

The Household.

Homedale Farm.

THE MARCH OF IMPROVEMENT

Work went on apace at Homedale. Mr. Perley pushed his rural affairs with the same energy he had been accustomed to throw into his city business. He was no sluggard, or idler, and he refused to have people of that character about him. With that intrinsic sagacity which characterizes a true man of business, he soon took the measure of a labourer or mechanic, and was careful to employ only such as were industrious and efficient. Improvements of various kinds were set on foot, and vigorously carried forward, in consequence of which Homedale usually so quiet, was for a time a scene of no small bustle and stir. Very soon after the removal, the enlargement and adornment of the dwelling came under discussion. After sundry consultations it was wisely resolved that the best method of procedure would be to call in the advice of a competent architect. Mrs. Perley, in her girlish days, had been fond of the pencil, and had attained some proficiency in the art of drawing. Her subsequent duties and cares had not taken away the taste and skill of which she had been mistress in her younger years, though her opportunities for practice had been but few and small. She felt, therefore, quite competent to sketch Homedale as they found it, and this drawing accompanied by a statement of the alterations wanted, would, it was thought, enable an architect to supply them with such a plan they desired. The question whom to employ, was at once met by a suggestion of Mr. Perley's practical mind. "We are farmers now, and what we want is a building in keeping with the rules of rural architecture. Some very nice plans of country homes have appeared in the CANADA FARMER, and we cannot do better than send our sketch, and an account of what we want, to Mr. Smith of Toronto, who I see by referring to the first number, has charge of the architectural department of that paper." Mrs. Perley at once fell in with the suggestion, and remarked, "I quite fell in love with the pretty log-house that appeared in the second number of the FARMER, and that was a very tasteful suburban villa which appeared in the last issue. I have no doubt Mr. Smith will send us a good plan for our improvements if we apply to him." Accordingly the sketch of Homedale, accompanied by a letter setting forth the alterations desired, was forwarded to Mr. Smith, and in the course of a few days, an answer was received, accompanied by a plan, which at once won the approval of all the Perleys, both old and young. It was, indeed, an astonishing transformation that was proposed. A wing almost equivalent to another house was added on the west side at right angles with the old building, and as the roof of the old house was pretty steep, an ornamented gothic gable was put to the wing, and a pediment made to rise out of the old roof. Ornamental tracery ran round the cornice. The square porch was taken away, and a nice verandah put in its place, which extended along the east side of the house, as well as the front. A little simple ornamentation was given to the windows and chimneys, the whole forming a very pretty and even elegant structure. The building already up was by no means an old one, though it was natural to call it "old," in distinction from the new part intended to be added to it. It had not been built many years, and though perfectly plain and devoid of all ornament, it was a substantial house, and rested on a solid stone foundation. It was better, therefore, to enlarge and improve it, than go to the expense of putting up an entirely new building. With as little delay as possible, the contract was let according to specifications furnished by Mr. Smith, and simultaneously with farm and garden operations, masons, carpenters, plasterers and painters, were kept busy.

Some weeks elapsed before Homedale farm-house received its finishing touches. Meantime other matters demanded and obtained attention. Walks and flower beds were cut in the greensward between the house and the road. Though not stocked with the right grasses for the smoothest kind of lawn, it was better to take the turf already formed, than to tear all up to form a proper velvety lawn. The paths were gravelled, and the flower-beds planted and sown. Evergreens, ornamental trees, shrubs, and bedding-out plants were set out. A neat fence was built in front of the dwelling, in place of the unsightly old snake-fence of decayed and worm-eaten rails, that had been such a disfigurement to the premises. The dilapidated and rickety log-house was taken down with some reluctance, Mr. Perley feeling a natural attachment toward it as his birthplace. It was, however, becoming unsafe in consequence of the rotting away of the logs next the ground. Prudence, therefore, dictated its removal. Not far from the site on which it stood, a neat carriage-house was built. Clumps and rows of evergreens were planted to cut off the kitchen yard and back premises from view, and to furnish protection from the keen nor-westerly winds which Mr. Perley well remembered were wont to sweep across those exposed plains. Nor must we forget movements about and within the kitchen garden. Not only was it well and deeply ploughed, but top-dressings of leaf mould from the woods, clay from the neighbourhood of the creek, and well rotted manure, of which there was considerable about the barn and outbuildings, were teamed upon it. A tight board fence, six feet high, was put round it. The little folks found plenty, not of amusement merely, but of real hard work in the front and back gardens. At first their young muscles, unused to labour, ached sadly, and they were weary enough when bed-time came. But children have a natural fondness for country life and rural pursuits. Under judicious management and wise instruction such as the little Perleys were blessed with, their natural liking for out-door occupations becomes an intelligent preference, and a rational enjoyment. Our young friends grew deeply interested in sowing and planting, raking and hoeing. The growth of every plant, tree and seed,—the budding and blooming of every flower and fruit blossom,—were closely watched and duly trumpeted as important news. Their time was divided between play and work out of doors and study, together with other duties, indoors. Homedale gave them plenty of scope for exercise and amusement in the open air, without the danger of evil company, such as besets the young in the streets of the cities. They were not prisoners as they used to be, to a great extent, in their city home, most thoroughly did they enjoy their freedom.

"Like sportive deer they cours'd about, and shouted as they ran,
"Tuffing to earth all things of earth as only childhood can."

To give an idea of boy and girl life at Homedale, we must narrate some of the pursuits and pastimes which occupied them while the improvements that have been spoken of were in progress. Some snatches of their history from spring to midsummer, will prepare the way for the appearance, in the proper order of time, of our promised engraving of "Homedale as improved by the Perleys."

(To be continued.)

SMOKING HIM.—"You look," said an Irishman to a pale, haggard smoker, "as if you had got out of your grave to light your cigar, and couldn't find your way back again."

NOR SO STUPID.—John was thought to be very stupid. He was sent to a mill one day, and the miller said "John, some people say you are a fool! Now tell me what you know and what you don't know." "Well," replied John, "I know millers' hogs are fat!" "Yes, that's well, John. Now, what don't you know?" "I don't know whose corn fats 'em!"

HOW TALL.—Dean Swift, "It with little-sooled people as it is with narrow necked bottles—the less they have in them the more noise they make in pouring it out."



Shelter for Gardens and Orchards.

In exposed situations, it is very necessary to provide, by artificial means, for the protection of gardens and orchards from the action of strong and cold winds. Our climate is such that we are liable all through the growing season, to be visited by turns of weather, endurable enough in sheltered places, even by the tenderest plants of out-door growth, but almost sure to exert an injurious influence, if chilling blasts have unrestrained sweep. In winter too, shelter is very important. Experience has proved that plants, fruit buds, and young wood, will bear a much lower temperature if the air be still, than they will if it be in motion. Just as the human frame suffers from piercing winds far more even than from severe frost, so vegetable fibre will resist much intenser cold in calm weather, than it will if exposed to fierce wind. It is commonly believed by the best gardeners and orchardists on this continent, that the wintry blasts have much more to do in killing out tender plants, trees and fruit buds, than steady frost and intense cold.

The importance of shelter should be kept in mind in planing out farms, deciding on sites for buildings, and laying out gardens and orchards. It is never desirable to build a house or barn in a low, flat place, but there are often locations sufficiently high, part of the way up a slope, or so surrounded and protected by rising ground, as to be considerably shielded from the wind. In clearing up new land, provision may be made by leaving timber belts to encompass the area on which it is proposed to put the house, barn, orchard, and garden. We believe that in many, if not most cases, it would be wise policy to have the farmer's wood-lot near the dwelling, instead of its being as it usually is at the farthest remove from it. The falling timber would nearly, if not quite, suffice for the supply of firewood for some time, and as openings were thus made in the reserved piece of forest, the undergrowth of young saplings would come on, spreading out their branches on every side, and making beautiful specimens of ornamental trees, which in their turn would be thinned out by the axe for purposes of fuel. Taste and economy would thus go hand in hand.

But generally speaking, a clean sweep is made of the natural timber when land is cleared, and living shelter can only be had by artificial planting and long waiting. Partial protection, very useful and helpful so far as it goes, may be obtained by board fences and screens, which though unsightly, can be erected quickly, and are at once available. For small gardens, these have the advantage of not taking up a large amount of room. But where land can be spared, living shelter should be had by all means, and for this nothing is comparable to a thick growth of evergreens. Retaining their foliage all the year round, these furnish a most valuable screen in winter when the fiercest and coldest blasts are abroad.—Their slow growth is an objection to them, and for this there are no remedies but careful planting, good attention, and patient waiting. After all they come on steadily, and in a few years astonish you by the dimensions they have attained. A farmer of our acquaintance was prudent enough to plant out a belt of native balsams on the north side of his house and garden, shortly after he settled upon his land, and now, in the course of some fifteen years, they have grown to magnificent proportions, and tower far above the buildings, affording ample shelter, and