

THE OUTLOOK FROM THE LAND

City and Country Interests Closely Allied

By J. W. WHEATON

IN no land are the interests of town and country more closely allied than in Canada. In Great Britain, for instance, though a prosperous agriculture has, no doubt, considerable influence on the business of the town or city, commercialism is largely dependent upon conditions outside of the United Kingdom. The commerce of the United States is gradually assuming a similar dependence. The influence of agriculture upon the trade of its cities and towns is not as strong as it once was in the neighbouring republic. True, agriculture is still one of its most important industries, but its trade and commerce is reaching out beyond its borders and the town is becoming less dependant upon crop yields and prices than was once the case.

Not so in Canada. The prosperity of the town depends so much upon the prosperity of the farmer that the least influence affecting the position of the agriculturist is felt throughout the whole business community. The forests, the mines, the fisheries, have their influence upon trade, but the dominant factor in Canada that makes for the prosperity of our towns and cities is agriculture. The average townsman may not realize this. But the capitalist, the bank manager, the railway president, the manufacturer or the merchant does. He makes it his business to keep in close touch with conditions affecting the land, with crop prospects, with prices for farm products and with the many influences that may retard or advance the position of the agriculturist. He realises that this is essential to success and that, in the last analysis, from the land must largely come the dividends on capital invested and the recompense for toil in the factory and in the counting-house.

THE FARMER'S POSITION.

Granting this, a brief survey of the position of the agriculturist as he enters upon another season of crop production and another endeavour to wrest from the land some more of its wealth, may be helpful in shaping business enterprise. Generally speaking, the farmer is in a better position than he was a year ago at this time. Live stock have come through the winter in normal condition. The scarcity of feed of last winter has been absent. The cost of feeding has been higher than it was two or three years ago, but with enough to run his stock through till the grass season opens, the farmer begins the spring campaign unhampered by the conditions of a year ago, when it required several months of grass feeding to get his animals back to normal and in a condition to render the service expected of them.

PROFITABLE PRICES.

With a few exceptions, profitable prices have prevailed for farm products since the last crop was harvested. Of the grain crops, wheat is the great staple, especially in the West. What was lacking in yield in last year's crop, has been more than made up by the higher price received. Not for several years past have Ontario farmers been able to obtain \$1.00 per bushel for wheat, as they are now doing. Prices for other grains have been well maintained also, and the returns from the harvest of 1908 have averaged up well with those of the past decade. East of the Great Lakes there is less selling of the grain off the farm than was the case some years ago. The growing of feeding crops is a chief part of the Ontario farmer's operations and his revenue from live stock and their products is increasing every year. All classes of stock have realised profitable prices also during the winter. Horses, cattle, sheep and hogs bring good prices to-day, and if more attention were given to finishing animals for market, especially in the case of beef cattle, the average price received would be higher. Last season's cheese output brought good values for the producer and this important industry enters upon another manufacturing season freer from held-over stocks than has been the case for several years back. Good prices should therefore obtain from the very commencement of the season. Butter is one of the exceptions. The producer realised well on last season's output, but the spring campaign in this line is not likely to open up so favourably as regards prices as it did a year ago. A saving factor is the better condition in which cows will begin the dairy season. Increased production will probably make up for any falling off in price. The orchard also gave a good account of

itself last year, where care was exercised in caring for the fruit. The apple trade has come through the season's business in better shape than for several years past. This will mean better conditions when this year's output is ready for market, though that is so far in the future as not to affect the general situation just now.

THE OUTLOOK.

So much for the past and present. What of the future? It is more difficult to forecast in connection with the farmer's calling than with that of any other. Providence counts for a very great deal. Seeding operations may be hampered by unfavourable weather conditions. The growing crop may not get enough moisture. Then again, it may get too much. If, however, average conditions prevail, the general outlook is encouraging and should inspire confidence in business circles and promote more activity in trade generally. A good start is half the battle. The farmer is in a position to make a good start this spring season. He is well able to make all the expenditures necessary for a good seeding campaign. There is no call for a Government loan to assist the farmers of the West in securing seed. Everything necessary seems to be at hand, and given favourable conditions, a good beginning will be made for the coming harvest.

A factor that has an important bearing upon the farmer's calling is the greater knowledge he has of his own business as compared with some years ago. The teachings of the agricultural colleges, the information obtained from experimental work and other sources, are being applied to-day as never before. This means better preparation of the soil, better selection of seed, better care and feeding of live stock, and better methods applied to farm work generally, all of which will tend to increase crop yields and the production of products that will command higher prices in the world's markets. This is one of the most hopeful features of

Canadian agriculture at the present time. The progress that this "land of farms" will make in the future, will depend in no small degree upon how well this deeper knowledge of agricultural practice is applied in increasing the products of the soil and in improving their quality. For this and other reasons the city and the town have a direct interest in every movement that makes for the better education and training of the farmer and the improvement of his financial position.

Winnipeg's Naval Ideas

WINNIPEG is taking its place in helping to form national opinions. At a recent meeting of its Board of Trade, the following carefully drafted resolution, was introduced by Mayor Evans and carried unanimously:

"Whereas, It is becoming and right that a people should provide for the protection of its own territory and interests;

"Whereas, Canada is a part of the British Empire and it is in her interest that the power and prestige of the Empire be kept unimpaired;

"Whereas, The integrity of the Empire and the safety of our external trade depends upon the efficiency of the British fleet; and,

"Whereas, The present crisis calls for the laying down of a definite policy of defence and offers an opportunity for a demonstration of imperial unity and of appreciation of the labours and sacrifices of the mother country in the common interests; therefore be it

"Resolved, That the Winnipeg Board of Trade heartily endorses the action of Parliament in adopting the policy of establishing and speedily organising a Canadian naval service, which can supplement the naval strength of Great Britain for the maintenance and honour of the Empire; and be it further

"Resolved, That at this opportune moment we would strongly advocate and support an offer by Canada to provide for the immediate construction of a *Dreadnought* as a special expression of our feelings toward the motherland and our desire that the standard of strength of the imperial navy should, under existing conditions, be maintained, and in the hope that it may be a means of hastening the day when the nations of the world will consent to a limitation of armaments."

Montreal's Spring Art Exhibition

By MRS. ROBERT JENKINS

IF to read every day a good poem or behold a fine picture is educative, then the people of Montreal are peculiarly favoured. This year they have had abundant opportunity at least for seeing paintings. The Impressionist Art display was no sooner ended than preparations were begun for the Spring Art Exhibit, which opened on 2nd April.

One of the most significant of the paintings now on exhibition is "The Letter" by William Brymner, R. C. A. A young woman is sitting on a couch by a table on which is a vase of flowers. The light falls on her auburn hair and on the white sheet of paper in her hand. She is holding a letter and with flushed face is musing on the contents of it. The girl's mood is excellently portrayed.

On the wall opposite is a painting that exhibits a study of a very different kind. It is "The Captive" by W. H. Clapp, and fascinates you by its horror and pathos. A young Spanish woman of beautiful form is lying prone on the floor, wrists and ankles bound and hair flowing. Close by is the large figure of a tawny Moor sitting on guard with weapon in hand.

Next to this dramatic picture is "The Bohemian Girl" by A. Suzor-Cote, a painter of strong, individual style. The painting is of a dark-eyed, oval-faced girl. Around her shoulders is a yellow scarf with red ornaments. Her face interests one, for in it character is depicted.

A very bright picture, showing unusual effects of light, is "Les Deux Plages" by Clarence A. Gagnon. Two yellow, sandy beaches lie before one in sweeping curves that mark the separation from the blue waters. Women and children are seen in the gay attire of a French watering place; and in the distance shine the buildings of the town. Over all a glow of light is diffused.

"The Autumn Harvest," an impressionist picture by Edward F. Boyd, is of a similar brightness—yellow stubble, golden, waving grain and autumn tinted trees. Mr. Boyd shows the Canadian spirit.

James Wilson Morrice's "Regatta, St. Malo," is a picture that is characteristic of the artist's style and gives evidence of extraordinary power in landscape painting.

Robert Harris, C. M. G., R. C. A., is represented by a number of portraits. He has a life-like painting of Canada's grand old man, Lord Strathcona. Another very fine portrait is an oil painting of Sir George Drummond by Jolliffe Walker.

From these you pass to "Landscape, France," by John Hammond, R. C. A. Through the country winds a road, bordered by tall, handsome elms. The shades of colour are of the softest. Everything is in harmony. Mr. Hammond's "Willow Creek" is a lovely pastoral scene. Sheep are grazing by the water. The soft green of the meadow blends admirably with the sober shade of the willows. Near this picture is a bit of beautiful poetry given in "Lowlands" by Mary H. Reid.

A very suggestive painting is "The Picture Book." Two Italian girls are looking over the pages. Mr. Edmond Dyonnet, R. C. A., the artist, has handled the subject with masterly skill. The picture possesses a charming simplicity and naturalness.

"French Canadian House, Murray Bay," and "St. James' Cathedral, Montreal," by Miss Ethel Seath display delicate work in etching.

"Bison in the Snow" by F. A. Verner, R. C. A., is happily conceived. The buffalo are feeding on the long, faded grass that is peeping through the snow. They are wonderfully life-like.

Thus one might go on with other beautiful canvases. It is impossible in one short article to do justice to them all. As you gaze at the product of conscientious work, careful thought and refined taste shown in portraits, landscapes, sculpture, and bronzes, you feel that Canada is gradually asserting herself and will at the right time take her place in the world of art as she is already doing in the world of nations.