

The Farmer's Advocate AND HOME MAGAZINE.

THE LEADING AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL IN THE
DOMINION.

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of the Department of Education. If agriculture is to be taught in the rural schools it must first receive some attention in the urban schools, and since it embraces so many sciences the city pupil will be the gainer for his acquaintance with it, even if his life work confines him to the centre of the largest city in the country.

The rural sojourner in the city who blows out the gas is no more to be laughed at than the teacher in a public school who does not know the difference between buckwheat and fall wheat, or who thinks that silage is taken from the bottom rather than from the top in a silo. The latter's career in teaching agriculture is likely to be quite as brief and unsuccessful as the former's visit to the city.

There is one more thought in this connection: All public-school education should be so outlined as to make citizens rather than farmers, doctors, lawyers or mechanics. If the boy is not suited for or cannot adapt himself to farm life, his early instruction should be such that he will not be at a disadvantage when he seeks a higher education or wishes to prepare himself for the work that appeals to him. What is wanted is a system that will not continually educate away from the farm but any scheme destined to make rural children hewers of wood and drawers of water for the remainder of their days will not meet with favor.

If threshing gangs are used farmers will be relieved of exchanging work with neighbors and, therefore, in a position to sow more fall wheat and get plowing done. The actual cash cost of threshing per bushel will be higher than usual, but where the plan is feasible it will be an economical way of securing help when it is badly needed, and the extra work done at home will more than compensate for the outlay.

Putting in the Time at Road Work.

BY ALLAN MCDIARMID.

It is about this time of the year, in most parts of this country, that the attention of the tax-payers, is turned for a short time to the question of how to improve our public roads by means of such systems as may be established in their particular localities. The old Statute Labor plan was probably the very first method used to get the people into the way of building and maintaining the highways on which they had to travel. This system has been in use a long time and has a good deal to recommend it if men were all as honest and conscientious as they ought to be. But an "if" of that kind has been the knock-out blow to many hopeful institutions of other kinds in the history of the world and it's not surprising that our attempt to keep up the condition of our roads through the honest co-operation of the farmers and other inhabitants of the country has met with only partial success. When it comes to shoveling gravel or broken stone into a wagon on a hot day in June, very few men want to do any more than their rightful share and the only way to do as little as the other fellow seems to be, very often, to do next to nothing at all. In many places men do not take advantage of the fact that it is only one of their neighbors that they have "bossing" them and something worth while is accomplished, but I have known a case of a pathmaster on a certain road-section being seen hard at work with his shovel while his men were all standing round talking and smoking. It was one time when the setting of a good example was without result. Of course the trouble with these men lay in the kind of a pathmaster they had. If he had had any ability as a foreman he would never have touched a shovel but would have seen to it that the rest of the men made good use of theirs. He would have known that when a man has three or more men working for him it pays him to do nothing else than direct the efforts of these men and see that they do not waste any of the time that belongs to the working day.

But the weak point comes in right here, where the Statute Labor system is concerned, because it is usually a farmer in the community who is appointed to see that his neighbors do the work, and no ordinary man is going to run chances of getting on bad terms with the people he has to live among by trying to compel them to do more or work longer hours than they feel inclined to. He's got to keep them in good humor and get what he can out of them. The result is that some of the willing workers of the road-section get the most of the work to do and the others share equally in any benefit that may be the outcome of their labor. I have seen men come to a gravel-pit with boxes on their wagons so small and so badly constructed that all their load was scattered along the way, and by the time they reached the dump they had simply to turn round and go back for a repetition of the process. The men with these "automatic unloading devices", as we called them, should have been sent home and made to pay their share of the road improvement in their taxes, but the pathmaster "didn't like to" and the thing was allowed to slide. Where men agree to work honestly and effectively together, for their own good and for the good of the community, the Statute Labor system is all right, but where they look on it as a sort of an excuse for a holiday and at the best only working "for the Government", it is all wrong. In an ideal world where all men were what they ought to be, it would probably work well, but in this world it doesn't always. It's a lack of public spirit that makes men unwilling to do anything for nothing, that their neighbor may benefit by. If they had the "community interest" as it is called, the result would soon be seen in the increased prosperity, not only of their neighbors, but of themselves. It's the same old story over again but applied to a different line of work. But it may be taken for granted that it is going to take some little time yet to convince everyone of the fact that it is only as we give that we can expect to get, at least in the best sense of the word. And as a rule for every-day business it applies about nine-tenths of the time. Those that have no contribution to make towards the welfare of humanity shouldn't be disappointed when the world refuses to admit that she owes them even a decent living. The men of my acquaintance who are prosperous in their private business concerns are, almost without exception, willing and ready to take a hand in anything that is likely to be of public benefit. But in some of our country districts this class of men are not as plentiful as they should be. If there were more of them our roads would show it and there would be some inducement for a person to own an automobile and get the benefit that they say is to be had by travelling. But when we find that "the even tenor of our ways" is interrupted by a series of ruts and ridges, of mud-holes and corduroy poles and of stones, both loose and solid, we are apt to think that the pleasure to be had from travel has been slightly exaggerated. It doesn't take much time or labor to keep the roads in repair when all do their share, but, of course, here is just the point; they don't. Things are just allowed to run along. I remember seeing a cedar fence-block that had somehow got into the road-way and had lain there and rolled about and been driven over until it was pretty well worn out. No one had even bothered to kick it off into the ditch. Some years ago we had a sort of local celebrity in our community who was, as the boys said, "a little off his base", and who spent his time like the well-known character mentioned in the Bible, by "going to and fro in the earth and walking up and down in it". But unlike the one whose example he followed in this way, he was of some benefit to those in his vicinity. He had acquired the habit of kicking every loose stone he found on the road, off to one side where it could no longer interfere with the wheels of the buggies and wagons

that passed along the highway of the King. They say that a streak of insanity and a streak of uncommon good sense often run very close together in the same person. It must have been the case with our friend, the pedestrian. He had the public spirit that we mentioned a while ago, at least, and we feel the need of some one to take his place now that he has laid down his job. None of those that are left have sense enough to kick the small stones off the roads and they are getting into a bad condition.

Nature's Diary.

A. B. KLUGH, M.A.

I write from the mouth of the Miramichi in northern New Brunswick. The Miramichi is one of the best Salmon streams in Canada, and the country about is a splendid Moose country. This morning a Moose was swimming across the river, which at this point is about a mile and a quarter wide. We went out in our dinghy and were able to get as close to it as we wished, that is close enough to get a good view of it without alarming it more than necessary.

This is a Spruce-Birch country, that is the main timber consists of Red and White Spruce and Paper Birch. The most conspicuous.

The above sentence was unfinished because of a slight interruption. I have been out fighting a forest fire. To get to the fire entailed a run of a couple of miles in a high-powered car, with a load of axes and shovels and buckets aboard, and all speed limits were thrown to the wind. The fire had a good start in a slash and a bit of spruce timber, and the wind was



A Flower of Rhodora.

blowing a gale. Trees, dead and living, were ablaze to the top. But in spite of the high wind we were fortunate in being able to get it under control, and then the wind dying down all danger was past. How did it start? We don't know. Hardly anybody ever does know how a forest fire starts, and those who do know aren't saying a word. Carelessness; gross, criminal carelessness, is the origin, of that we may be sure.

Now, as I was saying, when interrupted, the most conspicuous feature of the landscape in this part of the world at this season is the glorious show of Rhodora. This is a shrubby plant belonging to the Heath family, which along the Atlantic coast grows in great luxuriance in bogs and damp places. It has large, rose-purple flowers, with the two lower petals free and the three upper petals united. A single flower is shown in our illustration. There is a considerable amount of variation in color in the flowers of this species, some being much paler pink, and others being a very fine, deep, rich, rose-purple. At the time of blooming the young leaves are just beginning to expand.

In the same bogs with Rhodora is another very handsome plant, also a member of the Heath Family, known as Kalmia, Sheep Laurel or Lambkill. The flowers of this species are saucer-shaped, and their most remarkable feature is the series of ten little pockets in the petals. Each of these little pockets holds the anther of a stamen when the flower first opens. At this time the stigma is mature and while it stands up and is ready to receive pollen brought to it by bees from other flowers its own stamens are out of the way and thus the flower cannot be self-fertilized. Later the anthers spring out of their pockets at the slightest touch.

There are several birds which are now breeding here, which do not breed in the more southerly portions of Canada, for instance, the Yellow Palm Warbler, the Slate-colored Junco, the Magnolia Warbler, the Pine Siskin, the Purple Finch, the Red-breasted Nuthatch and the Hermit Thrush. If I had to pick the two most beautiful songsters among all our birds I should name the Hermit Thrush and the White-throated Sparrow, and both of these birds are common here and are now in full song.

I came across a flower to-day which is not very common in any locality with which I am acquainted, and which is entirely absent from many districts—the Moccasin-flower. This is one of the Orchids, and the lip—as the united lower petals of the flowers of the Orchids is termed—is sac-shaped and split along nearly its entire upper surface. The flower is about an inch and a half long and is of a deep magenta color. It grows in shady bogs. It is sometimes called the Stemless Lady's-slipper, the term "stemless" in this case meaning that it has no true stem, in the botanical sense, above ground, the apparent "stem," which is from ten inches to a foot in length, being really the pedicel, or flower-stalk.

In the same bog in which the Moccasin-flower grows the little Gold-thread is abundant. This plant has delicate, white, five-pointed flowers and shining, three-parted leaves. Its name is derived from the bright yellow color of the fine under-ground runners.

The Dwarf Cornel or Bunch-berry, a little plant with four white bracts which look like petals, which occurs right across the continent, but which seems to reach its greatest abundance in the Maritime Provinces, is just coming into bloom.

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