

The Farmer's Advocate and Home Magazine.

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DOMINION.

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confidence and cheapen living costs. The whole tendency now is to curtail production and increase the cost of everything.

The Spirit of the Age.

BY ALLAN MCDIARMID.

Just at present this world reminds us of some social gathering where a program has been prepared for the entertainment and instruction of the audience and everybody is waiting with a good deal of interest for the "next item." What that will be, no one, nowadays, pretends to predict. We have gone through so much that we are prepared for anything that may come. As with the new inventions, nothing that the genius of man can bring into being has, any longer, the power to surprise us. If we were told that our astronomers had at last got into communication with the people of the planet Mars, the only interest shown would probably be in regard to the way in which the achievement might affect the cost of living. Cold-storage transportation facilities would be the first thing the public would be inquiring about.

So it is with all our national affairs and our international relations. In connection with them we are in a state of unrest and expectancy. Whether the long-talked-of revolution of the so-called "lower classes" throughout the world is coming, or whether we are to have the experience of a race-war on this continent, it is hard to say. The next ten years hold out toward us all sorts of possibilities—for good and for evil, or, rather, for good through evil, perhaps. One thing is sure, however, and that is that peace will never come to the earth until the evil, mostly in the form of selfishness, has been put out of existence.

But, taking things as they are, in this country as well as every other country in the world, the question we would like to ask is, is this spirit of unrest an unnatural condition for man to be in, and would things be improved in any degree if he suddenly acquired a self-satisfied and peaceful frame of mind, in which discontent and worry were impossible?

So far as I am concerned, if I have been able to get anywhere near the truth in forming an estimate of humanity, I would say that for man unrest is the companion of progress, and, without this "divine discontent," he would still be at the stage of development attained by vegetable life, and with very little chance of ever getting any further. But, with the beginnings of animal life on this earth came unrest, and until mankind has passed his last examination in the school of Life and reached that Destiny that is waiting for us somewhere and at some time, as we are all inclined to believe, that unrest will continue.

It has been said by one of the poets that "man never is but always to be blessed." And, although it isn't a comfortable way to be, it's quite likely that for us it is necessary.

Take, for instance, the child from its earliest infancy. If we know anything at all about them, we know that they are restless. If they are not, as happens in some exceptional cases, it is looked on as a bad sign and an indication that the chances for that child of living and growing up are not very good. It is the same way with the rest of the animal world. When not asleep it is almost continually on the move. The more vitality, the more restlessness and consequent activity. Later in life, when the purpose of existence has been accomplished, this restlessness passes away and the peace of old age and decay takes its place. "The peace of the grave" is an expression we often hear, especially from those who have misused life and are tired of it. Whether peace is found in that direction, or not, we are not in a position to say, but it's a sure thing that anyone who gets out of this world before his time is missing a good many opportunities.

In the case of the child as well as in the case of the full-grown individual; with life throughout the whole animal kingdom and, possibly, with life in the vegetable kingdom also, Nature has instilled this something into our being to keep us going and growing. As with Her other gifts, we sometimes let them carry us to extremes, but a cure has been provided as well, which is generally brought to our attention in due time. For instance, it's safe to say that the spirit of progress and achievement is carried to an extreme in the case of some individuals. We all know people that have sacrificed their health and even their morals in the chase after money. The inclination at the present time seems to be to get a lot of it. And there is a trace of the tendency among us farmers, as well as the rest of the world. Especially since we have come within sight of enough of "the root of all evil" to make the chase interesting.

But the fact that we let the good gifts of Nature lead us to extremes and into consequent trouble is no argument against their real value. So I am free to admit that I believe that the spirit of this age, which is evidently the "spirit of restlessness," is one of the most hopeful signs of the times, and as we are endowed with it to a greater degree than any generation of the past, possibly, so are our achievements along worthy lines likely to surpass theirs.

We have no right to find fault with the working-man for trying to better his condition in the way of higher wages and shorter hours. It is his way of responding to Nature's push. And when his demands are within reason they should be listened to. If a certain amount of leisure and recreation is good for the bank president and the millionaire stockbroker it is good for the ordinary laborer, and the same applies to the compensation they get in dollars and cents. This world is rich enough to give to every man a fair share of even the luxuries of life.

When we say that some men are "never satisfied" we are, or at least may be, paying them a compliment. They are finding conditions, a long way from perfect and have every right to be discontented and "restless," which state of mind has its outlet in some of the ways that have lately been making the "idle rich" of our cities sit up and rub their eyes. I have no sympathy with law-breakers and extremists, but I have every sympathy with the laboring man who enters a protest against the unfair conditions by which he is surrounded and which prevent him from getting his rightful share of mankind's inheritance.

No mistake, there are a lot of very restless people in the world at the present time and they are likely to disturb the peace of a few individuals who have been too sound asleep to notice what was coming or to take any commonsense methods to prevent it. It may do them good to be also compelled to undergo the "restless" cure.

It's a sovereign remedy, as the patent medicine advertisers say. I have often wished I could apply it to some of those "born tired" people that we all have a more or less intimate acquaintance with. They have a peace that "passes understanding," but it is partly because the rest of the world has undertaken their support.

Our Exhibition Number.

The next issue of "The Farmer's Advocate" will be our annual Exhibition Number, and without saying anything now in regard to its contents we advise you not to miss it. The season of the year when exhibitions and fairs are just beginning in Eastern Canada is an opportune time to think along lines of better live stock, better farm crops, and better farming methods. Much extra time, worry and expense are annually built into this Exhibition Number in order to make it exceptionally good and prepare our readers for the Fair season which lies ahead. No one can afford to stand still. When we cease to progress we begin to go back. Some, no doubt, have had poor crops and will have to retrench this winter; but such measures should be only temporary, and ought not to interfere with the general plans for expansion. There are good seasons coming, and we hope our next issue will be instructive and inspirational, so farmers may get guidance from it that will lead them aright when making plans for future progress and development.

Nature's Diary.

A. B. KLUGH, M.A.

Trips to Two Islands.

Not long ago I made a couple of trips which were of considerable interest, because the areas visited presented conditions which one does not come across in every locality. The first visit was to Little Curtain Island, one of the islands towards the middle of Richmond Bay, P.E.I. This island consists almost entirely of sand, with a couple of clumps of spruces and a fairly extensive marsh in the centre. The shores, as is practically always the case with sandy islands, slope so extremely gradually that the area of the island is some three times as large at low tide as it is at high tide, and at low tide one can walk across a bar from Little Curtain Island to Curtain Island.

Just above high-tide mark is a slightly elevated ridge, which runs along the island between the sea and the marsh. This ridge was mostly clothed with a growth of Sweet-scented Grass, (*Hierochloa borealis*), from which a delightful perfume was wafted by the breeze. Among this grass were thick rolls of dried Eel-grass, a marine plant with long, narrow, grass-like leaves which is extremely abundant in shallow water in Richmond Bay, and among this dried vegetation were myriads of Running Spiders of the genus *Pardosa*. These long-legged spiders spin no webs, but run about seeking their prey, and practically every female carried an egg-case of toughly-woven silk attached to her spinnerets. The eggs are thus carried about until the spiderlings hatch.

The most interesting habitat on the island proved to be the bare patches of coarse sand among the Sweet-scented Grass. In this sand were numerous circular holes about a quarter of an inch in diameter, many of which seemed to be plugged by something which disappeared as one approached. Careful digging revealed the larvæ of a Tiger Beetle as the maker and inhabitant of these holes, and it was the broad, flattened head of the larvæ which had plugged the holes. These larvæ have extremely sharp and well-developed mandibles, and lie in wait at the mouth of their burrows ready to seize any insect which comes within reach. The adult Tiger Beetles, are long-legged, very active predaceous beetles, and were abundant on the bare sand-patches. On warm, sunny days these Beetles are so active, springing into the air some distance ahead of one, and flying so swiftly, that they are more frequently taken for flies than beetles.

There were also three other burrows of somewhat different types in the sand, and in some of these lived a species of Wolf Spider, in another were colonies of ants, while the third, which ran obliquely, instead of straight, downwards, was the nest-burrow of the Black SpheX. This latter wasp was running about over the sand, and going into every burrow of a Wolf Spider that she came across. When she found one of these spiders "at home" she promptly stung it so as to paralyze it, and then carried it off to her next burrow, where she would lay an egg upon it, and seal up the burrow so that the wasp larva on hatching would have a supply of food at hand. Such was the sand community of Little Curtain.

My second trip was to Fish Island, one of the islands which forms the outer barrier of Richmond Bay. This island, with the exception of a very small area of red soil near the centre of the inner side, consists entirely of sand-dunes, while in the interior are numerous ponds and small bogs. The waves have carried the sand up on to the beach where it has dried and blown inland, and every successive gale has carried in more and more sand, until great rounded dunes have been built up. At the east end of the island there are two high parallel ridges of sand with a wide valley between them—a peculiar piece of sand architecture which stretches for nearly a mile down the island. The dunes are pretty well fixed by the Sand-binding Grass, a coarse grass with heads somewhat resembling those of rye, and with long running root-stocks, which is characteristic of dunes whether on the coast of the shores of the Great Lakes. In places, however, "blow-outs" occur, that is places where the wind has cut into the dunes, destroying the grass and shifting the sand about. The sides of these "blow-outs" revealed a peculiar condition of these dunes which I have not noticed in other dune areas—that the sand of the dunes was satisfied, and showed distinct layers like those of many kinds of rocks. The only way in which I can account for this stratification is to suppose that a heavy blow at the same time as a very high tide has carried the waves up over the dunes, and that the layers mark the successive submergences which have occurred during the formation of the dunes.

On the dunes were several species of plants, such as the Beach Pea, and the Sand Rocket, which are characteristic of such areas.

In the bogs of the interior was Sphagnum moss, Small Cranberry, Black-fruited Pyrus, numerous rushes and sedges and other peat-bog plants.

On the broad sandy beach, along the side of the island facing the Gulf of St. Lawrence there were immense numbers of Beach Fleas. These little crustaceans hop about on the sand with an agility which entirely justifies their name of "fleas," and also their scientific name of *Orchestia agilis*.

Along the beach ran the Piping Plover, little grayish shore birds with an incomplete ring of black on their necks, and with white underparts. The piping notes, uttered chiefly as they flew overhead, were melodious and contrasted with the harsh screams of the Terns.

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