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The Farmer's Advocate

and Home Magazine

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EDITORIAL.

The centenaries of the birth of four great men were celebrated in 1909: Darwin, Lincoln, Tennyson, and Gladstone.

Apple orchards are the greatest gold mines on many Eastern farms. The trouble is so few of them are well worked.

If self-interest were eliminated from municipal and political contests, and public spirit took its place, there would be less eagerness and possibly less interest in the strife for position, and better service of the public afterwards.

In Dr. Jas. W. Robertson, Macdonald College loses a masterful mind and a princely character. He has accomplished vast things in the interest of agriculture, and in service of the Commission for Conservation of Natural Resources will be confidently expected to contribute much more to Canadian thought and progress.

A large number of Canadians who were induced to emigrate to Cuba to "better themselves" a couple of years ago are now reported by the Canadian Government Trade Commissioner in an almost hopeless condition, owing to three successive hurricanes which destroyed their plantations, and also by reason of taxation by two rival municipalities, with the option of going to jail. Old Canada is the best place yet.

"I tell you what, the first number of that paper opened my eyes, especially on feeding matters," remarked a new subscriber to "The Farmer's Advocate" the other day. It will do that for anyone who will read it carefully with an open mind. There is more to learn about agriculture than most of us have any idea. It is not enough to devise and follow a system of farming adapted to one's present conditions. A good farmer must be equipped with wide knowledge to enable him to meet emergencies and altering times and conditions. He must keep pace with every advance in his profession. His mind must be keen, his faculties of observation alert and his purpose kept strengthened. This can be accomplished only by the reading of one or more first-class agricultural journals. Splendid opportunities are opening out to-day before the wide-awake husbandman. Resolve at once to be up-to-date.

The uncertainty, and, in many instances, unsatisfactory nature of farm labor in these times raises the question, whether, as a rule, these conditions might not be improved by judicious tangible evidence of appreciation of satisfactory service from time to time when occasion presents. A case in point has recently come to our notice, in which on an Ontario farm a man who had been continuously employed for twenty years, and who on severing his connection with the farm to take possession of a house of his own, was, in the presence of friends and neighbors, presented with an appreciative address, accompanied by the generous gift of one hundred dollars, which was in addition to a handsome bonus, over and above liberal wages, given annually for several years past, in acknowledgment of faithful and efficient service and the apparent desire to do his part well. The kind of feeling shown in this incident, if more general between employers and employees, would serve to make life more pleasant and profitable to all concerned, and is well worth consideration.

Our Magnificent Winters.

What a glorious season the Canadian winter is! How the brightness of the snow cloak lightens the gloom of the long night, and the keen tang of the clear frosty air summons the resistant forces of the physical nature to the front! There is little doubt that the exercise of these same resistant powers of the being during our rugged, bracing winter goes far to develop the vigor and the power which have always characterized northern peoples. In morals, also, the same effect is noticeable. The languorous warmth of the south not only enfeebles the physical and intellectual fibre, but the habit of ease it develops saps the secret forces of the soul which should resist evil. The habit of resisting and overcoming which the cold necessitates seems to have a way of permeating the whole being, so that the vices of the luxurious south in contradistinction to the stern and rugged virtues of northern-bred folk has almost become a proverb.

What exhilaration there is in the air, or in the ozone, or in something not so definable! This does not, of course, apply to the between-seasons period. While the winter is coming on, and storm and damp prevail, with alternating periods of snow and mud, there is a chill and an unsettledness which no one relishes. But when winter has fairly set in, when the snow creaks underfoot, when the frost crystals sparkle in the air, when sleigh bells jingle, everybody feels better, and the salutations everywhere heard are, "beautiful day," "fine winter weather," "this is something like." The young men and boys on the country roads returning home late from some Christmas entertainment in schoolhouse or church, trip and shove one another into the snowdrifts, and give vent to the exuberance of their spirits in laughs and whoops, which echo back from the snow-powdered woods. The older folks cringe somewhat, but yet in fur coats, under comfortable robes in the cutter, face sturdily the frosty night, the whiskers of the men meanwhile whitening until they look like Santa Claus himself.

Grumblers there are, to be sure, who wish there was no winter, and long for southern climes. But the same old fellows are tough, and with weather-brown complexions and whitening hair continue to live on in the climate they complain of, until they are 80, 90, and in some cases 100 years of age.

Notice that bunch of girls or young women that you meet. Their cheeks are plumper than in summer. They have fleshed up somewhat as the weather became cooler, and what a color glows in their faces! Every movement indicates energy and high spirits. Even the motions of the tongue seem to be affected by the general acceleration of speed, and the crisp, quick speech and the happy giggle reveal a delight in merely living that is simply exquisite to witness.

Notice the horse that is let out on a sharp morning for exercise. How he gambols and tears around in his play! In part he is working off the chill, but there is more than that. There is an exuberance of action, a spring of movement, an evident delight in exertion that is not manifest at other seasons. After careering around to his heart's content, he at length comes straight toward the stable at a high, strong trot, every step a spring, then suddenly halts on all four feet, head and tail up, with a great snort, which sends upwards from his distended nostrils two expanding columns of vapor in the clear, keen air. What vigor, what joy, what conscious power he displays!

The full-haired collie dog exhibits a like delight. See him as he bounds out after a fresh snowfall! How he rushes past his master like the wind, describes in front a long parabolic curve

as sharp as his speed will allow, snapping meanwhile at the snow fluff that he raises in his race, and giving vent to short yelping barks of glee, comes back with a rush to his master and circles around him a few times, rolls over and over, and again executes some circles, then when satisfied throws himself flop in a recumbent position on the soft snow, his speaking eyes, wide-open mouth and lolling tongue saying as plain as can be, "Isn't this great?"

There are spells in our winters, it cannot be denied, when the blizzard shrieks and roars, when the snow sifts through the barn cracks clear across the mows, and the mercury in the thermometer keeps sinking, that it is wise to keep as near the fire as possible, and to let those who have to do so brave the storm. But such spells are infrequent, and do not usually last long. In their way, by contrast, they help us to appreciate the finer weather which always follows.

Each season as it comes has its own particular charm. The rapid and pronounced changes from one to the other are a succession of pleasant surprises, and keep the mind from wearying.

We should rejoice in our winters. Let us drop the apologetic tone which we have used too long in regard to them and other things Canadian. The thankful, joyful note, the note exultant, triumphant, becomes us better.

Rational Fertilizing.

"Which fertilizer would you advise me to buy—acid phosphate, or sulphate of potash?" Which would you prefer to live on, bread or water? It is impossible to compare fertilizers that are absolutely different and incapable of substitution one for the other. Acid phosphate supplies one of the three essential elements of fertility, viz., phosphorus. Sulphate of potash furnishes another, potassium. Both elements are needed by every plant. Excess of one will not compensate for lack of the other. "Does that mean," you ask, "that if I apply one, say potassium, without phosphorus and nitrogen, that I shall obtain no results?" Not exactly. Some results will likely be seen, but not nearly so good as if all the needs of the plant were supplied. There is, of course, considerable of each element of fertility in every soil, but not always enough in available form. Fertilizing and manuring consists in supplementing the supply of these elements (and also of humus, important for its physical effects) already in the soil. Certain crops make specially heavy demands upon some one particular element. For instance, turnips find difficulty in obtaining from the average soil a sufficiency of phosphorus, and for this reason an application of acid phosphate alone to a turnip crop may often prove profitable, particularly if applied to a soil already in good general heart, or if used supplementary to a dressing of barnyard manure. Other crops, such as legumes and fruit trees, stand more especially in need of fertilizing with potassic manures, though generally responding best to a complete fertilizer specially rich in the one element particularly needed.

But, making reasonable allowance for special crops and special soils, the general principle remains that best results in manuring or fertilizing will be obtained by furnishing a complete or balanced manure or fertilizer. Ordinary barnyard dung, carefully preserved, is a reasonably well-balanced manure for most crops on average soils, supplying not only nitrogen, potassium and phosphorus, but humus as well. Hence, in large part, the excellent and dependable results following this mode of enrichment.

Where the supply of barnyard manure proves inadequate, we believe the soundest policy is to