



A suburban street peopled by workmen
Where the township road is the highway and the foot-path in the grass serves for a sidewalk; soon to become part of a big city

SUBURBS AND VILLAGES

Getting the Land to the Doorstep and Beautifying the Street



Somewhat in the baronial fashion is this suburban home of a Toronto professional man. The English wall and the conservatory are two distinguishing features.



A well-known Toronto stockbroker built this handsome home in a fashionable suburb.



This home of colonial style stands in Queen's Park, Toronto, surrounded by groves of oak and maple and sloping down to a ravine. The land is leased but the house is the property of a Toronto millionaire who does not like a doorstep beginning on the sidewalk.



Outskirts home of an Englishman, who, two years ago, got this land for \$5 a foot. Material for the house cost \$1,200. Being himself a builder the rest of the cost was wages. This home he now considers worth \$3,500

THIRTY years ago—as may be noted by the miles of houses fronting near the sidewalk—city Canadians were almost as much in the habit of ignoring the land as are the builders of the 20th century. Many of the older houses are near the street line. Most of them were originally without verandahs, or anything more open than a porch. The people those days seemed to have either no inclination or no time to sit in the open. Contrast with that the spectacle of a present-day summer evening, when on one block of homes may be seen hundreds of people sitting on new broad verandahs—and balconies—wherever there was left room enough to build such.

The same tendency to enjoy the open and get the home in touch with the land may be seen on a larger scale in the thousands of suburban homes fringing our larger towns and cities. On this page may be seen a variety of suburban home types; some of them built in the heart of the residential section, many on the outskirts, but all surrounded by large plots of land and gardens. Many a humble labourer from the factories has more contentment of his own "vine and fig-tree" in a shacktown suburb than many a well-to-do owner of a city house, attached, detached or semi-detached. Most of these shacktown suburbs become integral parts of the city. Lucky is the man, then, who, having got his lot at five dollars a foot, is able to see it appreciate in value.

In most of the suburban settlements there is more local pride than in most city streets. But there is still room for a large field of activity in promoting village improvement. Many villages and towns are disfigured by unsightly and filthy rubbish-heaps; ash-dumps littered with dirty paper and rags; hideous blots upon the landscape that are often conspicuous from the railway-trains, giving visitors a most unhappy and unjust impression of the thrift and refinement of the inhabitants. In this respect Canadian towns are often in unfortunate contrast with European towns of the same grade, where the inhabitants have too good an eye to the main chance to allow their village to displease the stranger's eye and turn him away from their hostelries and their shops.

A well-organized Improvement Club can very easily efface the worst blot on the face of its village. With the help or at least the consent, of the village fathers, unsightly dumps and ash heaps can be levelled; tin cans can be buried out of sight; receptacles for waste paper can be provided; the railway company can be petitioned to embellish and beautify the depot grounds, a petition which in many cases they will grant when they see the people are in earnest about the matter; and in a score of ways the village may be made a more beautiful place to live in. A dozen resolute young men can bring about all this by their unaided exertions oftentimes, and then the citizens, when they see what can be done, will unusually contribute money and labour to keep their village beautiful.

Some attention should also be given to store building as well as residences. Nobody can live in a suburb, nobody rusticates in a "resort," nobody can run into the country for a week-end, if of a sensitive turn of mind, without finding cause to bewail the exceeding badness of the commercial architecture of his place of residence, sojourn, or visitation. The domestic architecture of suburb, resort, or country village, is improving year by year. "Village Improvement Societies," in villages far from the maddening crowd, import notions of embellishment. Stately villas are coming to occupy the picturesque coigns of vantage, and pretty cottages to line the village street. As for the "Resorts," the residential part of them offer a choice of picturesque homes and bungalows. The local tradesman alone does not seem to be affected by the esthetic uplift. Curiously, in his private capacity as householder and citizen, he may build and inhabit as pretty and modest

a house as any of his neighbours. But the ugliness, inappropriateness, and vulgarity of his place of business are as staring and uncomfortable as ever. The dwellings are improved by generations and decades. The "store" is as bad as ever. One is tempted to say worse. And yet proper supervision even of the "business quarter" should be included in the Civic programme and efforts made as far as possible to make even the stores picturesque and attractive.

The purpose in all this is to care for the general appearance of the village in the way that the individual property-owner cares for the looks of his own place. The beauties of the town are brought out by judicious treatment, and the ugly spots are done away or modified as far as possible. The roadsides are made beautiful, trees are planted, and the appearance of neglect that disfigures too many otherwise pretty villages is made to vanish.

There are always lot-owners who endeavour to beautify their places. There are others who always neglect them. One of the good effects of these village improvement societies is that they inspire a general desire to improve the home-lots. The lot-owner is ashamed to let his place fall behind in the general improvement. An energetic village society can accomplish much more in this way than its own expenditure would signify.

The money expended in this direction is not wasted. There is greater reward even than that to the eye. Land in a thrifty-looking, comfortable community where everything looks well, is more desirable than that in a neglected town, and where one is near enough to a big city to catch the suburban traffic the results very quickly show for themselves in increased population.

Villages in Ontario

ALL the Eastern Provinces of Canada have villages in bad need of some co-operative improvement scheme. The average Quebec village of course is always more or less picturesque, and might be made worse by any set scheme of improvement. There is always the tin-spired church, the parish house and the neat little cottage with the quaint dormer window. No, it would scarcely be possible for any merely civic idea to better it. It's a matter of poetry and religion and custom.

Too much custom and too little poetry have made many an Ontario village one of the most discouragingly decadent spots in America to visit. Many of these half-asleep little towns—many of which are admittedly improving—were started by a saw-mill. The mill shut down because of no timber. The town started to go into the museum stage. If as sometimes happens local option gets hold of the place, the town becomes dryer than ever. Though there is no reason why the average country hotel, such as is known in Ontario, should be suspected of improving any town. It's largely a question of regenerating the hotels, and rejuvenating the stores, improving the roads, planting gardens, laying out little parks, getting a band and some decent place of amusement besides the town hall—a rummy old ramshackle place!—or the hall over the cooper shop.

Nature has made many an Ontario village the beginning of a place beautiful. People—never having outgrown the old way of "any old thing is good enough, so long as it's cheap," let the village run down hill. They have the same old stores that did business twenty years ago; the same old postoffice, planing mill, perhaps a canning factory; even the same melancholy little shacks of houses. The main item of improvement is the sidewalk.

Yet a very little ambition and concerted effort would put many of these little civic museums into the first class of really alive, progressive little towns. Many of them in these days of much motor travel would begin to get a reputation, and to do a certain amount of casual business, some of them would become desirable places for well-to-do farmers to retire to and build comfortable homes after selling the farm.

It's a matter of a little local pride and some enthusiasm.

Ross Rifle and Its Critics

THE Quebec *Chronicle* explains in a recent issue that the alleged report of explosion of two Ross rifles furnished the Queen's Own was not due to any defect in the rifle, but to the fact that the rifles after delivery were handed over to another company to be fitted with a special sight. In fitting the sight the barrels were tapped to admit a screw instead of soldering on the barrel as in the Lee Enfield—or with rings as with the regular "Ross" sights to hold the rear of the back sight in place; this weakened the barrel and caused it to explode. When this was realized all the rifles which had been thus wrongly treated were, of course, ordered to be withdrawn.

Some people welcome the growing independence of the overseas Dominions. These young nations cannot stray very far afield as long as they owe such huge sums of hard cash to Daddy Rich of Lombard Street.—M. A. P.