



DAVE'S DAIRY

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Monday. I feel a bit guilty about the way I was grumbling about the rain a while back. We could do with some now. We've only had about 40 points for July so far. And some beautiful frosts. The feed is growing very slowly indeed, and that means I've had to eat the crops off more than I liked, which is a pity because it looks as if hay might very easily be a good price. The early-sown crops are pretty dirty, and it's too cold for the late ones to grow much, so altogether things aren't too bright. One thing about the dry weather; I can leave the red sow in the grain-room while we continue to make inroads into the lettuces (I really must do something about that pig paddock fence). But in the meantime the red sow is very comfortable. A fowl flew in there the other day looking for wheat. It was a bad blunder. There was only one squawk and a few feathers.

A neighbour of mine still uses horses and he, too, has an Italian POW. He put the Italian on the team one day while he was seeding. He heard a lot of yelling and went over to see what the matter was. He saw that the Italian had got the team into a trot, and he trotted them for about four hundred yards up to the seed and super trolley. When the boss asked him what the deuce he thought he was doing, the Italian said that he was afraid he was going to run out of super!

Wednesday. I saw a cloud of smoke over at Clarkson's to-day, so went over to investigate. There's no doubt that he's a bit weak in the head. He had some super left over after he'd finished seeding, so put his top dresser on his trolley and was spreading the super out on a bare paddock that is badly cut up with gutters. I don't hold with these top-dressers myself. I always say it's no good putting super ON the ground; you have to put it IN the ground. And anyhow, super was meant to grow wheat, not grass. And a lot seems to blow away, and I noticed it wasn't blowing on to my paddock. The wind was the wrong way. But you would have thought that, if he had to use up his super, he'd have put it on a decent bit of country; but here he was spreading it on this bare paddock that never is much good. When I told him this, he said he was putting super on to stop any more erosion. Sounded a bit queer to me. I couldn't see how a bit of super was going to stop the water running off. Perhaps there's something in it, but there's no doubt that Clarkson is an erosion crank. He was doing a grizzle about the super. It was 50/50 super, and that is very fine and blows away a lot, and doesn't throw like the granulated super he used to use. He had to keep poking it down in the hopper, too; it was so fine it wouldn't seem to fall to the bottom.

The wind changed after dinner, and I couldn't help hoping that Clarkson was still top dressing, and that the dust was coming over into my paddock. But when I sneaked over the hill to have a look, I found that the miserable coot had stopped.

Thursday. Mary is getting on to me now about growing a moustache. I don't like to tell her that she could grow one if she wanted to. But she says that a moustache kind of sets a chap off, like a frame for a picture. She keeps saying what a lovely moustache Clarkson has got, and how, if I had a moustache that bristled, I could probably talk more severely to the bank manager. I must admit I would rather like to try, but I'm afraid that if I did grow one, it would probably droop at the ends and get caught in the machinery. But all the same, if Clarkson can

grow one, I can, so I'll go ahead and prepare the seed-bed. I'll let you know how it gets on, or stops on, or whatever it is that moustaches do. Clarkson sent me over his (Squatter's) pedigree, and I stuck it up over his kennel, to see if that makes any difference.

Friday. I haven't said much about my pigs in this diary, but really, the less said about my pigs the better, because I don't mind admitting that I don't make a very good job of them. It isn't because I don't know how -or at least, not since I've had my new book. And it isn't because I haven't got any ambition to be a good pig breeder. There is nothing I'd like better than to be able to go to our local show, carrying a long cane and wearing a shiny pair of brown leggings which I could hit smartly with my cane when I was feeling embarrassed. I never know if these pig men wear the leggings so they can hit their legs with impunity, or is it just to look impressive? But I don't know why it is, my pigs are always in a mess. Sometimes it's because I haven't got enough barley, or there isn't enough skim milk, or the young ones get worms, or the sows lie on most of the young ones, or they get pneumonia, or sunstroke, or the itch and it's always because they are a mongrel lot. Clarkson and Mary have always been critical about the way I house them, feed them and breed them, and now my new book has joined Clarkson and Mary, so it looks as if I had better do something about it. Clarkson says the first thing I should do is buy some decent breeding stock. I suppose he thinks I am going to buy some from him. Well, he's wrong. I'm going to steal a march on the whole district and start a breed of pigs unknown here/ I've been reading in my new book about a breed of pigs called Sussex Saddleback or something like that. If I could only find out a bit more about them, and if there are any in Australia I would have a shot at buying some. They may not be any better than any other breed, but that's not the point. What I want is a new breed of pigs, and then I can go over and skite to Clarkson.