

### The County or Travelling Library.

A movement that is extending in many parts of the United States is that of travelling libraries. These are specially adapted for rural sections and enable farmers in isolated portions of the country to obtain good reading at comparatively little cost. The travelling library, the outcome of a movement scarcely a decade old, is now found in forty-two States of the Union. Nothing definite has yet been done towards extending the movement among the farmers of Canada. There is, however, no good reason why the travelling library should not find a useful field in this country, as well as in the United States. A scheme of this kind was instituted last spring in connection with supplying literature to the mining and lumbering camps in the Northern portion of the province. But why not extend it to the rural sections?

An interesting review of the working of a county or travelling library appeared in a recent issue of the *Literary Digest*. At the beginning of this year through private bequests, a county library, the first in America, was opened to the people of Van Wert County, Ohio, known as the Brumback Library after the donor. The working of this venture cannot be better described than in the writer's own words, which are as follows:

"The admirable feature of the Brumback Library is the fact that it is a county library, its privileges being extended to the people of the country and of the town and city alike. If we look into the history of the philanthropies of our nation, we shall find that they have almost exclusively benefited the people of the town and city. Who has done anything to make life happier, better and sweeter on the farm? The reports of our recent decennial census inform us that during the past decade thousands of people have migrated from the country to the town and city. What has been the result? Unhappily it has been that many of the best farm districts to be found anywhere in the country have to-day fewer people than they had ten years ago, although our nation has made, during the past decade, a gain of over ten millions.

"The method adopted by the Brumback Library to bring its books to all parts of Van Wert County is easily explained. The library itself—which represents a value of \$50,000—receives an annual income of fully \$6,500, and has a stack-room capacity when all available room shall be used, of 100,000 volumes,—is located in the city of Van Wert, the county seat of Van Wert County. Fortunately, this city is located in the center of the county, which contains in round numbers 275,000 acres and has a population of nearly 35,000. Besides the central library there are ten branch libraries, which are so situated that every resident of the county is within easy access of the library itself or of one of its branches. The ten branches have a

unique feature in the form of what may be called a travelling library system, and are also in direct communication with the central library. The ten branch libraries are placed in the more important stores or offices of the villages of the county, where they are excellently well managed, by virtue of the fact that those having charge of them are given nominal salaries.

"To start the traveling-library system, the library trustees purchased 1,000 books, most of them entirely new, which were sent to the ten branch libraries, 100 to each branch. After keeping its 100 books two months, each branch sends them to one of the other nine branches, and receives a second 100 from one of its neighbors to take their place. So the books pass from branch to branch until each branch has had the thousand books, when they are returned to the central library, and catalogued. In the mean time, another 1,000 books have been purchased and put in readiness to repeat the experience of the first thousand.

"I have already said that the branch libraries are in direct communication with the central library. By this I mean that all persons securing books from the central library through any of the branches are subject to no other rules than those imposed by the central library. Cards can be had from the central library only; but persons holding cards may secure books anywhere in the county. The more important papers of the county have published lists of all the books contained in the library, and continue to publish the titles of new books as soon as they have been catalogued.

"During the few months since the Brumback Library opened its doors to the people of Van Wert County it has been conclusively proved to be a very gratifying success. Unusual interest is manifested, and books go every day to readers in even the most remote townships."

### Seed Grain Selection

Crop Conditions in Western Ontario—Ravages of the Hessian Fly.

Mr. G. H. Clark, who has special charge of the Macdonald Seed Grain Competition, gave *The Farming World* a pleasant call last week while on his way to Ottawa after visiting the competitors in Western Ontario. There are from six to twelve competitors in each county in the west—all young boys and men under twenty years of age. Each one is operating a quarter of an acre plot of wheat or oats from which they select each year a sufficient number of large heads from the most thrifty plants to produce enough good seed to sow a one-quarter acre plot the following year.

The ideas which they get from performing this work serve as excellent object-lessons both to the competitors and to the people living in the vicinity where the plot is located. A great many farmers, in some instances as many as ten or twelve, have examined the growing grain

from the selected seed and the system of selecting from plants as well as from seed is being freely discarded. Most of the parties on whose farms these seed grain plots are being operated, acknowledge that the general appearance of the crop on the seed grain plot is superior and more vigorous than that of their general farm crop.

The principles which apply in the grading up of plants are much the same as those which apply in the grading up of live stock. Take, for example, the grading up of poultry. The poultry-keeper, raising birds for market, first selects the best birds for egg-producers, and secondly the best and most uniform eggs from these birds. On the same principle, the first step in the grading up of grain should be taken with the plants themselves, and secondly with the grain from these plants.

The competition runs for three consecutive years, and will close in 1902. Those who are competing will have to select seed for 1903 before they will be awarded prizes. In districts where the Hessian fly is very bad, many of the fall wheat competitors had become somewhat discouraged, and a few had decided to withdraw from the competition. When they considered, however, that the greater part of the wheat grown in Western Ontario is affected by the fly, and that all, or nearly all, of those taking part in the competition are experiencing the same trouble, they have all consented to continue with the work.

Mr. Clark reports the crops in some of the districts in Western Ontario, where they have heavy, clay, flat soils, still showing some of the effects of the early spring rains. In districts where the Hessian fly is prevalent, fully one-half of the fall wheat crop is being cut for hay, pastured, or plowed down. In a section about a mile and a half north of Lake Erie there is little trace of the fly, and the crop will be a heavy one. On the lighter and loamy soils spring crops are excellent, and the hay crop promises from 2 to 3 tons per acre. Rain is badly needed in the Northwestern counties, including Huron, Bruce, Grey and Simcoe.

Root crops and corn are generally looking well. In many sections of the country where farmers obtain their seeds from small local and unreliable dealers, the germination has not been good. In some cases the loss will equal from one-third to one-half because of the sowing of this old seed. In purchasing seeds, therefore, of any kind, and especially the small packages, farmers should make sure that they are getting fresh stock. In some instances seed two or three years old has been palmed off on buyers.

### Cheese and Butter for the Pan-American.

We learn that a large number of entries have been received by Mr. Geo. Hatley, Secretary of the Western Ontario Dairymen's Association, for exhibits of cheese and butter to be made at the Pan-American in July. The total entries received are: White