

must have overshoes, so that they can make themselves felt in the family by wearing out two pairs of shoes at the same time. As no teaming is done, it is seldom that there is any harness to be patched, and whittling wooden spiles to be ready for the sugar-making in the spring passed out of vogue at least a generation ago. Of course they have papers to read—loads of them, from the local weekly with its neighbourhood news to the city daily with fiery cables about the Budget. There is material in them for all kinds of talk from gossip to philosophising. But the average man can't read and talk for five mortal hours at a stretch with any degree of satisfaction. This leads the observer to regret that the art of sitting before the fire and twiddling one's thumbs has also gone out of fashion in these days of strenuosity. It is pleasant to remember the old-timers who used to sit before the open fireplaces twiddling their thumbs and staring at the coals. Being ignorant of "the three r's," except perhaps enough arithmetic to enable them to keep track of their money, they were unable to feed their minds with the latest sensational news. They therefore sat and twiddled their thumbs; but let no one despise this seemingly futile occupation. One of the shrewdest critics of life known to modern times asserted that "doing nothing is the hardest and most intellectual of all occupations." It was among such that Whitman found his "great uneducated" men, and Touchstone his "natural philosopher," who knew that "the more one sickens the worse at ease he is, and he that wants money, means, and content is without three good friends; that the property of rain is to wet and of fire to burn; that good pasture makes fat sheep and that a great cause of the night is lack of the sun." Where is one to find such men now? Packed full of information of all kinds by their favourite newspapers, even the humblest can "profess apprehension" and have opinions on all manner of subjects.

If Canada should produce a Burns among its multitude of poets and he tried to do a "Farmer's Saturday Night" he would be forced to go at it somewhat in this fashion:—

to accept
the name
now