

The Farmer's Advocate and Home Magazine

Persevere and
Succeed

Established
1866

Vol. XLII.

REGISTERED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COPYRIGHT ACT OF 1875
LONDON, ONTARIO, DECEMBER 5, 1907.

No. 793.

EDITORIAL

MACHINERY DISPLACING HAND LABOR ON THE FARM.

A large share of modern farming is done in factories. Much labor formerly applied directly in simple operations of sowing, reaping, threshing and marketing is now devoted to manufacturing plows, pulverizers, seed drills, binders, mowers, tedders, rakes, wagons, hay forks, grain slings, cutting boxes, threshers, engines, wind-mills, manure spreaders, feed and litter carriers, and cream separators, and in building and equipping railroads, warehouses, flour mills, creameries, cheese factories, basket factories, and hundreds of other facilities for the economical production and distribution of farm produce. With these auxiliaries, a farmer can now produce in a year several times as much sustenance as his great-grandfather could, and with less than half the muscular exertion. Of the increased wealth produced, part goes to the city laborer, the inventor and the capitalist, and part—not as large a part as we should like to see—goes to supply the farmer's family with more privileges, comforts and luxuries than was possible in earlier days.

In the household, the loom and the spinning-wheel have been long since stowed away in the garret. The factory, with its automatic processes, turns out the yards of linen and woollen goods once woven at home with unremitting industry. Of late years, even the family sewing-machine rattle seems less frequently heard, tailored and ready-made clothes taking the place of homemade garments, with advantages in the way of housewifely leisure, and possibly of style and fit, if not of warmth and wear.

Through it all we trace the farmer's evolution from the rank of a strenuous toiler to the more complex estate of a business proprietor, with emphasis upon management, whereas it was once placed upon manual dexterity and strength.

RURAL CANADA STILL SPARSELY POPULATED.

As in all periods of transition from simple hand methods of production to more efficient machine-aided industry, there is a disposition in some parts of older Canada to wonder, seeing that one man is to accomplish the work of two or four, how the rural population is to be maintained. "What," they say, "will we find here to do?" These inquirers overlook some important facts.

The world's population is steadily increasing, and the world's wants becoming ever more complex. While yet a long way from staring starvation in the face, the human race finds it necessary to maintain and even increase the prices for food supplies from year to year, despite more economical methods of production. In America, vast, growing cities bid liberally for breadstuffs, meats, milk, cheese, butter, eggs, fruit and vegetables, and demand, especially for the better quality, has been steadily outstripping supply. The world needs more food-producers, and Canada, with her fertile soil, favorable climate, and progressive citizens, is in an unrivalled position to supply the demand. It pays, and will pay better, to devote to the land the extra labor and extra fertilizers that tend to increased yields, and to grow those intensive crops that return maximum market values per acre.

Canadian farms are not yet half worked, compared to the standard of culture in older lands. In Britain, where much of the soil has been tilled almost a quarter as many centuries as much of ours has years, average crops of grain and hay

are almost fifty per cent. better, while our pastures are no match for theirs at all. Even at home, all we need do is to contrast the best yields with the poorest, or the best with the average, to perceive immense opportunities for increasing the population that may be sustained upon the land. Intelligent manuring, drainage and cropping, combined with thorough tillage, will do wonders. Think of the miniature countries of Denmark, with an area of 14,829 square miles, and a population of 2,449,540 in 1901, or 165.2 people per square mile; Holland, with an area of 12,558 square miles, and a population, in 1900, of 5,104,137, or 404 to the square mile; and Belgium, with an area of 11,373 square miles, and population, in 1899, of 6,744,000, or 593.11 per square mile. With the exception of Belgium, these countries are practically self-sustaining as regards food supplies, exporting enough in dairy and live-stock products to balance the imports of grains and breadstuffs. Yet, in Denmark's 14,829 square miles, 882,336 inhabitants are engaged in agriculture, or about 40 per cent. of the population. Then think of Canada, with her 3,745,574 square miles, equal to 30 United Kingdoms, 18 Germanys, 220 Denmarks, 290 Hollands, and nearly 330 Belgiums, and a population of less than two people per square mile.

We have scarcely begun to farm in America. We have merely scratched the surface of our agricultural resources. In the Northwest they have hardly tickled the soil.

Of course, we do not wish to emulate these minor European principalities in all respects. Five or ten acres would be rather too small for an average Canadian farm. We would scarcely care to tether our cattle, or spend leisure moments, as some of the Belgian peasants do, stamping the ground to bring worms to the surface for the poultry. In Canada, we deem it more important that the people on the land should live comfortably and well than that there should be a maximum population per square mile. But there is ample room in almost every Canadian county to double or treble the agricultural population, while materially raising the standard of living.

HOW MAY MORE PEOPLE BE SUPPORTED ON THE LAND?

Turning from generalities and statistics, let us consider a few ways by which the farms of older Canada may support in comfort an increasing agricultural population. First of all, let us remember that economizing labor does not necessarily mean dispensing with it. A farmer who has been growing grain and hay on land adapted for profitable orcharding or strawberry culture, may economize labor by planting trees or setting out strawberries, thereby enabling himself to earn on this land two, three or four dollars a day instead of a dollar and a half. Or he may economize labor by growing a large acreage of corn, which, while requiring considerable work, produces a heavy crop of valuable feed, thus liberally recompensing the labor expended. Economizing labor means making the most out of it by avoiding waste of effort and applying every ounce of energy to the utmost advantage. To-day, on Canadian farms, there is much labor applied to indifferent purpose. We can avoid a great deal of this by reforesting the poorest soils and steepest hillsides, and seeding the better of them to permanent pasture, so that live stock may harvest the crops. Hillsides not too steep to mow should be seeded to alfalfa, which will quickly convert them into mortgage-lifting areas. The rest of the land should be divided into few fields, and worked with four-horse implements wherever

possible. Thereby we make provision for the more profitable employment of extra labor in cultivation and also facilitate harvesting, while at the same time reducing the area of fence-corners and headlands. Seed selection to develop prolific strains of crops, cow records to eliminate the star boarders from the herd, and constant study to avoid waste of time in stable and fields, are other ideas which, if practiced, will not only augment the profits of farming, but also tend to increase the rural population per square mile.

Having disposed of the rougher and poorer lands by reforestation, laying down in pasture, and seeding to alfalfa, the next step is to farm better the remaining area. Millions of acres of Canadian farms are badly in need of tile-draining. This work could be done in slack seasons. Better preparation of seed-beds and more time spent in cultivating orchards, fruit plantations and growing corn would also be amply repaid.

Shorter rotations should be adopted in most cases, leaving smaller areas in grass, with more fields of clover and corn. Whereas the average farm now raises but five to ten acres of Indian corn, it might with advantage be raising twenty-five. Many a farmer with a hundred acres of ordinary land has been surprised to find that, by building a silo, he could increase his cattle stock thirty or forty per cent. without buying extra feed.

Stockmen, and particularly dairymen, will find it to their advantage to resort to a system of partial soiling (cutting and feeding green stuff) in the summer months. The experience of the Pennsylvania clergyman-farmer, Mr. Dietrich, who, by means of soiling, kept 30 head of stock, of which 17 were cows in milk, on a farm of 15 acres, on which he raised all the bulky food required, carries an eloquent weight of suggestion to Canadian farmers. It has been calculated that a meadow cut for hay will yield three or four times as much food as if grazed, and, in midsummer, the effect of grazing in reducing the yield of forage is undoubtedly much more pronounced than ordinarily. While we would not counsel the general adoption of Mr. Dietrich's method in Canada, deeming it not only unnecessarily laborious, but inimical to the thrift of our herds, still there is no doubt that, by the use of alfalfa, mixed grain, millet, green corn and silage to supplement the parched pastures of July and August, an additional ten to thirty per cent. more stock could be kept upon our farms, and much larger and more profitable yields of milk or increases in live weight secured. The necessity for such measures will increase as the land rises in value.

The third great need is for further diversification, raising more crops and more kinds of crops, keeping more stock and more kinds of stock. While we believe in each farmer having a specialty, we are equally convinced that it will, as a rule, pay to group around this specialty quite a few complementary branches. Nature rebels against the one-crop or one-stock system. Other conditions being equal, the largest crops and the thriftiest stock will be found where frequent change of crop is made, and not too much of any one kind of stock is kept on a given area. The importance of this principle is especially manifest in the case of poultry and sheep. No large poultry plant that we know of has succeeded for any length of time, and the unwisdom of keeping too many sheep on a farm is a matter of common knowledge. To a less extent, the same principle applies in other directions. Diversification not only tends to maximum production and elimina-