

## THE MANUFACTURE OF MAPLE SUGAR.



IN all the annual round of Canadian farm-work, by far the "sweetest" occupation is maple sugar making. Perhaps the farmer himself may not entirely relish the routine entailed by this first business of the dawning spring; pecuniary motives, however, render him deeply interested in its success. There is, nevertheless, one personage that regards the maple sugar season with unmixed delight, and that personage is no other than the happy-souled small boy. He it is who first announces to his industrious parents the wealth-promising news that "sap's runnin'"; he it is that considers the manufacture of maple sugar the most agreeable item on the long list of farm-life duties, and the one that gives the quickest and most satisfactory return for the expended labor.

Leaving profit out of the question, the making of maple sugar has a certain attraction for the aged farmer also; it is his nearest approach to the work done by the great manufacturing houses of the big cities. The necessity of having a special building expressly for the production of this popular article of commerce, awakens in his breast a kind of pride; for, on this account, he is in reality a manufacturer on a small scale, and has a monopoly of at least one species of production.

The maple sugar season, as a rule, begins about the third week of March, and extends as far as the second or third week of April. Its commencement and duration, however, vary somewhat every year, according to the conditions of the temperature. Bright days with warm sunshine, and cold frosty nights, constitute what is considered the best "sap weather."

As we have said, the ever active small boy is the first to discover the arrival of the maple sugar season. As soon as the March sun becomes bright and warm, his sugar-searching instinct is on the alert; every fine day sees him in the "bush," where, with jack-knife in hand, he tries the trees. At last his watchful patience is rewarded; his quick eye catches sight of the sweet liquid as it runs freely from the incision made by his knife.