

AND & RURAL HOME

The Recognized Expert of Dairying in Canada

Trade increases the wealth and glory of a country; but its real strength and stamina are to be looked for among the cultivators of the land.—Lord Chatham

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This Wonderful, Beautiful and Interesting Earth!

What Are We Here For—If Not To Enjoy Every Possible Fine Experience and Adventure?—By David Grayson

Why risk with men your hard-won gold?
Buy grain and sow—your Brother Dust
will pay you back a hundredfold.
The earth commits no breach of trust.

It is astonishing how many people there are in cities and towns who have a secret longing to get back into quiet country places, to own a bit of the soil of the earth, and to cultivate it. To some it appears as a troublesome malady only in spring, and will be relieved by a whirl or two in country roads, by a glimpse of the hills, or a day by the sea; but to others the homesickness is deeper seated, and will be quieted by no hasty visits. These must actually go home.

I have had, in recent years, many letters from friends asking about life in the country; but the longer I remain here, the more I know about it, the less able I am to answer them—at least briefly. It is as though one should come and ask: "Is life worth trying?" or "How about religion?" For country life is to each human being a freedom, a strange, original adventure. We enjoy it, or we do not enjoy it, or more probably, we do both. It is packed and crowded with the zest of adventure, or it is dull and miserable. We may if we are still enough, make our whole living from the land, or only use it, or we may find in a few cherished acres the inspiration and power for other work, whatever it may be. There is a man whose strength is renewed like that of the wrestler of frassa, every time his feet touch the earth.

Where Life is Fullest and Freest.

Of all places in the world where life can be lived to its fullest and freest, where it can be met in its greatest variety and beauty, I am convinced that there is none so equal the open country, or the country town. For all country people in these days may have the city, some city or town not too far away; but there are millions of men and women in America who have no country and no sense of the country. What do they not lose out of life?

I know well the disadvantages charged against country life at its worst. At its worst there are long hours and much lonely labor and an income pitifully small. Drudgery, too, especially for the women, and loneliness. Where is there not drudgery when men are poor, where life is at its worst? But I have never seen drudgery in the country comparable for a moment to the dreary and lonely drudgery of city tenements, city mills, factories and sweat shops. And in recent years both the drudgery and loneliness of country life have been disappearing before the motor and trolley, the telephone, the rural post, and the gasoline engine. I have seen a machine plant as many potatoes in one day as a man, at hand work, could have planted in a week.

The Farm Warfare.

There are indeed a thousand nuisances and annoyances that men must meet who come face to face with nature herself. You have set out your upper acres to peach trees, and the deer come down from the hills at night and strip the young foliage; or the field mice in winter, working under the snow, gnaw and trolley the telephone, the rural post, and the gasoline engine. I have seen a machine plant as many potatoes in one day as a man, at hand work, could have planted in a week.

It is something to meet, year after year, the quiet implacability of the land in the ground; the cross seed never waits long for you. There is a chosen time for planting, a time for cultivating, a time for harvesting. You accept the eggs thrown down, well and good—you shall have a chance to fight. You do not accept it? There is no complaint. The land

cheerfully springs up to wild yellow mustard and dandelion and pigweed, and will be productive and beautiful in spite of you.

Nor can you enter upon the full satisfaction of cultivating even a small piece of land at second hand. To be accepted as One Who Belongs, there must be sweat and weariness.

If one has drained his land, and plowed it, and fertilized it, and planted it and harvested it—even though it be only a few acres—how he comes to know and to love every rod of it. He knows the wet spots, and the stony spots, and the warmest and most fertile spots, until his acres have all the qualities of a personality, whose every characteristic he knows. It is so also that he comes to know his horses and cattle and pigs and hens. It is a fine thing, on a warm day in early spring, to bring out the bees and let the bees have their first flight in the sunshine. What cleanly folk they are! And later to see them coming in yellow all over with pollen from the willows!

If You Love the Country.

Why, one who comes thus to love a bit of country may enjoy it all the year round. When he awakens in the middle of a long winter night he may send his mind out to the snowy fields—I've done it a thousand times—and visit each part in turn, stroll through the orchard and pay his respects to each

tree, in a small orchard one comes to know familiarly every tree as he knows his friends, stop at the strawberry bed, consider the grape trellises, feel himself opening the door of the warm, dark stable and listening to the welcoming whicker of his horses, or visiting his cows, his pigs, his sheep, his hens, or so many of them as he may have.

So much of the best in the world seems to have come fragrant out of fields, gardens and hillsides. So many truths spoken by the Master Poet come to us exalting the odors of the open country. His stories were so often of sowers, husbandmen, herdsmen; his similes and illustrations so often dealt with common and familiar beauty of the fields. "Consider the lilies how they grow!" It was on a hillside that he preached his greatest sermon, and when in the last age he sought a place to meet his God, where did He go—to a garden? A carpenter, you say? Yes, but of this one I am sure: there were gardens and fields all about; he knew gardens, and cattle, and the simple processes of the land; he must have worked in a garden and loved it well.

Farm Made Luxuries.

A country life rather spoils one for the so-called luxuries. A farmer may, indeed, have a small cash income, but at least he has the first table. He may have the sweetest of the milk—almost unmeasured, perhaps millions, of men and women in America who have never in their lives tasted really sweet milk—and the freshest of eggs, and the ripest of fruit. One does not know how good strawberries or raspberries are when picked before breakfast, and eaten with the dew still on them. And

work and sweat for what he gets, he may have all these things, almost unmeasured, and without a thought of what they cost. A man from the country is often made uncomfortable upon visiting the city, to find two ears of sweet corn served for twenty or thirty cents, or a dish of raspberries at twenty-five or forty, and neither, even at their best, equal in quality to those he may have from the garden every day. One may say this after the hour and day after day, but rarely monotonously; for fruits sent to the city are nearly always picked before they are fully ripe, and lose that last perfection of flavor which the sun and the open air impart; and both fruits and vegetables, as well as milk and eggs, suffer more than most people think in handling and shipment. These things can be set down as one of the make-weights against the "higher" presentation of the farmer's life as a hard one.

Vicissitude is Not Monotony.

One of the greatest curses of mill or factory work, and with much city work of all kinds, is its interminable monotony; the same process repeated hour after hour and day after day. In the country there is, indeed, monotonous work, but rarely monotonous. No task continues very long; everything changes infinitely with the seasons. Processes are not repetitive but creative. Nature hates monotony, is ever changing and restless, brings up a storm to drive the hay-makers from their hurried work in the fields, sends rain to stop the plowing, or a frost to hurry the apple harvest. Everything is full of adventure and vicissitude! A man who has been a farmer for two hours at the mowing, must suddenly turn blacksmith, when his machine breaks down, and tinker on each and hammer; and later in the day he becomes dairyman, barrier and harness-maker, merchant. No kind of wheat but is grist to his mill, no knowledge that he cannot use: and who is freer to be a citizen than he? Freer to take his part in town meeting and serve in state in some of the important small offices which form the solid blocks of organization beneath our commonwealth.

What makes any work interesting is the fact that (Continued on page 12.)



THE MIRACLE OF SPRING

By Tom Allala

THE miracle of spring! Every year it grows more wonderful to me. Yesterday was one of those days when I went out to enjoy it to the full. The soil worked beautifully and by noon the rest ground was ready for the seed. I spent the afternoon pushing a lawn mower, a little implement that conserves seed but is conducive to headaches. At one end of the drills I stopped occasionally to look for the alfalfa plants that were just making themselves among the fall wheat, just showing in shaft. Up on the hillside the barley was just beginning to shoot up in fine green lines and I knew that there, too, alfalfa would soon be springing up and covering the soil with green. In the heavy growth of the north boundary, the birds were singing glad little snatches of song to show their appreciation of the warmth and cheerfulness of the day. Down in the barnyard the chickens were frisking around as they have not done since last fall. All nature seemed to be rejoicing and I forgot the cares and troubles of the world and rejoiced with all other living things. Oh, I am not a poet, not even a writer of anything but the plainest and most practical of farm themes, but this does not prevent me from enjoying nature for long hours of full, often poorly rewarded, then let us open our eyes and our hearts to the miracle that is being performed around us by a Beneficent Creator—the miracle of spring.