

The Farmer's Advocate and Home Magazine.

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DOMINION.

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chances of their being on hand in the morning would be small indeed. Let them follow the dairyman through the various operations of milking, feeding, etc., and take an inventory, with values attached, of the feed consumed by the herd. After cognizance is taken of all the many operations and expenses incident to a well-run dairy farm the Board will be in a position to place a value on milk, but not till then will they be able to add anything to what is already known about the cost of production and what dairymen are entitled to ask for their product.

The criticism showered upon the Board of Commerce, and Mr. O'Connor in particular, by members of the House of Commons was, in many regards, well taken. Strangely enough the Board has directed its activities in the direction of foodstuffs, and the results are naturally first felt by farmers, who have made the least out of the high prices obtaining. Agriculture will welcome any fair investigation, but these knife-thrusts dealt by irresponsible parties and taking the form of embargos, mandates and such will not long be tolerated.

Anyone with ordinary intelligence can see that greater production on the farms of this country is absolutely essential to the well-being of the nation financially and otherwise; but when the call comes from Ottawa to produce more it sounds like mockery to the producers' ears. This is not a healthy state of affairs, and so far as we can see the fever is not abating.

Imperfections in Human Nature.

BY ALLAN MCDIARMID.

It is very likely that nearly all of us have some one "on our list of friends" whom we think would be a pretty decent fellow if it were not for some one particular fault. The "fly in the ointment" here as well as in almost everything else in this developing and consequently imperfect world. If we had the chance to work in a few little improvements in the case of the people we know we think we could like them much better.

I remember noticing this when I first got to thinking about the subject and taking note of my fellow-men in general, and of their moral and mental qualities in particular. The worst of it was that I found that I was no exception to the rule. And I became so impressed with the fact that I remember saying that if I ever, by any chance, made a good impression on some person at a first meeting, I was going to take good care not to run across that person again. I would dispel

their illusion, I was very certain of that. They say that familiarity breeds contempt and I suppose it is because of the fact that the opportunity for closer inspection has revealed our faults to our friends, and they are disappointed in us because they have forgotten to take into account the naturally imperfect state of man in this unfinished world.

And I have thought, at times, that the greater a man is in one respect the smaller he may appear in others. A case in point is that of one of the most close-fisted men I ever knew. He would sit up all night for the sake of making ten cents and, although he was an insurance agent himself, he never put a dollar on his own buildings. But when he was burned out, as happened in the course of time, he took it in a very philosophical way and started in to repair his fortunes in a manner and spirit that should have been an example to his former critics. He was a contradiction embodied. And I have seen many a one of his kind on the farm. Strong at one point, weak at another. An example is the man I have often wondered at who would go to all kinds of expense and labor to build a barn or house and, after the building had been shingled, would leave the brackets nailed to the roof for months and sometimes for years, perhaps until they rotted and were carried off by the wind. Or again, the man who, while working and saving in the effort to make a good living for himself and family, with, possibly, a college education in view for some of them, will leave his farm machinery out in all kinds of weather and often for the entire year, wasting as much money in that way as might, perhaps, satisfy his very worthy ambitions. He's not very consistent, but he is very human. We're all in the same boat and, apparently, trying to row up-stream with one oar while the other is lying idle at our side.

It is this failing, it seems to me, that is responsible for most of our misfortunes and so-called bad luck. Some call it carelessness and perhaps it is, in a way, but what it really amounts to is a tendency to pay all attention to the big undertakings and overlook the smaller details on which the success of the other may rest.

Nothing makes the meaning of a statement of this kind clearer than an appropriate illustration and one comes to my mind just now that may serve this purpose.

Some years ago I spent the summer with a farmer friend of mine in the western part of the province and had a chance to become pretty well acquainted with his "manners and methods" and his general style of farming. It was all right except that he never had time to "fix" anything that was out of shape or to keep things in what we call running order. He raised splendid crops of grain, but they were generally badly damaged by his cattle getting into them through some weak spot in the fence that he had neglected to repair. And one night his best horse got loose in the stable and, finding the grain-box cover broken, had eaten enough oats to bring his career to an end the next morning, in spite of all that we or the "Vet" could do.

Shortly after this I was with him one day when he was watering his remaining team at the well. He asked me to hold the horse while he went to the house for some water to prime the pump. When he came back I said to him; "the time may come when you'll need water in a hurry. You ought to get a new valve for that pump." "Oh, I haven't had time," he replied, and that was the end of it just then, but I think he remembered what I told him, later on.

A few days after the pump incident the threshing gang came along. It was a gasoline outfit and my friend had them put the engine at the back end of the barn floor, which best suited the plans that he was always making.

The sow-thistle was very bad that year and shortly after they had started threshing everything about the barn, including the engine, was covered with the down, the nature of which most of us are pretty well acquainted with. I was just coming from the house to see how things were going at the barn when I heard someone shout "fire!" It didn't take me long to get to the scene of action and the first thing I saw were the flames that covered the engine and were beginning to run up the side of the grain-mow that, like everything else, was covered with the thistle-down. Some of the men were scratching and tearing at the fire with their pitchforks and others were running towards the well for water. I could see in a minute that water, and plenty of it, was the only hope. But we weren't to get it. One of the men came running back from the well calling for water to prime the pump. The water had run back in the short time that had elapsed since the engine tank had been filled and not a drop could be got short of the house. Some one started in that direction and the rest of us turned our attention to getting the separator out of the barn. It was all we could do. The chance for saving anything else was gone. By the time the man who had gone to the house for water to prime the pump returned we were all standing at a safe distance watching the best barn in that part of the country go up in smoke. A defective spark-plug had set fire to the thistle-down gathered on and about it and the lack of water had done the rest.

A thought crossed my mind prompting me to remind my friend of what I had said about needing water in a hurry some time, but on looking at him I concluded that he had about all he could stand up under for the time being and held my peace. I left for home shortly after this and am not able to say whether my friend's misfortune was in any way profitable to him, or not, but we are hoping that it was. The price was too high not to have got something of considerable value out of it all. But habit is so strong in us that nothing short of the high-priced lessons seem to be effective. For

that reason I am inclined to think that by this time my farmer friend up West has bought a twenty-five cent valve and has fixed his pump.

Nature's Diary.

A. B. KLUGH, M.A.

The woods are now glorious in their autumn tints—every stretch of deciduous forest, every bit of wooded hillside, presents a color scheme worthy the brush of a great artist. The reds and yellows of the maples, the coppery-reds of the oaks, the yellows of the beeches, birches, and poplars contrast with the greens of those trees which have not yet taken on their autumnal hue and with the darker greens of the coniferous trees.

Beautiful as are the colors of the trees, they are equalled, if not surpassed, by those of some of the shrubs and vines—the brilliant reds of the Staghorn Sumach and Virginia Creeper, and the beautifully blended bronze, copper and deep red of the Blackberry, the little Spiked Maple with its graceful leaves variegated with pink, red, yellow and green, and the Hobble-bush with each leaf a symphony in color.

The other day I was looking at a little scene which some would have called common-place, even ugly, earlier in the season—a little bit of old rail fence with shrubbery about it. Now, to one with an eye for color effects it appealed very strongly—the colors of the Spiked Maple and the Blackberry, rich in reds, pinks and coppers with the delicate lilac-blue of the flowers of the Heart-leaved Aster in the foreground and a touch of the rich gold of the Goldenrod.

In swamps and in moist places along the shores of lakes and streams the Black Alder is now very effective with its clusters of bright red berries amid its dark green leaves. This shrub is really not an Alder at all but belongs to the Holly Family, and if its leaves were evergreen, it would be as much of a favorite for winter decoration as its famous British relative.

The Chipmunks are now laying in the last of their store of nuts and seeds, and are prepared to retreat into their burrows at the first hard frost. As they finish their garnering they pause from time to time and perched on a log or stump, they utter their "Chonk-chonk-chonk" call, one after another taking it up until it becomes a chorus echoing through the woods—a farewell chorus which bids us say good-bye to those blithe little mammals until the spring.

The Red Squirrels and Bluejays are busy in the groves of nut-bearing trees and of oaks—busy securing their share of the autumnal harvest of nuts and acorns.

The fall migration of the birds is now in full swing. Many of the Warblers and Vireos have already departed. For some time the flocks of these little birds have been passing south, making their flights during the night and flitting from tree to tree, feeding, during the day-time. These migrating Warblers and Vireos are very valuable economically on account of the "spring cleaning" and "fall cleaning" which they give our trees. In the spring, just as the buds are bursting and the tender leaves unfolding these hosts pass along from tree to tree, seeking out the minute scale insects and aphids and other very small insects, and again in the autumn, just before the leaves fall they once again search bark and twig and leaf, for these tiny, yet, in the aggregate very destructive insects. In these flocks are many species and the bands of Warblers are usually accompanied by Kinglets, Red-breasted Nuthatches and Chickadees. The latter are not migrating, as they are among the few species which are faithful to their northern home at all seasons of the year, but they attach themselves to the flocks of migrating Warblers for the day and appear to "show them around" as it were.

The Chipping Sparrows, White-throated Sparrows, Song Sparrows and Juncos have gathered into flocks and frequent weedy fields where they are feeding on weed-seed. Soon these flocks will follow in the train of the other feathered hosts.

A species which is seen more frequently in central and southern Ontario during the fall migration than during the spring is the Rusty Blackbird. It is smaller than the familiar Bronzed Grackle, and in full plumage exhibits the rusty edgings to the black feathers which give it its name.

The fall migration is a much more difficult movement to observe than the spring migration. Firstly, it implies the keeping tab on every species every day, as only in this way is it possible to tell when a certain species has departed. Secondly, the great majority of our birds are in much duller plumage than in the spring, and a good proportion of the individuals observed are young birds which, in most cases, are duller than their parents in fall, and in many species differ considerably from the adults. Thirdly, there is an almost total absence of song, and since the ear is almost as important as the eye to the student of birds, this is a decided handicap in the recognition of the various species.

A sound which is frequently heard in the night at this time of year is the plaintive tremulo whistle of the little Screech Owl, a soft and musical call quite unlike the notes uttered by any of the other owls. This little owl sometimes takes up its residence about the farm buildings, and it should be carefully protected as it is a very efficient destroyer of mice and rats.

Advocates of daylight saving last June are now complaining about how cold the mornings are when they go to their work. October 26 will probably see the end of it for this year and for all time, we trust. Never was more utter folly given expression in legislation than that which conceived daylight saving.