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The Rural Canadian.

EDITED BY W. F. CLARKE.

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TREES IN FIELDS.

We have often observed, in the course of our travels, that while many parts of the country are very bare of trees, there are others in which there is a superabundance of them, only they are out of place, being miscellaneously interspersed through cultivated fields. The other day, when journeying through one of the finest agricultural districts of Ontario—that, namely, lying between the town of Paris and the city of Brantford—we were much struck with the large amount of land thus occupied. "The plains," as that section of the country is called, are thickly dotted with trees; and while it must be confessed that they add greatly to the beauty of the landscape, it cannot be denied that they diminish the crops to a very serious extent. If an accurate calculation were made in regard to this matter, the thrifty farmers of Brant county would be surprised to find how costly a tree tax they are unconsciously paying from year to year, in the diminished products from their fertile acres, owing to this cause. It seems a very common idea that trees make no demand on the soil; hence an orchard is not considered to occupy the ground, and so a crop of some sort—usually grain—is expected from land covered a few inches beneath the surface with a network of roots. But a little observation will suffice to show that this is a mistake. It matters not how liberally a piece of land may have been manured, a tree will monopolize the greater part of the resources of the soil, and leave a circle of half-starved grain all around its trunk. Suppose each tree standing in a field of grain to lessen the crop to the value of a single bushel of wheat—and we believe this estimate is far beneath the mark—then the tax is indeed a serious one. It is no exaggeration to say that in the particular district above mentioned there are farms that will average from two to four trees per acre. Calculate what this comes to in a year—in ten years—and it will be seen that it amounts to a considerable sum. Beside the loss in crops, there is the trouble of ploughing around trees, which is by no means a slight affair. It lessens the day's work of teams and men, beside being hard on implements and harness. We are strongly in favour of trees on farms, but we would have them in proper places: along the highway; as wind breaks; perhaps along the lines of fence—though, in truth, both fences and trees should be swept away as inconsistent with economical farming. A weed has been defined as a plant out of its proper place; and, strictly speaking, a tree in a cultivated field, unless in a fence corner, is a big weed. The convenience and comfort to cattle resulting from having trees here and there in pasture fields is often pleaded, but these are quite as well secured if the trees are confined to the lines of fence. In the good time coming, when cattle are mostly soiled, it will be found cheaper and better to provide sheds and yards than to keep up extensive pasture ranges sufficiently shaded with trees to protect stock from the noon-day sun. By all

means let the dwelling-house and farm-steading be embowered in trees; by all means let there be a reserve of woods well underbrushed and kept in a park-like condition, where cattle can roam and enjoy themselves; by all means let the exposed part of the farm be sheltered by a strip of forest and evergreen trees; but to have trees here, there, and everywhere is poor economy of land and labour. We do not advocate the wholesale destruction of trees in fields, but, by a judicious course of planting, the substitution of groves and rows of trees, where they will not interfere with farm work and farm-crops, for the miscellaneous growths which interfere with the productiveness of the soil and the straightforward and pleasant work of the ploughman.

THE ENSILAGE QUESTION

Discussions on the above subject continue to be "all the go" in our American exchanges, but we must confess that unfavourable opinions appear to be in the majority. The *N. Y. Tribune* summarizes a number of debates in the following paragraph, which is headed "Some Sayings about Ensilage":—

"A misinformed person might easily imagine that the champions of the silo were all interested in the sale of an ensilage cutter or other patent in some way connected with the new system of storing fodder.—One impulsive critic has dared to maintain that the enthusiasts of the pickling process couldn't see anything against their hobby if it were written in letters as large as the broadside of the biggest barn in New England. Is the effusiveness thus parodied the effect of the alcoholic fumes of the 'cow kroust' on the human victim? If so, it suggests an added labour for the temperance advocates.—The *Farm Journal* has this caption to an incisive article against ensilage: 'A Bald Humbug Knocked on the Head.'—Secretary Russell, of the Massachusetts Board of Agriculture, says the use of ensilage lessens the amount of cream, and butter from it shows its flavour.—Messrs. Ephraim Chamberlain and Joseph H. Walker, Worcester, Mass., 'investigating and thinking men,' are quoted as opposed to ensilage.—The *Rural New Yorker* insinuates that there are 'crazy-heads' connected with the abating ensilage excitement.—A correspondent writes that he visited the Pompton silos a year ago, and was not greatly impressed with the system as seen there, nor with the proprietor's method of presenting the subject.—Secretary Russell is quoted in the *N. E. Farmer* as having said in a recent public address that he and others 'opposed the pretensions of the ensilage supporters at the outset, because they began by claiming what was impossible, and because there was an evident purpose of speculation on the part of some of its advocates.'—Meanwhile the search for truth at the bottom of the silo goes on, and there is labour still for the Gradgrinds; 'men of facts and calculations, men with measuring-sticks and multiplication tables always in their pockets.'"

"THE CATTLE FANCY."

The *N. Y. Tribune* is pursuing live stock jobbers with a very sharp quill. We have already copied one or two trenchant editorials from its columns on this subject, and hope they may have some influence in restraining speculation, and inducing people to have some regard to real rather than fictitious values. Under the above heading the able journal named had another spicy article in its issue of June 7th, in the course of which it said with much truth that "the high rates paid for blue-blooded Duchesses and the black muzzled among Jersey pets bear hardly any

more direct relation to the great practical dairy industry and the pressing question of oleomargarine than the outer gingerbread of house ornamentation bears to the solid basis of stone which sustains the structure."

Our worthy contemporary is not far wrong in thinking that the fancy prices obtained for animals with fashionable pedigrees are secured by means very like those which are used in the parlours of Wall street, on race-tracks, and in pool-rooms. It finds a crumb of consolation in the reflection that if the mania for speculation did not take this form it would be pretty sure to assume others, and concludes its homily with the following paragraph:—

"If gentlemen of wealth and leisure, or those who illustrate the old saw about the unwise and his money, wish, in the excitement of sharp competition, stimulated by 'hippodroming' and offers of expensive silver-plate, to pay fat prices for such an intangible substance as 'pedigree' (which they fondly think they see illuminating the tip end of each individual fawn-coloured hair of sleek and promising but untried heifers, and even showing itself in the delicate shadings of their hoofs and horns), there is no law—except maybe a moral law—against their doing so. If the disease didn't take this form it might break out in the rabbit aberration or the fancy for swell dogs or pet poultry or pouter pigeons; and if wholly repressed in such lines of activity it might even have to expend its force on the ill-fed and despondent of the sorrowful human race. But when agriculturists and well-informed practical people who carry the heavy weights of this present world, see accounts of such cattle sales, they recall the sure outcome of the folly as exemplified in many experiences in England and in our own country, especially at New York Mills, fifteen years ago, and they make the easy and convincing calculation that probably no cow ever lived that was really worth a single thousand dollars—much less five or forty thousand."

MANURE SAVING.

Saving manure is like saving money. "Take care of the pence and the pounds will take care of themselves," is an old adage in regard to money saving. A like principle applies to manure saving. A correspondent of the *Farmer's Review* gives an interesting account of the methods by which an old German, rigidly economical of all the fertilizing material he could scrape up, managed, with only one cow as a manure-maker, to raise on a small plot of land a quantity of first-class vegetables. There is a moral to the story which will apply to extensive farms.

"He took me to his little barn and showed me the inclined floor of his stable, which conducted all the liquid manure into a tank. In a little shed back of the stable, protected from the rain, he piled the other portions of manure. Every scrap was collected carefully. Nothing was allowed to be lost. Two or three times a week he cleaned the floor of the stable, and the water used was turned into the tank to dilute the liquid stored there. In a shed adjoining the one containing the coarse litter from the stable he piled up all refuse that could be made into manure. Leaves, straw, muck, the stocks of vegetables, all went into this pile, to be wet with the liquid from the tank. He turned it over frequently with a long-handled fork, and soon it became as rich in fertilizing power as the more solid portions of the stable manure. In this way the old German secured more than double the amount of manure that one cow would make, and the liquid in the tank, to which soapsuds and all other liquids containing any element of plant food were added regularly, supplied an invaluable stimulant for