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EDITORIAL.

In the production of rapid and beautiful landscape effects, what artist can surpass the snow and sleet storms of a Canadian winter?

Rural teachers and scholars are finding a continuing source of instructive delight in the "Nature's Diary" articles by A. B. Klugh, M.A.

To obtain a useful understanding of the principles of animal nutrition we can, without any reservation, commend a winter course in a stableful of cattle.

On our fall-plowed lands the snow and frost are now engaged in tillage operations for next season's crop. It remains for us merely to apply the finishing touches in spring.

That farmers become the best-read and most thoughtful citizens is in large measure due to the splendid opportunities which the long winter evenings afford for solid reading.

Do not let it escape your notice that there are a host of things in the woods and fields about home just as intensely interesting as any town moving picture show, and far more wholesome in their surroundings.

A hustling Western city that keeps itself very much in the limelight of publicity is reported to have six hundred real-estate agents who will see that newcomers are promptly introduced to the land.

Very well put, indeed, is this paragraph by a Western farmer, who, being past the age of activity, has retired to a small piece of land in the neighborhood where he was raised.

"A farmer retiring from the soil where he has lived his best days reminds me of an old plow thrown in a fence corner to rust out. Now compare the plow rusting out in idleness and one that comes out of the last furrow bright and shining; it is past repair but still shining."

A case of considerable general interest through the Province of Ontario recently arose in Toronto over the prosecution of J. A. Webster, of Elgin County, for the sale of a quantity of apples on December 24, 1912, under a city by-law forbidding sales of less than a bushel at the St. Lawrence Market. The trial before Police Magistrate Kingsford, however, resulted in favor of the defendant, the magistrate holding that farmers were exempt under the regulation in question. It is said the city of Toronto will appeal the case.

The continued appreciation of its readers is one of the chief sources of satisfaction in the publication of "The Farmer's Advocate," and this is aptly expressed in a letter from a subscriber, who refers to the paper as "an old friend," and says he has not missed one copy for thirty years. Owing to international postage, the subscription price to American readers is \$1 more than in Canada, but merit counts above price with discriminating readers. For instance, James Kidd, of Lackawanna Co., Pennsylvania, writes: "Your Christmas Number is just received, and am highly pleased with it. No paper here publishes such an issue. The 'Farmer's Advocate' cannot be beat as an agricultural paper. Find enclosed \$2.50 for another year's subscription."

Corporation vs. Individual Farming

Failure of the National Land, Fruit and Packing Company, whose extensive project in the operation of rented apple orchards has attracted attention during the last few years, recalls certain observations made in these columns a year ago by way of comment upon our own quite successful, but more limited, experience with leased orchards. To quote from our files:

"As the acreage increases, difficulties multiply. Successful orcharding demands considerable labor, and certain of the operations, such as spraying and picking, must be accomplished in a limited time. To secure an adequate supply of even moderately efficient day-labor is difficult at the best, and, with extensive operations, becomes almost impossible. There is nothing wrong about this state of affairs, but it may well give pause to the syndicate orchardist. . . . We should be exceedingly sorry to see the splendid orchard possibilities of this country taken out of the hands of the individual farmers to whom they belong and leased for a song to capitalists. Notwithstanding certain probable advantages of corporation control in respect to marketing and rapid introduction of improvement in cultural methods, we are convinced that there is much more aggregate profit to be realized when each farmer takes care of his own orchard and harvests the crop himself, relying mainly upon his regular farm help. Instead of corporation marketing we should like to see co-operation; instead of hired managers, individual proprietors; and instead of capitalistic profits, an ampler revenue realized by the owner of the farm. Our experience furnishes reason for believing that extensive corporation control of orchards will not prove an ultimate success."

While sympathizing with the investors, therefore, we are, from another point of view, rather relieved to note that our prognostication has been affirmed by the facts. Goldsmith was near the truth when he said, "A bold peasantry, their country's pride, when once destroyed, can never be supplied."

From the standpoint of citizenship as well as agriculture, a race of individual free-holders is of the utmost importance to the State; hence we are gratified to observe evidence that business reasons will tend to preserve it yet awhile in Canada. Even allowing for the tendency of modern invention with the advantage it throws towards capital, it still seems to be the case that the interested thrift of a proprietor-manager who is in a position not merely to direct the work personally, but to perform a portion of it himself, is necessary for the highest type of success in the mixed farming of Eastern Canada. If there is one branch of mixed farming where syndicate operation should have its best chance, that branch is apple growing, but we are pleased to note that even in apple culture the best opportunities for profit are open to the enterprising farmer who will care properly for the orchard on his own land. The day of the independent self-employed farmer—the bulwark of our citizenship—is not yet past. May co-operative organization prolong it.

Mail Delivery and Roads.

One of the indirect results of the rapid and general extension throughout the older-settled portions of the country of mail delivery will be to rivet attention upon the condition of rural highways. That this will tend to their betterment there is every reason to believe. Very fortunately, too, in our judgment, these are, and will be for the most part, the ordinary roads leading hither and thither from the post-offices where the mail is sorted and the routes start in charge of the courier. Rural mail distribution will, therefore, not lend itself to the furtherance of trans-provincial or transcontinental touring highways for the idle rich. Who knows but what by the time these great pleasure routes were completed some other rapid transit fad like aerial motoring would be in vogue? Properly constructed and maintained main lines of road needed for the increasing ordinary traffic of the country are highly desirable, but so are the roads radiating from all the local centers of business which draw their sustenance from the farms, and it is over these that many of the rural mail conveyances will daily travel. The cost, speed and comfort of delivery will bear a very direct relation to the condition of the roads. Bad roads will increase the wear and tear on harness, horses, and rigs, and on the temper and nerves of the courier. The better the roads the less will be the cost of delivery, other things being equal. Comparatively few persons yet realize the large expenditures that rural delivery will entail upon the national Postal Department. While its revenues will, no doubt, greatly increase because of the better public service rendered, the net cost will be heavy, and this ultimately falls upon the people, indirectly, perhaps, but none the less certainly. It is, therefore, in their interest that the cost of operation be not unduly increased by the bad state of the roads. No investment which farmers make, whether through taxation or by their own individual efforts, brings more certain and gratifying returns than that intelligently expended upon the roads in constant use, either for pleasure or for business. Farmers have an individual and a community interest, therefore, in the up-keep of the highways, and they should not rest content to wait for municipal or government action, but bestir themselves locally as well as bringing pressure to bear upon "the powers that be." Here, as in other spheres, heaven will help those who help themselves. Under the old mail-stage regime, now passing away, the main gravelled roads were, as a rule, the ones traversed, but rural delivery will tend to promote traffic along the concession and side lines over which the routes are laid out, and these will now, perforce, receive more attention in all schemes of rural road improvement. It is well that this should be so. Furthermore, it is only a question of time when the public boon of a parcel-post system, as developed in other countries, will be initiated in Canada. While this will go to swell the postal revenues, it will entail more commodious carrier vehicle accommodation, and make still more desirable that better road-beds for the heavier traffic should be provided.

Better roads and better rural mail delivery must go hand-in-hand.