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EDITORIAL.

The secret of easy gardening is to keep the ground clean from the start.

Early, rather than eternal vigilance, is the price of success in a fight with weeds.

Enough moisture falls in these Eastern humid regions to insure good crops, but what are we doing to conserve it for the "dry spell" in August?

Prof. Zavitz's data to the contrary, we have less use for barley as a feed crop than for any other grain. Its one redeeming virtue is that it is a good crop to seed down with.

Travellers and local seedsmen in Western Ontario report the demand for alfalfa seed this spring as phenomenal. Thousands of acres are at last being sown, but who can give a creditable reason why an even larger area was not sown ten or fifteen years ago? Alfalfa is no new thing. We have only been slow in realizing its value.

Come to think of it, farm improvement is a safe business in which to invest one's surplus cash. The farmer, at all events, knows where it is, what is being done with it, and has some control over it, which is not the case when his funds are in a double liability financial concern, exploited under the name "Farmer's." In the case of the Farmer's Bank, now in liquidation, the name was about its sole good feature. The thing itself proved as delusive as a slippery sand bank.

There are those like Mr. Gradgrind who would reduce everything to the realm of fact, hard, prosaic fact. But sentiment will not be put out of life, nor poetry, nor dreams, nor imagination. Life without these things would be a poor, dry thing, and farming itself a failure. Other things being equal, the man of imagination will grow the greatest crop of corn. Charles Eliot Norton puts the thought thus: "Whatever your occupation may be, however crowded your hours with affairs, do not fail to secure at least a few minutes every day for the refreshment of your inner life with a bit of poetry."

The National Insurance scheme of David Lloyd-George, Chancellor of the Exchequer in Great Britain, is described as the largest application of state socialism ever undertaken in any country. By it, the nation and employers will assume considerable burdens shared in by the beneficiaries, in order to protect the latter in case of sickness and unemployment. At the best, multitudes of people are unable to obtain more than the bare necessities of life, and many not that. It is being criticised as a boon upon the thrifty for the benefit of the shiftless and indifferent. But humanity are not all alike, and the bill seems to be "free and equal," and the effort to equalize and improve the chances of better living for the masses is a more self-respecting way than the workhouse.

As to Hours.

As intimated in an editorial of two weeks ago, one of the main reasons why workmen prefer to work in factories, rather than on the farm, is that they appreciate definiteness of hours. They like to know beforehand when the day's work ends, and the practice of many Canadian farmers is dreadfully lax in this respect. They have no fixed time for quitting work, and, with human nature as it is, that usually means keeping at it till unreasonable hours.

That there are many good excuses for acting so, cannot be denied. When stuff is in good order for hauling in, and rain threatens, a few minutes extra in the evening may save hours afterwards, and there are times when a crush of work is unavoidable, and the only way to get through it is to put in longer days. The scarcity of farm help at present, and the practical impossibility of getting an extra man for a few days, aggravates the difficulty of the problem. But, making all necessary allowances, is it not true that very many farmers do not concern themselves about limiting the hours of labor. Rather, through desire to make the work go, or from habit, they scheme to make the day as long as possible. We believe this to be a profound mistake.

First, because it tends to make life to the farmer himself, as well as to all concerned, one long, wearisome grind. Work which ought to be a pleasure comes to be disliked, and the farmer himself a mere drudge. In many cases his life is shortened. A case in point is that of a sturdy English yeoman well known to the writer. Living, as he did, among poor farmers, his place soon began to be noticed for the excellence of its crops. With very little means to begin with, he prospered steadily, buying one field after another until he had a fair-sized farm. He was always at work and never sick, and seemed to be able to stand anything. When between fifty and sixty years of age, he suddenly was taken down, and in a short time died. There was no functional disease, the doctor said; he had simply spent all his strength, had worked himself to death. Are we not acquainted with many others whose strength and health have been broken through over-diligence, though their lives may not have been noticeably shortened?

And again, we believe these long hours a mistake, because long hours do not usually result in more work being done. An observant man, who had done well on a large Manitoba farm, used to say that he had found ten hours a day as long as it was profitable to have teams continue at work. Daylight in summer continued for hours later, but he found it wise to have them quit at six o'clock. Should men work longer than horses? A great number of our most successful farmers do have fixed and reasonable hours of work. They have demonstrated that it is quite possible to keep the work as well done up as can those who work till bedtime. There is no guess-work about this. The facts are known.

In this there is nothing singular. Clearness of brain and elasticity of movement, on which speed and efficiency so largely depend, cannot be expected when the whole waking hours have been spent in toil. Some, perhaps most, who thus work in harvest till after the stars appear never seem to get warmed up to their work the next day until near sunset, and then the hustle begins. If a man cannot tire himself out thoroughly in ten hours, he does not apply himself as he might.

But more is needed by human beings in order

that they may be ready to spring to their work than merely rest. Diversion, relaxation of mind, is necessary. The young people ought to have time in the evening to play, to sing, to have fun. Even if recreation takes the form of violent exercise, they are the fresher for it. And young and old should have time for reading, when in quiet they may appropriate the thoughts of others, and forget completely for the time being the work that rightfully claims the most of their strength and care. Not only is the time thus spent repaid by the added freshness and zest with which the day's tasks are afterwards attacked, but habits are being formed, and the mind is being stored with thoughts which shall stand in good stead should the days come when physical labor is impossible.

We should very much like this whole question of hours of labor on the farm to be discussed in all frankness by our readers, as we believe it to be of great importance, and we heartily invite contributions on the subject from them.

What One Farmers' Club Accomplished.

The important functions of a Farmers' Club should be at least three, viz., (1) to develop, inform and assist its members individually along scientific, business and social lines; (2) to develop the faculty of public expression, fitting the members to represent their occupation effectively in Parliament and otherwise; (3) to secure through organized effort public benefits.

A live organization which seems to have served all three functions well, is the Farmers' Club at Ayr, Ont., which a member of our staff had the pleasure of visiting this spring, and with which he was so much impressed that he asked the new secretary, Wm. T. Edgar, for a statement of what the Club had accomplished to date in the way of tangible public attainments. Mr. Edgar has been at some pains to accumulate the data which is here presented in his own words:

"The Club was organized in April, 1908, by our County Representative, F. C. Hart, B. S. A., Galt. After appointing a staff of officers, and with a membership of about sixty, the Club commenced work at once, holding meetings once a month. These meetings, besides being an intellectual and social benefit, have been the means of promoting many things that have proved beneficial to the surrounding community.

"The first of these was the promoting of a rural telephone system, which is now flourishing under the name of the Ayr Rural Telephone Company, with Bell connection.

"Second was a very successful three-days' short course in seed and stock judging.

Third, was the organizing of a Union Continuation School—Ayr village and several of the neighboring school sections.

Fourth, a petition signed on behalf of the Farmers' Club, asking the C. P. R. to provide a more suitable loading siding, which has been built and has proven a great benefit.

"Fifth, was the organizing of a Horticultural Show, which, with the valuable aid of the Women's Institute, has proven a great success, and will be continued.

"Sixth, we presented a petition to the Provincial Government, signed by over 400 men of the community, regarding the unfairness of the law concerning the thresher crossing bridges safely with traction engines. We also sent three men to wait on the Government Committee dealing