

ber 1, the trees are helped to ripen off their wood and prepare for winter.

These advantages are worthy of the consideration of the orchardist. The plan has worked well in the orchards of this department, and it will without doubt operate as successfully in many other regions of the state.

It is a matter of grave doubt as to whether there is anything gained in the long run by cropping the land that has been planted to fruit trees. Of course it pays while the crops are being gathered, but does it pay to have the orchard come into bearing on soil reduced in fertility? Will not the orchard during its bearing period have need of all the food elements that the soil contained at the start? Will not the productiveness of the orchard be reduced in the same proportion as the elements of fertility have been removed by previous crops? This will certainly be the case unless the removed elements are restored by means of fertilizers. Ground that supports an apple orchard for thirty successive years has no food to spare for corn crops. Either cling to the orchard and forego the corn crop or else depend upon the corn and abandon the orchard.

It is now the latter part of May. The soil is moist, and good growing conditions prevail all over the state. It is nip and tuck between crop and weeds on every side. With the farmer in the garden or the cornfield, the weeds grow apace in the orchard and often predominate. Once in control they soon fully possess the situation; and, as dry weather prevails later on, they will consume the water in the soil and leave none for the trees, which thereby starve for the time being. The only remedy is prevention. Do not allow the weeds to grow.

Should Towns Assist in Road-Making?

The following extract from the report of the Provincial Instructor in Road-making for 1898, just issued, is to the point:

"A difficulty in the way of obtaining better roads in Ontario is that, under the present system of township management, the entire cost of road building falls upon the farmers. The people of the villages, towns and cities, to whom country roads are as necessary as to the farmers, and who compose nearly one-half of the population, pay nothing towards their construction or maintenance.

While it is necessary that the farmer should have roads to haul his produce to the centres of population, he also uses the roads to draw back to the farm the supplies purchased in the towns. It merely happens, as a matter of convenience easily understood, that the farmer draws his produce to the town and his purchases back to the farm instead of the merchant hauling his merchandise to the farmer, and the produce of the farm back to the town.

It is only a century or so ago since the active settlement of Ontario commenced. It was at that time the statute labor system was established. In addition to this, the Provincial Government spent the greater part of its revenue on the construction of roads and bridges. Since that time the distribution of the population has materially changed; the statute labor system remains for the construction of country roads, applying only to the rural districts, while the provincial aid has been withdrawn, thus wholly relieving the people of the towns and cities from their share in the cost of road building.

The change of conditions has taken place so gradually that the evident disparity resulting has remained unnoticed. The system of road control and taxation has not grown and developed with the growth and development of the country. The result, so far as road control is concerned, is similar to a full grown man still wearing the clothes in which he went to school.

There does not appear to be any reason why the farmer and rural population should pay the entire cost of road building, any more than they should meet the entire cost of railway and canal construction. A system of good

country roads is an expensive public work, in every way necessary for the development of a country, and so long as the farmer bears the entire burden it is manifest that the desired end, good roads, will be difficult, if not impossible, to reach. In any event the attempt to do so comprises an injustice.

The towns are asking for good country roads. They are beginning to realize how important for them it is to have free and uninterrupted communication with the surrounding country districts at all seasons of the year, and would no doubt be willing to pay a fair proportion of the cost in order that road improvement would progress more rapidly. This very interest which is being displayed is the strongest evidence as to the mutual right of townsman and farmer to pay for the construction of a country road system."

A Sheep Clipping in the Old Land

The following spicy account of a sheep clipping in the lake district of England and published in a recent issue of the *North British Agriculturist* is a beautiful piece of word painting of this old time custom where work is combined with a great deal of pleasure and good fellowship:

It was a rememberable sight that sheep-washing on Thirlmere's side—a sight that will never more be seen there, as long as Manchester drinks the water of the mere of Thorolf the Dane.

With barking and much noise, the sheep dogs drove from the high fells the brave company of bleating ewes and lambs, and the farm lasses met the shepherds as they strode through the fern, and the boys and girls all helped to get the noisy multitude of Herdwick mountain sheep into the funnel-shaped pen inside the wall. Then into the close-crammed company the lads went, picked out the struggling lambs, and tilted them over the pen side, to await their dripping lake-bathed mothers.

What a picture it all was!—Raven Crag lifting up solemnly and silently into the sunny air, and down by the lake's glistening marge the whole farm company gathered with their loud-voiced charges. As we listened to the bleating and the baaing and the barking, it seemed as if the fell-side voices of miles of pasture were mingling in protest against the bath; but what suspicion of harm could there be, when the shepherd's daughter sat on the boulder close by, cooing to and caressing two of the tiny lambkins clasped under each arm, while the collie lay at her feet or licked her face.

Then what good-natured fun and frolic it all seemed! The shepherd stood waist-deep in the lake water, the sheep were lifted one by one and thrown towards him. Seizing the fore legs and keeping the heads above water, he soused and swayed the body of each Herdwick in turn, gave it a friendly push towards the shore with a 'theer git heam to the barn,' and the sheep, heading for the land, crept out upon the grass, shook its head and ears violently, and waited till its child should own its much altered and less lovely if cleaner form.

I said, what fun and frolic reigned. The lad who threw the ewes into the pool would wait till the shepherd's back was turned, then splash, splash right atop of him would come the sheep. I thought one or two of the Herdwicks looked as if they enjoyed the joke, but when the shepherd "clicked" the lad by the heel and dragged him in with the last ewe in his arms, and, letting the sheep go, took the lad by the head and treated him to a downright good sheep-washing, I fancied the whole flock shook their sides with laughter, as much as to say, "Serve him right."

Then all the lads and farm lasses sat down and waited, and over the fell-tops came another bleating multitude, while the lately washed ones went back with their lambs in silent thankfulness, through the fern, and were lost to sight.

But not for ever were they lost. I was brought face to face with them again in less than a fortnight; for "Th'