

any subject he is simply showing that his observations and studies have been very superficial. I have no doubt that there are many valuable things to be learned even about farming that have escaped practical farmers and scientists.

In spite of occasional storms and cold snaps the winter has beauties and delights that are as enjoyable as those of any other season. At no other time is the air so pure and exhilarating as during a snowstorm. The falling snow seems to purify it of every taint, and a walk over the crunching snow makes a man tingle to his fingertips. This winter I have been especially impressed by the beauty of the leafless trees. In the past I have admired the trees when covered with leaves, but lately I have been struck by their delicate beauty when standing bare. Every twig and branch shows against the sky like an etching. It is only when you see them in their winter nakedness that you can see how wonderfully the trees are built up with branches to give the outward form you admire in the leafy summer. Without being in any way regular in form or plan every tree has branches that start from the trunk in such a way as to give a certain evenness to the whole tree. Branches do not over-crowd and yet, if no accident happens to injure them, they leave no wide empty spaces. And even when one has been injured new branches will fill out the gap in a very few years. Forest trees need no pruning, for they prune themselves naturally. Branches that do not get their place in the sun gradually die and fall off. That is why so many trees in the thick woods have no branches except at the top where they can get their share of light and air. But because a full-grown tree has much the same shape as a little tree this self-pruning has led to some curious mistakes. Many people think that as a tree grows the branches are pushed up until a branch that was originally near the ground would be many feet in the air. The fact is that a branch does not move up. It dies and falls off while a new branch takes its place higher up. This fact has been the undoing of many a spontaneous and graceful liar. I many times met with a story both in print and in conversation about hunters in the wilderness finding a human skeleton at the foot of a tree, and they knew that it had been there many years because the saddle he had hung on a branch before lying down to sleep had been lifted by the growth of the tree until it was fully fifty feet above the ground. I used to swallow that story regularly until I learned somehow, somewhere, that if he had hung his saddle on a branch and the branch continued to grow that saddle would never have moved a bit higher, except through the addition of rings of growth on that branch. It is too bad to puncture a dear old story like that, for I remember hearing it often on the lips of travellers who had returned from the West, and there may be liars still living who enjoy telling it as one of the wonderful things they saw in far parts of the earth.

We have not been paying much attention to the level crossings for some time past, but that was because I was waiting for some information from the Railway Board. The problem of punishing offenders so that they would learn to respect the law presented some difficulties, but yesterday I received a letter from an officer of the Board in which he says:

"If you can give the Board specific information to enable them to take proceedings against parties responsible, I can assure you the matter will be given necessary attention."

If you are unable to give the name of the employee who fails to give signal, give the number of the engine or the time such train passed a given point."

It now remains with us to see that the needless slaughter of human beings at the level crossings be stopped. If we will all report cases of neglect to the Board, the railways will soon find that they must obey the law, and give the signals with both bell and whistle at every level crossing. From now on I am going to report every case that comes under my observation. Will you do the same? Remember that human lives are at stake. To report neglect on the part of the railways is only a small matter, but it may be the means of saving many human lives. I hope you will help me in this.

A Farmer's Club of twenty members with their families has been in continual operation meeting on a day specially set aside for this and this only every month for the past twenty-seven years in North Trumbull County, Ohio.

In the list of Christmas examination results, at the Ontario Agricultural College, 139 names are included in the first year, 95 in the second year, and 49 in the third.

"The Farmer's Advocate" has saved me many times its price each year.
Victoria Co., Ont. WILLIAM REED.

*Will the Winter be Hard?

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

Will the winter be hard? That's what we want to know. The Weather Bureau is a valuable institution and has given many a good warning to the people of the Dominion; but there is one thing it does not try to do. That is, to forecast just how hard the winter will be.

This is a wise act on the part of that much-abused organization, for who would believe that this is to be the hardest winter in a decade? Who would spend their hard-earned savings on food and coal and clothing, when it might be an open winter? Besides, we have Smith's Almanac for 1913, which says, quite contrary to Jones's, that the winter will be open and mild, and that the people will be subjected to heavy colds, etc., only curable by Smith's, etc.

When it comes right down to real weatherology the Weather Bureau leaves this delicate decision to the oldest inhabitants who are usually wise in the ways of nature, or at least pretend to be. You and I have our own opinion as to the probability of a severe winter, and this opinion is in no way shaken by the opinion of others. However, let us review some of the signs, which are the same as last winter and every winter before.

Hiram Doolittle, who lives between London and St. Thomas, says he looks for a hard winter. He says that for nine days he has had no rest from his rheumatism and that this is an unfailing sign with him.

George H. Tightwad, who lives right in London, Canada, remarked at the station the other day that he was certain of a very cold time this winter. When being questioned, he said that if he filled his cellar with coal, the winter was soft; if he did not, as this year, it would be very severe. He explained that owing to the cellar not being cleaned, he had only obtained one ton, which was delivered last week. A mean individual with straight, black hair, said he couldn't get credit for more.

On the farm is where they notice things. Frank Dean, who works by the year for Elias Perkins of Essex County, says the corn has a thicker and tougher shuck than usual, and Frank ought to know, as he has husked all the corn on rainy days and odd spells. Mr Perkins claims his apples have a much thicker and tougher skin than usual, he having had to use a knife for the first time in sixty-four years. It appears that the corn and apples will require greater protection this year.

A commercial traveller who makes a speciality of observing things, says he is positive of a severe winter season. He says he notices that as the winter advances and, in proportion to its severity, the women begin to wear low neck dresses, short skirts, and larger and larger muffs. So far this fall and early winter, he has seen a tremendous advance in these lines and looks for the worst.

Peter Hall, who lives down in Southern Ontario, where the nuts grow, claims practically every variety of nut he gathered this fall had a thick shell, and some which he used to crack with a little tack hammer now require the heavy claw hammer.

Peter also says his hogs have much longer hair than usual. He made a shake-down in a fence corner for two, and he says the long, curly hair they are growing is positively a shame. Every crow has left the neighborhood, too, he also admits.

The other day a man in Hichse's restaurant said he could tell the severity of the winter and the number of snows by the first snow. He admitted it would be hard, and, upon being pressed for the number of snows, he raised his tea to his lips and mumbled something which nobody caught and all felt ashamed to ask again. He was in a hurry.

One thing which looks bad is that Premier Borden admits sleeping under four blankets, with two at his side, against three of all other years.

Undoubtedly this will be a hard winter, the hardest of a decade. The weather is the one topic of conversation which never grows out of date. It is the most abused and most argued and most thought of.

No wonder we want a weather bureau, when our whole activity depends entirely upon that changeable thing, the weather. There is one real expert on the weather subject. He is the farmer. Did you ever get up about half-past four on a summer morning and watch the man of the house scan the sky for the first time and say, "Wall, I guess mebe it'll rain t'day—'bout four o'clock." And it usually does.

In conclusion, let me ask you one little question I know you can answer. Will the winter be hard?

Elgin Co., Ont.

J. C. INMAN.

Destroying Caterpillar Eggs.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

On October 25th, 1912, I started a contest to collect the egg masses in which the leaf-eating caterpillar deposits its eggs. I told the children of the Melbourne Ridge School that I would give a prize to the boy and girl that would collect the most egg masses. The contest closed on the 19th of December. Total number of egg masses collected was 19,280. I allowed 300 eggs to each one which would mean 5,784,000 caterpillars destroyed.

The prizes were won by Miss Lottie M. Davidson, age 12, who collected 2,490 masses, and John Wilkins, age 13, who collected 8,393 masses. We have only ten pupils in our school, so I think they did very well.

I think the collection of these egg masses will be of much benefit to the country, and I mean to keep at it until I have destroyed all I can around here, and hope that all the people will take a helping hand in the good work, wherever they are bothered with caterpillars.

I would like to know what you and others think of this plan to get rid of these little leaf-eating caterpillars.

Richmond Co., Que.

E. DAVIDSON.

[Note.—Excellent.—Editor.]

A Society for Maple-Sugar Makers.

The Hon. Minister of Agriculture for Quebec, J. Ed. Caron, has granted a charter for the formation of a co-operative society of maple-sugar and syrup makers. This society is to hold its first annual meeting for the election of directors at Waterloo, Que., on Thursday, January 9th, 1913, at 10 a.m. Sessions will also be held in the afternoon and evening, at which a number of addresses will be given upon the various aspects of the maple industry. Luc Dupuis, the Provincial Demonstrator, will give a lecture in French; M. F. Goddard, John H. Grimm, Prof. J. F. Snell, and others, are expected to speak in English. It is also hoped that President Carleton, of the Vermont Sugar Makers' Association, will either attend or send someone to represent the old-established and successful society of the neighboring State.

The meeting will not confine itself to the discussion of methods of making syrup and sugar, but will deal also with marketing problems and the problem of better legislative protection of the industry. It is believed that co-operation will enable Quebec farmers not only to sell more syrup than at present, but also to sell it at much better prices.

A display of maple products will be on exhibition in the hall, and manufacturers are invited to send exhibits of sugar-bush utensils.

Parcel Post in United States.

With January 1st, 1913, started Parcel Post in the United States. It covers all the United States, and her outlying possessions. Americans will now carry on their own express business. It will be cheaper than express. For example, one can send a parcel weighing one pound from New York to Philadelphia for six cents, or to Chicago for nine cents. The charge for each additional pound will be four cents in the former case and seven in the latter. The country is divided into 3,382 zones, little squares, or postal units, as they are called. A number of maps corresponding with the zones has been published for the use of postmasters. There is only one zone map for each locality. Special parcel post stamps are issued. Parcels carried must not measure more than six feet in length and girth combined. Parcels may be insured against loss in transit. On the 43,000 mail routes the carriers will serve 16,000,000 persons, which should prove a boon to trade. Butter and lard and fish, fresh meats, dressed fowls, vegetables, fruits, and such perishable articles, will be accepted for local delivery. With an added equipment of 10,000,000 bundle tags, 30,000 weighing scales, 25,000 special mail sacks, 110,000 tape measures and 195,000 rubber stamps, the post office department of the United States has inaugurated what they believe to be a system which will greatly benefit the people, and at the same time add a magnificent sum to the returns of the department.

A New Year's Wish.

I am delighted and much benefited by the many practical items of advice given in your editorials, and with your efforts to aid in securing Traction Ditchers in Canada duty-free, for they are much needed, and as yet not manufactured here. Success to you and Weldwood is the wish of

J. STANDISH (V.S.).