

# Open Letters

## BOULEVARDS VERSUS PRIVATE GARDENS

A LETTER FROM

W. F. CLARKE, GUELPH

FAMILIARLY KNOWN FROM CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE MONTREAL WITNESS  
UNDER THE NOM DE PLUME OF "LINDENBANK"

SIR,—I have been an advocate of the boulevard system of improving town and city lots in preference to the custom of having division fences, of all sorts and sizes, as a means of securing privacy and safeguarding the contents of the private garden. But I cannot shut my eyes to one very strong incidental objection to the boulevard plan, and that is the fact, for such it really is, as things now are, that it really means the extinction of the private garden. Not boys merely, but grown-up men and women, appear to think that the absence of a fence is a license to roam at will, and that a fence only is a notice to quit trespassing. Gradually we find, here in Guelph, where I live, that gardens are becoming more rare, and while it is quite true that grass and trees are "things of beauty" and "joys forever," no one can pretend that they may wholly supplant the garden with its varied attractions. It strikes me very forcibly that we need some legal protection to guard boulevards from trespass, but still more we need the protection of a better public sentiment in regard to the rights of owners of property, whether it is protected by a fence or by any other intimation of ownership. His-

tory tells us that in King Alfred's days people were so honest that jewelled bracelets and other valuable ornaments might be safely left hanging on trees and nobody but the rightful owners would ever think of touching them. If such things were left thus exposed in these days there would be a perfect scramble for possession of them.

I have a fence around my place yet in the delusive hope of being able to protect flowers and fruit, but I strongly suspect that the boulevard system has had much to do with the prevalence of that loose public sentiment which appears to make many people think they have a right to go wherever there is free passage, and to take whatever they have a fancy for. In my young days it used to be a school maxim and copy headline: "Who steals a pin it is a sin." Is this doctrine taught in our public schools to-day? Garden thieves and trespassers must be taught a few sharp lessons by police magistrates, and even parents must get some schooling in regard to the morals and manners of their children on these points if we are to see any marked improvement.

Guelph, July 1, 1902.