

The Farmer's Advocate AND HOME MAGAZINE.

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DOMINION.

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as platform orators, or perhaps having a better political standing with the party in power, have gone on the job to the detriment of Farmers' Institute work. This latter fault has not been with the different Superintendents who have acted since the inception of the work, but with the powers higher up in the Governments which have ruled in Ontario during that time and no doubt one side is as much to blame as the other. The point is, however, that a combination of these things, and no fault of the Superintendents who have been efficient men, has finally caused the need for reorganization.

In summing up, then, the weakness of the old methods is apparent. It will be avoided if it is in the new Board of Agriculture work. Nothing is a success unless backed by local effort. Little progress can be made unless the rank and file of the farmers can be lined up behind the movement to get benefit from it through the best local men. And above all things politics must stay out, no matter what party is in power. Co-operation of all the various organizations will mean success, but let it never be forgotten that when anything of this kind is taken out of the hands of local men it dies. The work must have a Superintendent and a head, but should be carried on in so far as at all possible, by leaders in each community. Success to the Board of Agriculture in Ontario!

The satisfaction the progressive farmer gets from watching his wheat head out, his oats and barley shoot up, his corn sending out a broad, strong blade, his roots breaking through the crust and his cattle contented in knee-high grass under a spreading shade tree cannot be measured in dollars and cents. It can be estimated by a study of the pleased expression on the bronzed face of the happy man; it can be realized only by experience.

How Often Do You Cultivate?

It was ever thus. The man with the best garden is the man who hoes it the most frequently, and the man with the best hoed crop is the man whose cultivator is going up and down the rows of corn, turnips, mangels or sugar beets the greater part of the time. The cleanest summer-fallow and the one in the best tilth for the crop to follow is the one that gets the most cultivation. How often should one cultivate? We have heard that it should be done after every rain but in a dry season or one unusually wet this is scarcely practicable. However, in an average season it is good practice to cultivate, especially corn, after every rain. This generally means once every week or ten days. Some good farmers make it a practice to go through the corn with the cultivator at least once a week during the growing season and these generally have a good field of corn. How would it do to make a rule something like this: "If rain falls about once a week, cultivate as soon as possible afterwards, if there is no rain cultivate anyway every five to eight days." Of course no hard and fast rule can be followed but make the cultivations as frequent as possible during the short growing season. Cultivation makes crops.

Nature's Diary.

A. B. Klugh, M. A.



Brodiaea grandiflora.

A very attractive little plant which is now in bloom on dry hillsides in British Columbia is *Brodiaea grandiflora*. It has, as far as I am aware, no common name, but its specific name of *grandiflora* is well merited, for the flower is extremely large for so small a plant, being an inch and a quarter long and as wide across when expanded, while the plant is only about three inches in height. The flower is deep blue, and against the blue background of the petals the white stamens stand out like little vertical shelves. The stamens are sterile, and they are longer than the three stamens which remain functional. As a rule there is but one flower at the top of the scape, but some plants bear two flowers, as in the case of the plant from which our illustration is taken, which has one expanded flower and a bud. The petals have a stripe of darker blue down the centre.

It is now leafy June. Just why it should be "leafy June" any more than "leafy July" with the poet is perhaps a little hard to see, unless it is a matter of contrasts—contrasting the fully expanded foliage of June with the bare branches of early May or the expanding leaves of mid-May. It probably is a matter of contrast—most things in this world are. Most things take their status from what we compare them with. A white-painted fence looks very white in the summer; look at it when surrounded by freshly fallen snow and see if it looks quite so white. Place one hand in ice-water, the other in very hot water, then put them both in a basin of water of ordinary temperature; one hand tells you the basin contains warm water, the other says it's cold. So it is that the fully-foliated trees in June attract our attention more than they do later on when we have become used to them.

It is interesting to study the arrangement of the leaves on a branch, to notice the way in which they fit in between one another so that one does not take all the light from another. They form what we may call a leaf mosaic. This arrangement is attained by a variation in the lengths of the petioles (leaf-stalks) and by curvature of the petioles. It is absolutely essential that a leaf be exposed to the light in order for it to perform its functions. The green coloring matter, chlorophyll, can turn the inorganic materials—water, carbon dioxide—into food (starch) only when acted upon by light. In addition to being the laboratories in which food is manufactured the leaves are also the stomach—where the food is digested,—the lungs—which take in oxygen from the air, and the excretory organs—which eliminate waste materials such as superfluous water and mineral matter. The water is exhaled from the stomata (little mouths or little pores) during the life of the leaf, but the salts are not finally got rid of until the leaf falls. If you burn dead leaves you notice that the proportion of ash which they leave is very large—it is the waste salts which have been accumulated in the leaf which you see in the form of ash.

A bird which is quite common in the woods in Ontario is the Towhee, Chewink or Swamp Robin.

The first two names mentioned are derived from the bird's note—to some it seems to say "To-whew" to others "Che-wink"; personally I can hear the former far more plainly in its note than the latter. But the name Swamp Robin is decidedly a misappellation, as it doesn't live in swamps, and it isn't a Robin. A glance at its cone-shaped bill will show you that it belongs to the Finch Family. The male Towhee has a black head and back, a white abdomen and chestnut sides. The female resembles the male except that the parts that are black in the male are a warm brown. The iris of the eye in the Towhee is red, a color not usual in birds, most of them having brown or yellow irises. The song starts with the call-note "To-whew" which is followed by a trill.

The call-note of the Oregon Towhee, which is the species found in British Columbia, is entirely different from that of the Eastern bird, being a "Micow" like that of the Catbird. The Towhees are nearly always seen on the ground, and are great scratchers—a Towhee busy scratching in some dead leaves can make enough noise for a bear.

Play on the Farm.

The twenty-fourth of May, Victoria Day, has just passed, and Victoria Day opens the picnic season in Canada as regularly and as assuredly as the first of January opens the new year, and why should it not be so? Recreation and relaxation from work man must have if he is to be a being with whom his neighbors would like to associate. But this year we have had much to sober us. Many, in the season's work, see only the necessities of life, and others hope only besides a living to reduce the debt that threatens to submerge the farm. Yet if we let the knowledge of our condition and the work about the farm weigh too heavily we cannot accomplish that same work in the way we might. The fields will not receive the best management or the best cultivation at the right time and neither will the housework go as it might, and the happy relations that should exist will not be there if the mind is worried over farm conditions. The picnic will help right these conditions. Throw aside farm cares and arrange with the neighbors for a neighborhood half holiday and go out to enjoy an old-time picnic. Arrange the picnic through the Grain Growers' Association or any other organization the neighborhood supports, or, if without an organization, take it upon yourself to call your neighbors together and shoulder the responsibility of picking out a day when there will be no rain.

Again, it has been suggested that with the Empire engaged in such a titanic struggle, and with the war cloud hanging so low over Canada, the time is too serious for pleasures. With the lists of dead, maimed and wounded, touching homes all over the land, with anxious faces watching for the news they hope will never come, many believe that we can well forego pleasure and in its place put soberness, thought and action.

In part only is this right. True, this is a time for sober thought and action, but who can stand the strain and give his best without relaxation? The men in the trenches must have their jokes and, behind the battle line, their games of football. We too, in the serious business of farming, doubly and trebly serious at this time because of the needs of the Empire and because of our own needs, require that we do our most efficient work. To do so requires relaxation from time to time in mind and body. Then let the whole neighborhood from time to time put work aside for half a day and everyone enjoy relaxation through a neighborhood social gathering of some sort.

Then what about the boys and girls, the big boys and girls as well as the little ones? Youth has been endowed by nature with a superabundance of high spirit that ever clamors for companionship and recreation. Unless this natural appetite is satisfied in wholesome sport then much of the best in these young people will be submerged by work. They will get a wrong conception of life and of farming. As we grow older we become more serious and too frequently fail to appreciate the longing for sport and companionship in boys and girls, in young men and women. But we must recognize all factors in their development if we are to have them do their best work and mature into the best men and women, and not the least of these factors is a reasonable amount of recreation and companionship. Too often it is lacking on the farm.—"Farmer's Advocate and Home Journal," Winnipeg, Man.

Someone ought to tell the German diplomats that New York is in the United States. Did anyone ever hear such a foolish contention as that Canadian troops were on the Lusitania?