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The Farmer's Advocate and Home Magazine

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EDITORIAL

Corn is many laps ahead of where it was this time last year.

How puny is man's best effort compared to the majesty of a storm!

How many thousand barrels of milk did that last big rain represent?

Like a benediction from Heaven is 'a warm, gentle thunderstorm after a drouth.

To let good haying weather go by after the clover has reached full bloom is "tempting Providence."

Strips of alfalfa are suggested as fireguards for prairie farmsteads, by a writer in "Conservation," who explains that it will not burn.

Many a drouth-stricken farmer has breathed a prayer of hope as the Militia went to camp for its annual June drill.

According to the teaching of a recent book, the real function of the agricultural scientist is not to teach the how, but the why of farming.

A rain which dampens cultivated land to a depth of six or seven inches, may moisten the soil in a dense meadow or grain field hardly more than two or three.

An American magazine writer has figured out that the birth of every child, no matter of what order, adds \$849 to the aggregate value of New York real estate.

After all is said and done, it appears to be the water (well-warmed) that makes the crop. A ton of hay is said to pump 500 tons of water out of the soil before it is ready for the mower.

"Why," queries the author of "The Farmer of To-morrow", "is the farmer of Holland able to produce 50 bushels of wheat per acre, while the Dakota man rarely produces above 12 bushels unless the heavens are especially propitious.

We can afford practical education for the Indians, which is right enough, but when proposals are urged to modify public school education so as to make it meet the needs of the masses, taxpayers are prone to shake their heads at the possibility of extra expense.

In 1912, says Hon. J. S. Duff, Provincial Minister of Agriculture, in his last annual report, a total of 17,212 acres in the Province was surveyed for tile drains and 2,278 miles of drain laid, while 70 demonstrations were held under the auspices of the Department to show the possibilities of drainage.

Peter McArthur is afraid that too many of our thinkers work in the gloom of libraries instead of in Nature's sun parlor. We agree. The lore of the ages is like a dry seed, which needs to be germinated and nurtured by the sunlight of direct inspiration. Books are rich in knowledge and thought, but mere book-worm philosophy is a sorry excuse for wisdom.

Abate the Dust Nuisance.

The difficulty of getting farmers to take united action on any matter affecting their interests is very well illustrated by the passivity with which the dust nuisance is borne. This evil, which has on many highways turned the pleasure of country driving into a nauseating and clothes-injuring ordeal, has been many times aggravated by automobile and motor-cycle traffic. Automobiles as yet are owned chiefly by foreign tourists and by city men who have contributed nothing towards the maintenance of most of our roads, and are even yet paying only a little indirectly through the medium of provincial grants and other channels. Their machines dart across the country, sometimes endangering life and property, destroying the highways as fast as we can build them, and raising dense clouds of dust which follow the road for as much as a mile after the car, creating distressful conditions for occupants of slower-going vehicles or for pedestrians to pass through. Dwellings situated near the roads are daily favored with sickening doses of pulverized road, while fruit, vegetable and field crops suffer heavily. No wonder Prince Edward Island farmers voted in plebiscite to continue the policy of exclusion. There are methods of oiling roads which tend to minify the evil, but treatment is costly.

There is a saying that those who get people into trouble should help people out of it. Applying the principle we should say that those who make themselves a nuisance to others on the highway should do all in their power to abate it. In still plainer terms, we consider the case is exceedingly strong for taxation of automobile traffic on a basis that will yield some revenue worth while, said revenue to be used for road construction and oiling or other treatment to keep down dust. Of course the way to levy the tax is to charge a good round rate for the licenses. Fifty to a hundred and fifty or two hundred dollars per car per annum, depending upon the horse power, would seem to be reasonable, and might be divided among municipalities interested, ear-marked for purposes of road improvement. Would it, on the average, more than compensate for the manifold injury resulting from motor traffic on the roads? If not why not impose it? What do you think about this, and what have you said to your provincial member?

What to Do with the Town Boy.

What to do with the town boy in the holidays appears to be about as serious a conundrum as how to keep the boy on the farm. The superintendent of one of the largest industrial concerns in Canada tells "The Farmer's Advocate" that at this season the company is pestered with applications from parents who want a couple of month's clerical employment for their boys, of say twelve to eighteen years old, in order to keep them off the street and out of mischief. The spirit of youth in these lads will assert itself. They must have adventure, or, at least, occupation. As a means of education, "the street" with its multiplying temptations, grows steadily worse. A good many people, like the superintendent quoted, are beginning to consider the long holidays rather a curse than a benefit to the town boy, but apparently necessary under the present school curriculum overloaded with book subjects and so-called "information" most of which, though duly attested by over-estimated

"exams," is forgotten while the youth is being really trained for usefulness in the school of life. Who wonders that boys and girls hanker for the "last day" of the term, which is the signal for tossing the big school bag into the garret. One of these days we may see evolved a system of industrial school training that will appeal to the activities of boys and girls, reducing the need and desire for long vacations, and a system of enlarged and supervised play grounds with wholesome out-door accompaniment that will divide interest with the nerve-racking, frivolous and mercenary moving-picture show. The appeal for some genteel, clerical job for the young hopeful instead of mechanical occupation is disheartening, but just the fruitage that might be looked for from our educational policies. Not having been taught to use their hands, most of them would be of comparatively little use in a hive of industry. The suggestion has been made that some plan might be worked out whereby these boys could be given employment cutting weeds on rural roads or possibly working at such jobs as hoeing or spudding thistles on the farms, but the problem of getting them "in and out" and of supervision present difficulties not easy of solution, unless resolutely handled by the parents themselves with the cultivation of a desire for country life. The busy farmer would hardly relish the idea of undertaking direction of a "bunch of town boys" for a few hours daily, though he might not be unwilling in case of those he knew personally to give a civil boy willing to learn a chance to improve himself in holiday time.

The complaint above referred to is by no means confined to one locality, but we believe to be wide-spread. It was expressed in the following enquiry the other day in the Mail and Empire of Toronto:—

"There is always a reactionary tendency amongst the young pent up in the cities. There is the heaven-born desire for country life. Is it not possible to assist the realization of the longing for a successful and happy farm life amongst our town-born boys and girls? The college at Guelph is too advanced for them, while there seems room for farm homes for younger people, and even for farms where, during the holidays, a strenuous and happy life might be advantageously spent."

In reply, "Flaneur," a staff contributor of the Mail and Empire concedes the unusual importance of the matter as one "vital to our well being and solid progress as an agricultural people. To any well-informed and thinking man the farm appeals as the strong and solid foundation on which rests our national prosperity. If the supply of intelligent, well-informed and enterprising young men and women requisite for maintaining and developing the farm land of Canada is diminishing, or is being diverted to other activities, then the Canadian farm is like a human body underfed and weakened by the loss of a full supply of rich, pure and life-giving food. We need more—far more—strong, healthy, intelligent and interested young men and women on our farms. And it would be an act of national wisdom were our Governments to provide some practical means whereby young boys and girls could be interested, trained and prepared for farm work."

A farm conducted on the lines of the Mount Elgin Industrial Institution, described in last week's Farmer's Advocate, would seem to fill the bill for boys and girls of the country as well as the town.