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The Month.



May is welcomed by everybody with expressions of gladness. We have indeed no "May-day" festivities such as are common in some countries. Our variable climate hardly admits of it. We have known the first of May, in some rare instances, to be very wintry. Within a week of that date, the present year, we have had a snow-storm which left the ground with a white wintry covering of from two to six inches in depth. Nor do we ever have such a profusion of blooming flowers as would render the first of May an appropriate time for a floral festival. Nevertheless there is universal joy at the advent of May. At this date anything wintry can only be spasmodic and ephemeral, and let appearances be what they may, "we know that summer is nigh."

The mean temperatures do not rise so fast this month as last. Having given them thus far, for a few leading places in the Dominion of Canada, we may as well continue them throughout the year, as they may be useful for consultation and comparison.

Stratford.....	47° 73
Hamilton.....	50° 87
Barrie.....	48° 22
Toronto.....	48° 30
Bellefleur.....	50° 42
Montreal.....	50° 25
Quebec.....	48° 30
St. John N.B.....	46° 51
Halifax.....	47° 00

It is noticeable that, at points where the cold of winter is very severe, the mean temperature is now quite as high as at places considered to have a much milder climate. Thus a Quebec May is precisely like a Toronto May, while Montreal is within three-fifths of a degree of the Hamilton average the present month. In June it is rather warmer in Quebec and Montreal than it is in Toronto and Hamilton.

The rapidity with which vegetation advances, when once growth has commenced, is one of the peculiarities and charms of our Canadian climate. No sooner is the frost out of the ground than the grass begins to sing, "Here I come creeping, creeping everywhere." Very little sunshine makes the pulses of the sugar-maple bound with life, so that the sap streams out wherever an incision is made in the bark. After a very few warm days, the children exclaim,

"See the tender catkins cover
All the slender willows over!"

In fine, the change from winter to spring is almost magical. It is as if the scene had been touched by some Fairy's wand, and suddenly transformed from dreariness and death to life and beauty.

The present season has been somewhat peculiar. For about ten days toward the end of March, we had weather warm and sunny enough for the end of May. The grass became green, and made a visible start in all moist places. The willow catkins came out in the swamps. A fine run of maple sap took place. Not a few farmers sowed their wheat and other grain crops; indeed we have heard of one or two dreadfully beforehand people, who had finished their spring seeding by the first of April. It would be hardly unjust to say of such people that they made themselves "April fools" by their excess of promptitude, for it is arrant folly to sow seed when the ground is cold, and the conditions of growth do not exist. Farmers cannot be too prompt in breaking up their land and preparing for seeding; but it is poor policy to sow under circumstances that render it certain that the seed will lie for weeks in a cold, ungenial soil. Much seed is wasted thus, while the plants that get a premature start are chilled and stunted by the state of the ground and air. After the wondrously fine March weather, we had a relapse into frosty nights and windy days, which lasted for about a month, checking vegetation indeed, but furnishing a fine opportunity for carrying on all manner of out-door work. We are inclined to think that farm operations are in an unusual state of forwardness the present season, that crops will be got in early, and that, other things being equal, we may look for an extremely favourable year. So far as our observation and means of information enable us to judge, the fall wheat is in splendid trim, and grass lands promise well. Very little rain has fallen, and light land has become quite dry. The backward weather has checked the fruit buds to a degree that renders it pretty certain there will be no untimely nipping, so that we may fairly hope for a good fruit yield. On the whole, appearances justify a most favourable augury for the season of 1868.

The calendar of work for May is very similar to that for April. Sowing and planting are the prominent labours of the month. We would urge upon our readers the importance of doing everything in the best and most thorough manner possible. It

never pays to do farm work hurriedly and superficially. The maxim "once well done is twice done" is often illustrated in agricultural affairs. There is less excuse than usual for hasty ill-done work the present season, because of the favourable weather we have had for active operations.

We strongly advise our farming readers to make extra effort this year in certain directions where neglect and failure often prevail. *First*, be sure to grow an adequate supply of carrots, mangolds, and turnips for the winter feeding of stock. Horses should have carrots daily all through the winter. They are most healthful and beneficial feed when only dry fodder can be had. Milch cows, growing stock, and cattle that are fattening, should also have roots along with their dry fodder. *Secondly*, take care to have a good garden. How few farmers grow an adequate supply of vegetables and fruits for home consumption! Yet nothing is easier with proper management. To succeed in this, a bit of ground should be fenced off so that pigs and poultry cannot invade it; it should be so arranged that most of the work can be done by horse labour; early and tender plants should be started in a hot-bed and duly transplanted; last, but far from least, the garden must be kept clear of weeds. *Thirdly*, plant some trees, stock the orchard and shrubbery; line the roadside and lane. The country is far too bare and shelterless. Myriad voices exclaim:

Save us the Forest! already is done
More mischief than time can restore;
And most of the landmarks of boyhood are gone,—
We cannot, we will not lose more.
If forester's part could but rise from the dead
To look on the scenes they had known,
They would look in amazement; their Forest has fled,
And the pride of its glory is gone.

Save us the Forest! that children may roam,
Or gambol in innocent glee;
Their shouts shall ring loudly 'neath Heaven's high dome,
Telling all that the Forest is free.
No carpet of Turkey or Brussels, whose ply
The loom of the cunning one weaves,
With Nature's own loomwork one moment can vie,
The Forest's soft carpet of leaves.

O save us the Forest! the tolling ones cry,
Who dwell mid the smoke and the heat;
In the long summer sunshine delighted we fly
Away from the alley and street.
From anvil and hammer, from counter and pen,
Too seldom, alas! can we stray;
We need such a refuge from Babylon's din—
Then save us the Forest, we pray

O save us the Forest! the home of the dove,
Whose plumage bestowers each spray,
Discouraging sweet music, like Love's thrilling words,
From dawn till the closing of day.
The Oak and the Maple, the Ash and the Fern,
No hand of the spoiler should seize;
The castle and mansion are buildings of man,
But the buildings of God are the trees