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EDITORIAL.

The Need of Underdraining.

At no season of the year is the need of underdraining, in many places, more apparent than in the spring, when farmers are waiting for the land to become sufficiently dry to admit of its being worked to advantage in preparation for seeding. In riding through the country at this season, one is impressed with a sense of this need by seeing water lying on some portions of a field, while the major portions are dry and ready for cultivation, the consequence being that seeding operations must be delayed a week or more while the wet places become dried by the process of evaporation, while if those places were tile-drained, they would be fit for work as soon as the rest of the field. It is conceded that the early-sown grain and clover, as a rule, ensures the surest catch and the heaviest yield, and early sowing is often impracticable because of a few wet places in the field. The harvesting, too, is often delayed by the necessity of waiting for the ripening of the crop in these low places, if, in the meantime, it has not been drowned by excessive rains, when that on the higher portions is ready and in the best condition for reaping. The spindly stalks and yellow leaves of the grain on these low places are often noticeable as signals of distress, owing to the wet feet of the crop, and the end is disappointment, while, with a little expense for tile-draining, these portions would certainly be the most fruitful in the field. As a matter of fact, few farmers are wealthy enough to be able to afford to neglect draining such portions of their lands, and yet such neglect is a common occurrence. Those who have adopted tile-draining have almost invariably found the results so satisfactory and profitable that the expense has been repaid by the increased yield of the first two or three crops, and in some instances in a single season. It may be too late, in many cases, to remedy this evil this spring, but it is a good time to make a note of the need of the remedy, and resolve to apply it at the first favorable opportunity.

Sow Clover About the Buildings.

A little clover seed, left after sowing the fields, may be used to excellent advantage by scattering a few handfuls here and there about the buildings, especially in the backyard, and along the lanes and roadsides. If clover were not such a common farm crop, it would be used largely in a decorative way. No other plant makes such an effective flower-bed as a mass of clover bloom. Its foliage is unsurpassed. No perfume distilled by nature or man excels the fragrance of its crimson blossom. Unlike many flowering plants, it is at no stage of its growth unsightly. While it holds the ground, it subdues noxious weeds, and, dying, leaves the soil in better condition to grow whatever may succeed it. If it be considered too common, or not altogether suitable to make a sward for a lawn, it has, at any rate, a place in the back yard. A few pounds of clover seed cost little, and are not worth holding over to another year. Sow it in the bare spots, or the places where the weeds grow rampant every summer. It will help to keep them down. Broadcast it everywhere there is a chance for a seed to sprout. If a few plants come up, they will, in all probability, seed more ground next year. And a few plants are better worth while than the exotics in the nursery catalogue.

Thrift is a first essential in farming. Without thrift, enterprise leads to failure; with thrift, it usually leads to success.

Make Country Life Better Worth Living.

Despite the imputed conservatism of farmers, there is no doubt we are making rapid progress in methods. Practices derided ten years ago as visionary, are to-day commonly adopted. A fortnight since, driving through a prosperous section of Western Ontario, we found the area of fall wheat had been reduced almost to nil. Instead, spring grain, corn for ensilage and clover are grown extensively in a more or less regular rotation; large numbers of dairy cows and other stock are kept, and bigger returns secured than used to be the case from the system of hay and grain farming. We noticed few cross fences. The land is worked in long rounds, and three-horse teams were in evidence. Substantial barns were common, and the houses were protected by groves of trees, and not a few of them surrounded with nice lawns, shrubs and flower-beds. Comfort, and even luxury, were enjoyed by the people.

It is true the population here, as elsewhere, had been somewhat thinned by western migration, but this will right itself by and by. Meanwhile, those who have remained are, beyond question, more prosperous, and generally better off than any of their precursors. Progress is reflected in their condition.

What has the next decade in store? It is unsafe to prognosticate specifically, if one would preserve a reputation for judgment, but we do not hesitate to affirm a belief that the progress of the last fifteen years will be eclipsed by that of the next ten. This will include the whole field of agricultural effort. Great strides will be made in cheapening and increasing the production and improving the quality of farm produce, but if we may undertake a prophecy, it is that the most marked advance of the next few decades will be in making the country a better place to live in. Dwelling places will be made homes—homes in the true sense of the word. The exterior will be embellished with trees, vines, shrubs, flowers and grass, and an unpainted building will be the exception. An unkempt back yard will be as much frowned upon as an untidy front yard is now. Inside, the best periodicals will be found upon the tables, standard books in the library, the piano and camera will be found in almost every home, the typewriter and letter-copying book will be considered essential, as they are in a modern office. The telephone will be universal; electric railways will traverse the country in a network. The social standard in rural districts will rival the city in culture and versatility. Much will be done, also, to make farm labor more easy and pleasant. Electricity will, in all probability, be harnessed to thresh and grind our crops and light our buildings, if not to plow the fields. Farming will be a nicer job than ever before.

At the same time, it is well to point out that this happy condition will be realized first by the thrifty, energetic workers who love the farm for its own sake. It was a sensible thing said to us recently by a farmer who had erected a new barn a few years ago, that he built it in order to make enough money to build a house. He will have the house, too, judging by some facts he told us. Last year, from a two-hundred-acre farm, his cheese-factory checks totalled \$1,400, besides which, he sold this spring eight yearlings at twenty dollars apiece, and raised also a colt or two, and sold a hundred dollars' worth of hay. This is a rational way of bettering one's condition. All the facilities above described will come, not by investing in luxuries first, but from the increased prosperity that results from judicious prosecution of enterprising business and scientific methods. Any other ambition is an attempt to put the cart before the horse.

Last, but not least, one of the greatest advances will be in lightening the work of the farmer's wife. We cannot dwell here upon details, but the time will come when no feasible convenience will be esteemed too dear for the farmhouse, and the day is approaching, if it is not soon upon us, when a favorite beau of the city girl will be a thrifty, progressive Canadian young farmer.

Let everyone do something in the great work of beautifying the country roads and farmsteads, removing or covering up blotches on the landscape, subduing weeds, tearing down fences, grading and levelling roads and planting trees. If every man, woman, boy and girl would take as a motto, "Nature idealized," what a transformation would be made in the face of the country.

We live only once, and we take no wealth with us beyond the grave. Let us see that our lives are lived amid beautiful, wholesome surroundings; and what a chance we have to make them so! He who makes nature to smile where she frowned before, is a public benefactor of the truest type. Co-operation is necessary in this great work, and co-operation waits only for example. That means each of us.

Don't Work the Hillside.

Seed down that steep, clay hillside this year to lucerne, either lucerne alone for hay and soiling, or with a mixture of white clover and other grasses for permanent pasture. Prof. Zavitz's permanent pasture mixture has often been given in this paper, and a trial is recommended. We may also give the following, which has given excellent satisfaction on forty acres of hilly land on a farm in Ontario Co., Ont.: Twelve pounds lucerne, 6 pounds timothy, 3 pounds white clover, 10 pounds orchard grass, and 10 pounds blue grass, per acre. Nine years ago this spring this mixture was sown with a nurse crop of barley. The growth was rank, especially of lucerne, but no cattle were allowed on it till the latter part of the following May. It has been pastured continually since, being top-dressed occasionally with manure. It is true the lucerne has now died out, except on the clay knolls, but here it is very persistent, and as thick as and more growthy than the first year it was sown. The seeding, generally, has proved a great success, and these hills are more productive and vastly more profitable than similar land on neighboring farms, tilled in the old-fashioned way, and gradually washing into gullies, the good surface soil having been long since carried away.

There is no money in working these hillside. They take the bigger share of the manure, as well as an extra amount of very difficult cultivation. Even then the crop is often inferior, and frequently the rotation is disarranged by failure to get a good catch of clover. In the early days the hillside were cleared first, as being safest from frost and earliest to permit seeding. But conditions have long since been changed. Now, it is the rich, level land which should be cultivated in rotation, and the hillside clothed in forest or seeded to some crop which entails no work except the harvesting. The worst of them should be in permanent pasture, so that the live stock may do even the harvesting. How many of our readers have ever calculated the profit in cultivating hillside.

The idea of exempting farm woodlands from taxation is gaining ground. It is not an extreme or irrational measure, but a moderate, feasible, and badly-needed means of stimulating interest in the farm wood-lot. As such it deserves the support of public-spirited citizens.