

Human Nature and Politics.

EDITOR "THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE":

In December last for the first time in my life I went on the stump in my county in support of Union Government. Not as a party man, mind you. I gave up party three years ago and vowed to myself that in future I would vote as I pleased or thought best or not at all.

I knew, and my knowledge of the fact is increased every day, that such a course would brand me as a political pariah or outcast. I had always voted Liberal but had never given much thought or time to elections or party issues. However, I was always considered a strong enough Liberal to make the candidates for the Conservatives believe it not worth while to ask me for my support.

During the autumn and early winter, Major C. W. Gordon, (Ralph Connor) lectured throughout the province on Canada's position in the war, and I heard him in a nearby town. His graphic portrayal of the heroism of our men in France, the powerful organization of the enemy, the apparent sloth and inefficiency of the Allies, especially of Britain and English speaking countries, the great need of men to help and take the place of our boys at the front, many of whom had been in active service for over three years, and the need of subordinating party and any other mean consideration to the all important one of doing all we could to win the war, roused within me my first real feelings of patriotism, and I offered my services in the election campaign to the Union candidate, knowing that my friends on both sides of politics would repudiate me as a job seeker.

At first it was rather amusing to be treated by my old party friends on both sides as if I had the small pox. Then I began to pity those who were so blinded by the teaching of years that they would close their ears to all arguments, but those of their own party papers and hee-lers. At the different places we held meetings I had a splendid chance to study human nature in the men and women I met. The women were, as a rule, in favor of conscription and a Union Government. I was surprised also that although it was their first experience in the franchise their ideas were comparatively clear and well defined, and they seemed to have less of prejudice and more of a fair-minded desire to vote right than the men of either side. I had always been in favor of female suffrage for I felt that the masculine vote had fostered a political system of graft and corruption that was making Canada a disgrace, and the slime was spreading and becoming thicker every year, and I hoped if women were given the franchise their influence would be for political purity, at least.

In this campaign I met many women voters, talked with them when their hearts were yearning for sympathy and encouragement to bear the absence of loved ones at the front, and for knowledge of the questions at issue in the present crisis, and I still feel that the extension of the franchise to women will be one of the wisest laws that the statesmen, not the politicians, at Ottawa could pass—They will, if allowed to vote, use the privilege much the same as the men, inasmuch as they will be influenced by friends and government parasites. They will hear, read and be prejudiced on general questions by the people they talk with, and the papers they read. They will become, the majority of them, almost if not quite as strong partisans as the male voters and will listen to or read only one party's arguments. They will probably never give as much feeling, thought and time to politics as the men but—and here is where their real value will come in. If any question concerning moral reform, political trickery, national progress, or betterment of existing conditions comes up as a plebiscite or in connection with an election, I think we can in almost all cases depend on the women voting for the right, at least as far as they can see the right.

But the men I met in this campaign! They were hopeless. With the greater number the predominant feeling was that they belonged to the "Grand Old Party", and that was enough said, if they were Tories they piously felt that the Union Government was their party working under a non-de-plume and that all who worked for the Union Government had turned Tories. While the honest-minded Liberals maintained that the Liberal party only could save the country from the disgrace of conscription and save our precious boys from being butchered in France.

Getting down to an analysis of feeling, I found that men were partisans for three principal reasons. The political machine of both parties has been built and thoroughly built on the hopes and aspirations of, I would almost say, the majority of voters who hope by unswerving devotion to party to gain, at some time in life, some position or emolument under the Government which will ensure them a life of greater ease and honor; a chance to make a little more money. This is the class of voter who is responsible for all the graft and wickedness of governments the world over. Held off year after year by the indefinite promises of his representative or political friends in power or given possession of some more or less soft job, he sticks slavishly to party and enables the machine to manipulate blocks of him as so much certain filling material in an election. He is the biggest curse to be found in the state, as far as clean government goes. This monster is too often a male of influence in his county or community; a party heeler, he acts for the machine in herding together the ignorant, shiftless and unthinking and don't-care voters at the time of an election.

A second class takes his party politics like his religion and his surname, from his father and thinks as much of changing the first as either of the others. He is also generally unreasoning, ignorant and prejudiced. He does not stand out distinctly, but shades into and

partakes of the feelings of each of the other two classes and is probably as hopeless as far as any real support to his country goes—No matter how flagrantly corrupt his party has been he will not believe anything against them, he also is a "sure count" with the political heeler.

A third partizan is the one who is afraid to change. He fears the turning out in the cold by his own machine and non-acceptance by the opposite group. Being prepared for it I was amused to notice how quickly the cordiality of the Tories toward me cooled after the Union Government came into power and my usefulness and the campaign ended. How much more self-respect would be engendered in a number of our voters and how much purer governments we would have if voters would only realize that their representatives and political friends considered them as so much fuel useful principally at election seasons to keep the party machine in action, and how faithful they are to this machine even against their own interests.

In my presidential address before the farmers of Nova Scotia last year, I spoke of the contemptible action of both parties in the local house in allowing legislation asked for by the farmers to pass the house of assembly with the understanding that it would fail to pass the local Senate, thus hoodwinking the farmer into believing that his representatives were doing all they could for him. In spite of the fact that the representatives had thus made a laughing stock of the farmers there were a number of farmers of both parties in my audience who were indignant at my arraignment of the political tricksters who had fooled them. In regard to this last class, or, in fact, all classes of partizan voters, I would like to live to see the day when a man or woman voter will be as much ashamed of having to confess that they are, and always have been followers of one particular party as they are ashamed today of being called turn-coats.

These classes of partisans cannot believe that a man could change his vote from pure and disinterested motives. In the campaign in December last I found comparatively few who took me at my face value and believed that I was working from patriotic purposes. The Tories thought I had turned Tory permanently. A few Liberals considered me a weak Liberal who had been influenced by the enemy's false appeal to patriotism. A large number of both parties were sure I was after a Government job, and a few insinuated that I was getting paid straight for speaking as a former Liberal in favor of Union Government.

In any case I would not have missed the experience for a good deal. I learned a lot more about human nature and had my ideas about the political system confirmed and strengthened.

N. S.

R. J. MESSENGER.

Favors Four-foot Sleighs.

EDITOR "THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE":

Having noticed your articles re wide sleighs, I thought I would tell you the opinion of the people in this district. The general opinion of the farmers is that sleighs should be four feet, centre to centre of the runners on the ground. Many farmers have already got their sleighs made that width. This being a lumbering district and having used sleighs of both four and five feet, teamsters all say for an all-around sleigh four feet is by far the best width of all. A sleigh being much lower down than a wagon and the load placed directly on top of the runners instead of in between the wheels as on a wagon, I do not think it necessary to have sleighs made four feet eight inches as a wagon is.

Muskoka District, Ont.

R. V. KNIGHT.

Prevent White Grub Injury.

Crop Protection Leaflet No. 5, by C. Gordon Hewitt, Dominion Entomologist, has recently been issued by the Dominion Department of Agriculture and deals with white grubs.

White Grubs, which are the larvæ of the well-known May Beetles, or June bugs, will, it is expected, cause serious injuries in the Province of Ontario, and possibly in other sections of Eastern Canada in 1918. The statement is based on our knowledge of the life-histories of these insects. The grubs feed naturally on the roots of grasses, so when sod land is ploughed up they are deprived of their usual food and readily attack such crops as corn, potatoes, strawberries, etc., if grown on the land. The injurious species require three years to complete their life-cycles; in other words, a period of three years elapses from the time the eggs are laid until the grubs which hatch from the same are mature, transform to the pupal state and appear as beetles. In 1917, the beetles were very abundant in certain districts in Eastern Canada, and eggs were deposited freely. The grubs hatching from these eggs did not develop much during the past year, but in 1918 they will grow more quickly and, being more voracious, will undoubtedly cause serious injury to the roots, etc., of various kinds of field crops. They will continue to feed throughout the growing season, and in the autumn of 1918 go deeper into the soil to pass the winter. In the spring of 1919 they will again come near to the surface, feed for a short period and then rest for a time preparatory to changing to the pupal state. It will be seen, therefore, that the second year in the life of the grub is the destructive one.

Methods to Prevent Serious Injury.

CROPS FOR INFESTED LAND.—The female beetles lay their eggs in sod land, and also land bearing such crops as timothy and the small grains. Suitable land nearest to groves or woods is favored by the beetles, which feed upon the foliage of the trees and then visit such nearby fields to lay their eggs. In districts where the beetles were abundant in 1917, it is to be expected that such land is now more or less infested with the grubs, and it would, therefore, be unsafe in 1918 to plant on newly broken sod land, or on land grown to the above crops in 1917, any crop which would be attractive to the grubs. Crops particularly favored by white grubs are potatoes, corn and strawberries. In addition to these, other crops which are grown in wide rows, and timothy, are liable to injury. The safest crops to grow on land which is suspected of harboring grubs, are alfalfa, clover or buckwheat. If it is not desirable to use infested land for alfalfa, clover, or buckwheat, the same may be again planted to timothy or small grain. Such crops as corn or potatoes should not be planted in 1918, on newly broken sod land in districts where the beetles were abundant in 1917. Corn or potatoes grown on land which grew the same crops in 1917, and which were kept cultivated and comparatively free of weeds during the flight of the beetles in May and June, 1917, will be reasonably safe from injury by white grubs in 1918.

CULTURAL AND OTHER METHODS.—Under garden conditions, grubs are often turned up when the land is being dug or ploughed. As many of these as is possible should be removed by hand and destroyed. Under acre conditions there are unfortunately no practical measures known to destroy the grubs when they are known to be present in the land, and destroying crops. Late summer ploughing which brings many grubs to the surface,



Two Necessities on the Up-to-date General Farm—Sheep and an Automobile.