

The Bill-Board Nuisance

Prof. F. C. Sears, Truro, N.S.

ONE of several reasons which have always seemed to be legitimate causes for congratulation that we are "not as our cousins to the south of us," is our relative freedom from bill-boards. I am not as familiar as I might be with the upper and western provinces of the Dominion, but one cannot fail to be impressed with this difference when travelling in the Maritime Provinces as compared with travelling in the United States.

A year or two ago the writer took a railway journey out to the middle west, as far as Kansas City, and returned. For some reason the prevalence of what might be legitimately called "the bill-board nuisance" was brought more forcibly to his notice than ever before. Everything that was ever made from "The Incomparable White—the Car of Service" to "Ball-Bearing Garters" seemed to require a bill-board, and no landscape seemed sufficiently beautiful to escape. As we sped along the banks of the beautiful Hudson River, we were constantly reminded that "Gillett's Lye Eats Dirt," and ere we had realized the full significance of this gustatory peculiarity of the article in question we learned that "Delicacy Demands Pearline," or were admonished to "Let Gold Dust Twins Do Our Work."

WOULD SEE AMERICA FIRST

Rounding another curve of the road we came in sight of a beautiful stretch of rolling country with orchards and vineyards on the slopes; and scattered among the orchards and dotting the meadows below were a succession of boards, the size of the side of a house, advising the traveller to "See America First—Via the Louisville and Nashville R.R."; or that "Packers' Tar Soap" was as "Pure as the Pines"; or that "Armour's Simon Pure Lard" was the proper thing and so on. We wished that we could "see America first" and without this constant accompaniment of advertising jargon; we thought it possible that "Packers' Tar Soap" was as "pure as the pines" but bill-boards announcing the fact were not half so pleasant to look at as the pines themselves. As for "Armour's Simon Pure Lard," while we didn't know then as well as we do now, just what definition Mr. Armour would give for "Simon Purity," it *did* occur to us that he might confine his bill-boards to localities where they would be less objectionable.

In other parts of the country some other commodities would take the lead in this fight for publicity. Perhaps it would be a broken, rugged country, the most beautiful of all naturally, with little mountain valleys scattered along the

line of the railway and with farm houses nestled among the trees; and nestling close alongside, in apparent unconsciousness of the incongruity of the combination, would be an immense bottle with the laconic inscription "It's Wilson's—That's All." We thought it *was* all, the limit in fact, and turned with disgust from the marred, sign-besmirched landscape outside to study our fellow-passengers and wonder how many of them felt as we did, a sense of having been outraged by all this vulgar commercialism intruded upon the view.

In still other sections, the advertising mania takes another, though not less obnoxious, form. There are miles, yes whole states, where instead of the restful harmonious, or, at least, appropriate red or brown barn of our Canadian landscape, the view is almost constantly marred by barns and outbuildings of all kinds, which shriek at you in immense yellow letters on a black background that "HOOD'S CURES"!

It was certainly a relief to get back to Nova Scotia, where one can enjoy to the fullest extent the pleasures that come from a beautiful country unspoiled by signs. Even at Windsor Junction, where the beauties of the landscape are not sufficiently pronounced so that a few bill-boards would seriously mar the general effect, there were only two, and these modest affairs, setting forth in plain figures and letters that Clayton & Sons are clothing manufacturers in Halifax and that A. M. Bell & Co. of the same city are headquarters for hardware.

A TORONTO FIRM

But of late I have noticed that this sign-board mania is creeping into even this province. As yet, it is confined mostly to one firm and that an Ontario firm, the house of T. Eaton & Co., of Toronto. But there is no telling when our local firms may catch the disease. Now, I haven't the rabid objection to this firm that some of our local store-keepers have, which is perhaps very natural since their loss is my gain. But I *do* object to their dotting our country with their bill-boards and, particularly, when these boards represent, as many of them do, a gigantic female figure donning a garment which, however necessary to the proper adjustment of the feminine form, is *not* usually displayed in public.

The question then arises: "What are we going to do about it?" And that is a question which I should like all Canadian lovers of the beauties of nature to consider seriously. Cannot some method be devised to prevent the introduction of these unsightly advertising schemes into sections which are as yet free from them, and to reduce their number and

confine them to the least objectionable localities where they have already gained a foothold. If our laws are not now such as to admit of our putting a stop to the indiscriminate distribution of bill-boards, they are surely capable of being amended if the public can be brought to see that one of its rights is being infringed upon. It may be a question just how much legal right the public has to the free enjoyment of the beauties of the landscape unencumbered by these unsightly objects; but, in these days when we are making a determined effort to save the beauties of Niagara and of other natural resources of our Dominion, is it not worth while to try to preserve undefiled the other natural beauties, the country over, which make Canada so goodly a land to look upon?

Top-Dressing Lawns

In the fall, lawns, tennis courts, cricket creases, and all kinds of sporting greens should receive a top-dressing of well-rotted barnyard manure or other fertilizing material. Stable manure is valuable for the purpose, if it is well rotted and free from weed seeds; coarse manure is objectionable, being unsightly, ill-odored and certain to contain undesirable seeds. Apply only a moderate dressing, evenly spread.

An earth mulch composed of equal parts of good clean soil and well-rotted manure is better than manure alone. For applying to the lawn this month, the compost should have been started late in August. As it is, however, there is plenty of time. Secure the materials at once, mix them and turn over occasionally and apply in November. A mulch of this nature not only fertilizes the soil but also, when spread evenly, it tends to smoothen any irregularities of the lawn surface.

Next spring, as soon as the ground is settled, rake off the manure or coarse remnants of the earth mulch. The rains and melting snows of winter and spring will have washed the soluble plant food out of the mulch into the soil. Thus, the turf will receive a stimulant and a protection that will bring forth a new degree of density and a brighter color for the new season.

An effective remedy for mealy bugs and scale on house plants is fir-tree oil. Apply with a rather stiff bristle brush.

Perennials, such as phlox, peony, iris, larkspur, lily-of-the-valley and ferns, improve by the division of the roots, and any person who loves flowers will help you to increase your stock.—N. S. Dunlop, Floral Dept. C.P.R.