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EDITORIAL.

Influence of Example.

A good example in life and conduct along moral lines has greater influence upon others than is generally acknowledged, and, in like manner, the example of the man who farms well or introduces improvements has an influence upon his neighbors that, though not always admitted, is often apparent in their adoption of his more advanced and improved methods. We have in mind a man who, many years ago, when farmers generally were recklessly destroying as much as possible of the woods on their farms, placed a fence around a generous portion of his wood land to protect and preserve it, with the result that he has now a wood-lot that is a source of pleasure as well as of profit to him, and is admired by all who see it in its summer dress. Although few followed his example in that matter, and many now regret they did not, he did another thing along the same line that many have copied, to their great satisfaction. He planted young maples, elms and basswoods at intervals along the front of his farm, by the roadside, and on both sides of the lane to the homestead, and a shelter-belt of spruces and pines on the north side of his buildings and orchard, and on the grounds in front of his house, all of which have grown into beauty and blessing. His neighbors, for miles in either direction, one after another, began to plant trees by the roadside in front of their farms, until now a drive over that road in summer is a pleasure, the homes beautified and farm life made more attractive, and when for any reason a farm in that district is offered for sale no one will deny that this planting enhances its selling value much beyond the cost of these improvements.

We know a man who took an interest in improving the public road in front of his place, and when the regularly appointed roadmaster refused to deepen a ditch to quickly carry off surplus water from a piece of road that was notoriously bad at certain seasons, with his own men and teams he did the necessary work in a day, greatly improving the road, and, at the same time, the condition of his own fields, portions of which were often water-soaked from the same cause. Encouraged by this experience, he prevailed upon a few of his neighbors to join him in hauling gravel in winter to further improve that piece of road, with the gratifying result that the roadmaking policy of that division was radically changed and most of the statute labor devoted to drawing gravel until that became the best piece of road in the township, and the good work was in time extended to most of the roads of the municipality, to the great satisfaction of all concerned.

The benefit to his crops from the deepening of the roadside ditch led this same farmer to consider the advantage of drainage, and by using the plow and road-scraper to deepen the surface ditches leading from certain slack places in his fields, his crops being greatly improved in those portions, ripening more uniformly, so that harvest could commence earlier, no part of the crop being allowed to get overripe before being cut. He found that by cutting the grain before it was dead ripe there was less waste from shelling, while the straw made much better feed for stock. This experience led him to make a study of systematic underdraining, and, preparing a map of his farm, he, by degrees, as he could spare the time, first laid down suitable tile for main drains, to which

laterals in the most needy places were laid, and, later, additional ones, until his whole farm is now thoroughly underdrained, the advantage from which has been noticed by his neighbors, and tile draining in that district has been generally adopted, and is acknowledged to be a profitable investment, the improvement in the crops paying for its whole cost in two or three years; while the work, if well done, is practically permanent.

These are cited as examples, which might be greatly multiplied, of the influence for good of men who do things, instead of merely talking of what might be done and what should or could be done. We might, did space permit, present in contrast the record of the man who made the longest and loudest speech at the Farmers' Institute, who had the history of agriculture from the days of Noah on the end of his tongue, who could expatiate at length upon scientific theories, and whose life was soured by the failure of his neighbors to appreciate his qualifications for office in the county council or the Legislature, but whose farm was a striking illustration of how not to do it, his fields an exhibition of the "yellow peril" and kindred weeds, his implements stored under the canopy of the blue at the back of the barn, and his stock the scrubbiest of the scrubs, but we trust we have written enough to set someone thinking of some things that may be done by any farmer without taxing unduly his time or his pocket to improve his own condition and prospects, and, at the same time, by his example to encourage others to go and do likewise.

Agriculture in the Canadian Parliament.

Listening to debates on subjects relating to agriculture in the House of Commons at Ottawa, it must be reluctantly confessed that one is not impressed with the dignity of Parliament nor its businesslike character. When measures are under consideration for the advancement of the agricultural interests of the country, a great deal of the criticism is destructive rather than constructive. Too many men seem to deal with propositions before the House from the view-point of party rather than what will promote the well-being of the farmer. In so far as the farmer is concerned, partyism is the bane of Parliament, and we believe there is a growing sentiment abroad that does not approve the consideration of the agricultural estimates in the light of a huge joke or as a party football.

Here is a specimen press-gallery paragraph from one of the big party dailies, in which a speech by a member of the House is burlesqued:

"Mr. Speaker," he said, "the records of the Agricultural Committee will show that I am first in every practical movement to advance this fair Canada of ours. From time to time, my voice has been raised in behalf of progress and reform. It was I who suggested that potato bugs should be provided with burglar alarms. It was I who brought to the attention of the farming community a new rotation of crops which would relieve the exhausted soil and turn a blight into a blessing. I allude, sir, to my famous theory that wild mustard should alternate with ham sandwiches in the fields of the grand old Province of Ontario. Who was it that took hold of a waste product like campaign literature and by using it as manure saved this country thousands of dollars? Who was it induced pumpkin pies to grow on bushes, and so avoid the pastry cook and the middleman? Who was it encouraged hens to lay hard-boiled eggs and build up the

picnic industry of this broad Dominion? Who was it discovered that dairy farms should be sown with buttercups, and that windmills should be run with speeches from Hansard? Who was it solved the problem of irrigation by planting the side lines with water lilies? Who was it advocated that there should be Government ownership of air? Who was it protested, day in and day out, against the scandalous and extravagant practice of equipping railways with Ascot ties? Who was it, when there was a new idea to boost or an old foible to knock—who was it, I repeat, was in the van and over the touch-line? Who but the member who now addresses the House?"

Fortunately, there is a saving remnant of members, not confined altogether to one side of the Speaker's chair, who take a more serious and sensible view of their duties than mere fault-finders or burlesque actors.

Let us keep first things first. Our agricultural exports (including animals and their products) are more than double our exports of manufactures, and nearly one-half the total exports of the country. During the writer's presence at several sittings of the Ottawa House, recently, we saw the seats of scores of M. P.'s empty when agriculture was under debate, some of those who were there asleep, and others who had no practical knowledge of farming wasting hours asking ridiculous questions for the purpose of badgering the studiously courteous Minister of Agriculture. One hon. gentleman struck a snag in the Central Farm estimates, and was bound to commit Mr. Fisher to some particular form of fastening for cattle, and when the Minister would only say how his own beloved Guernseys were tied, the irrepressible M. P. wanted to know, with all the gravity of an owl, whether cows would sleep as soundly in swinging stanchions as in chains? Another hon. gentleman slashed right and left, alternately knocking the unhappy experimental stockman, the beekeeper and the poultry manager, proceeding upon the theory that if the Farm, apart from the plots, did not show an actual cash profit, then all was loss and the people's money was being wasted. Apart altogether from the merits of what is being done or attempted at the Dominion experimental farms, this unique theory of the purpose of investigation is one to which the intelligent farmers of Canada do not subscribe. A given experiment may even demonstrate a loss, but the knowledge so gained may be worth thousands to the country. Does any dairyman begrudge the years of time and sums expended before Dr. Babcock discovered his butter-fat test? The utility of experimental work depends upon the men who plan and carry it out. A great deal of it may be no more than an accurate scientific check upon what some individual feeder or grain-grower has learned by private enterprise and effort, knowledge of which thereby becomes more widely diffused. Members of Parliament, as representatives of the people, are quite within their rights in discussing the conduct of the experimental farms and in seeing that the statement of accounts given in the farm report and in the report of the Auditor-General correspond, but it is also desirable that those entrusted with the management of these farms should have advice and counsel from time to time, as well as criticism once a year. On the other hand, the officers, as servants of the people, do well to keep in close touch with the man on the farm and in the market, and with open minds be ready for suggestions from any quarter, so that their investigations will have a direct bearing upon present-day problems.