money and do not realise that payment in kind in their own native land is better than cash in a different country. The number of permanent coolies of the type described already is not in proportion to the extent of the holding of the ryot. The permanent coolies and their families, however large, must be maintained by the ryot.

Harvesting is done in October. The straw is cut to a height of about 6 inches from the ground with serrated sickles. It is left in the field in small bundles for a day or two to dry. These small bundles are then heaped one over the other and made into bigger bundles, tied tight with fibre ropes and carried by men and women to the threshing floor. Threshing is done by beating these bundles against raised planks. The straw is stacked in a corner of the threshing floor to be subsequently threshed by bullocks. Paddy, after threshing, is stored in the threshing floor in straw bins. Rice is made during the hot months and stored in straw "mudis."

On the Bettu lands only a single crop of paddy is taken. After the harvest of this crop, the land is ploughed once and left to weather till June when transplanting is done.

On Majalu land, sugarcane substitutes paddy in some years. When sugarcane is not grown, vegetables and crysanthemum for domestic use and market purposes, are cultivated after paddy.

On Bailu lands, second crop of paddy is followed by a pulse crop or by a third crop of paddy. Artificial manures are unknown in this village, as in very many other parts. Loose-box manures and burnt earth, excreta of fowls mixed with ash are the only principal manures. Burnt earth is made as follows:—Green branches of trees which are felled for fuel purposes are brought and heaped up here and there in the field. When this is completely dried up in the hot season, a layer of earth of about a foot high is spread over it. Over this layer dried branches are again put to form another layer. Thus a mound about 6 feet high of alternate layer of earth and dried branches is formed. This is then set fire to and the whole mound gradually falls to ashes and burnt earth is obtained in a few days. This important manure is spread over the field in baskets just before the rainy season commences.

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### Seed Selection.

The Agricultural Department and others in various parts of the world have demonstrated that, without doubt, very considerable improvement can be made in the quality and yield of many of our staple crops by the adoption of a system of seed selection which could, and should be carried out over a period of years, and in fact, indefinitely, to attain the best possible results.

The following simple system which guarantees an improvement in yield of at least 20 to 50% and laid down by Mr. A. E. V. Richardson may be adopted for cereals or other crops as it involves little labour; but it should be carried out in detail.

*Method of Improvement.* The method proposed is to apply the same principles to the improvement of cereals as have hitherto been applied to the improvement of stock, choosing the seed only from the best individual plants. An ordinary crop of, say, wheat or paddy consists of a mixture of high yielding plants, average yielding plants, and low yielding plants. When we harvest such a crop the seed obtained is of average yielding capacity, is no better, if as good, as the seed which produced it.