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The Rural Canadian.

EDITED BY W. F. CLARKE.

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LIFE ON THE FARM.

To the question which is now being discussed by certain modern philosophers, "Is life worth living?" some would reply, "Not on a farm." Many a discontented youth is pining amid the pursuits of husbandry, and pathetically sighing and singing, "I'd be a butterfly," or

"A life on the ocean wave,
A home on the stormy deep."

But here is one, a man every inch of him, who has another song to sing. "Mr. Francis B. Sanford, after long and varied and rugged experience on the high seas, returned to his native island of Nantucket, and on his dairy farm there has led, as he freely admits, 'twenty-one years of the most splendid life a man need enjoy.'" Life is, after all, very much what we make it.

CULTURE OF THE MAN AND THE FARM.

"To improve the soil and the mind" was for many years the motto of one of the oldest and best agricultural journals in the United States. The idea is a good one, but it can be improved by transposition. "To improve the mind and the soil" is a better statement of the motto. In most occupations a proper exercise of the mental faculties is necessary to success, and farming is no exception to this rule. Too many people, and especially farmers, do not sufficiently appreciate the importance and utility of mental culture.

"Survey the world through every zone,
From Lima to Japan,
The lineaments of light 'tis shown
That culture makes the man.
All that man has, had, hopes, can have,
Past, promised, or possessed,
Are fruits which culture gives, or gave,
At industry's behest."

As there must be implements for the cultivation of the soil, so there must be means of culture for the man. These, in our favoured age, are abundant and cheap. The best books and periodicals are within reach of all. In no period of the world's history has literature been so universally accessible. Any thoughtful, diligent person can unlock the stores of universal knowledge, and help himself freely. Yet how scarce are good books and papers in the majority of farm-houses. Families that have spent, it may be \$150 on a nice carriage, or \$100 on a musical instrument, have hardly invested a ten-dollar bill in useful literature. Yet it has been demonstrated, time and again, that an agricultural paper costing \$1 a year has yielded from 10 to 100 per cent. on the outlay. A single suggestion has, before now, brought in a profit of many dollars.

The time when ignorance guiding the plough could extract wealth from a virgin soil is well-nigh past. Our older lands are impoverished. Any fool can spend, but it requires wisdom to earn and save. The call now is for farmers who can re-stock the soil with plant-food, who can so manage land that it shall not run down, who can actually improve upon nature, and put their fields

into a better condition than they were when the first crop was taken off them. Old land is not necessarily poor. Some of the oldest soils on the face of the earth are the richest. Good husbandry has made them so. It can convert the barren wilderness into a garden. We do not need to go a thousand miles westward to obtain fertile land. We can make it around our own homesteads. All that is needed is the "know how." This may readily be acquired by culture of the man. Hordes of immigrant farmers have gone to the Far West only to leave poverty and desolation in their track, for they will repeat the folly of land impoverishment which has driven them from their homes in the older districts of this continent. The only cure for this evil is to educate the tiller of the soil. Then he will make any spot of earth that he touches a blooming garden. An American paper says:

"Many a farmer accomplishes far more by head than hand work. Not long ago we read some account of one of the most extensive and successful wheat growers in Dakota and the whole West—that he was on the start, and still is, an invalid and unable to perform manual labor, but remarkable for calculating or planning and figuring; in short, his excellent brain-work inaugurated such superior management in all his farm operations as to secure most profitable results. And this is not an isolated instance. Many farmers, stock raisers, and fruit growers, in various parts of the country, accomplish more by mental than by physical labour."

Of course, physical labour is necessary, but it must be skilled labour. The head must guide the hand. There is a vast amount of muscular effort wasted for want of intelligent direction. A notable example of this is found in the custom of summer fallowing. Every year there is work enough thrown away in a useless fight with nature, which might be better expended in getting a crop from land absurdly condemned to idleness. In the coming age of general intelligence among farmers, the fair face of nature will never be disfigured by an unsightly summer fallow.

The annual school term for farmers and their families is now in session. Winter, with its partial rest from pressing work, and its long quiet evenings, invites to reading and study. Let the season be improved. How much might be acquired by a single winter of steady devotion to the pursuit of useful knowledge! Not only in the seclusion of home, but in social gatherings of farmers, may valuable information be gathered. In every neighbourhood there should be a Farmers' Club, or Grange meeting, where the knowledge gained by each may be thrown into one general stock, and made the common property of all.

WEATHER PROPHECIES FOR 1882.

Vennor is not the only man who is trying to predict what weather we are to have. Illinois has its weather prophet also, in the person of Mr. R. Mansill. Like our Canadian Vennor, the Illinoisan has a scientific theory on which to base his prophecies. He has a philosophy of storms, earthquakes, cold, heat, and all other influences that control the weather. He is a diligent student of nature, and right or wrong, seeks only to interpret her signals. The *Prairie Farmer*, in noticing Mansill's Almanac for 1882, remarks:—

Planetary meteorology is a domain of science that has been very little explored, and very little has been definitely settled in regard to it. Mr. Mansill has long been studying it, and thinks he has made progress in establishing the correctness of his theories. We are not prepared to say that he has not, but still our faith in them is of that nature which was once likened to a grain of mustard seed. However, as many of our readers would like to see them, we give Mr. Mansill's predictions of the seasons in 1882. He says:

The seasons of the year 1882 appear to be marked out by the positions of the planets as follows:
The temperature should average above the mean of the

season during January and February, both in Europe and the United States.

The temperature will probably average above the mean of the season during March, or more so than January and February, both in Europe and the United States—this giving us a moderately early spring—up to say about April the 5th or 10th, after which time the temperature will likely average below the mean of the season during the balance of the month of April, also below throughout the month of May.

May will be a cool, stormy month, for the season, in Europe and the United States, with the greatest rainfall on sea-bordering countries. All efforts should be made to take advantage of the weather during March and April by the agriculturists, to forward their work, as the month of May will probably retard the progress of vegetable growth and farming to some extent.

The temperature of June is not likely to be much better, as it is as likely to go a little below the mean of the season as it is to go above. The last ten days may be warmer than the mean.

The temperature for both July and August will likely average a little below the mean of the season, both in Europe and the United States.

The temperature of September may come up to the mean of the season in Europe and the United States.

The temperature will probably average above the mean in October; it will likely go higher in November, and still get warmer and more stormy in December—for the season, both in Europe and the United States.

May is the cool stormy month, and December the warm stormy month for their seasons.

The crop-producing season of 1882 should commence very early in the Southern States. Advantage should be taken of this in the southern districts, also in Europe, and likewise to some extent in the Middle States of the Union, as there will likely occur a general retardation of vegetable growth and farming work for the season during May and perhaps the first half of June, with the principal rainfalls on sea-bordering countries. These rains are not expected to be in great excess of water-fall over the mean for the season.

Though not excessive in the general aggregate, the rains are likely to be in excess on sea-bordering countries, and deficient in the north and far inland districts.

PROFESSOR BROWN "TALKS CATTLE" AT MARKHAM.

Markham has a "live" Farmers' Club, and at its meeting on the 6th ult. was addressed by a "live" lecturer in the person of Prof. Brown, of the Ontario Agricultural College. The *Markham Economist* of the 15th ult. contained a full report of the Professor's address and the discussion thereon, which was a spirited one. We should like to transfer the whole bodily to these columns, but it would take too many of them, so we must be content with a brief synopsis and a few comments.

The Professor sets out with the announcement, that if a cost value—not even a market value—be placed upon any kind of food usually given in the stall to fattening cattle, so as to obtain rapid production, there is no profit whatever from the extra weight got by the use of that food. The gain is all in the manure. But that pays, for we cannot keep up the fertility of the soil without good manure and plenty of it.

Professor Brown is a strong believer in the early maturing of beef cattle. He contends that a two-year-old, properly handled all along, will always return more money for its time and weight than a three-year-old can possibly do. On the subject of proper handling from calfhood, he was very explicit, fortifying his statements with facts and figures, and rounding out his argument with a challenge which ought to attract public attention. He said:—

"With reference to the question of greater profit to be obtained by getting rid of beef when two years old, I wish to make an important public announcement to the province, through your agency. All assertions are comparatively valueless and untelling, unless brought home by practical demonstration. If it is a fact, as I do now and have elsewhere publicly stated, that the loss or gain to the province annually on this one practice alone is not less than \$1,000,000, it is surely worth while to prove it thoroughly. We have several times given practical proof by the actual cost of producing two and three-year-old steers at our farm; but, in order to face the country and drive the lesson home as hard as possible, I am prepared, on having Government consent, to exhibit, say three or four steers, two-year-old Shorthorn grades, at any or all our principal shows next year, against a similar number of three-year-olds of the same kind, on condition that the exhibitors submit a statement of the exact amounts and kinds of food given twelve months previous to date of exhibition, with the weights of cattle at same date. The judge, or judges, would then be asked to do five things: