

ALL THINGS CONSIDERED

By PETER McARTHUR

ALL the time and in every town and city men and women are talking of moving to the country. The failures, the misfits, the unfit and the weary are all looking to some land of promise where happiness awaits them if they could only get up the energy to move. The pathetic part of it is that few of those who are longing and talking will ever make the change and of those who do few will do it in the proper spirit. It is all nonsense for the man who cannot get ahead—remember that phrase—in the city to think he could retrieve his fortune or make his fortune in the country. As far as money-making is concerned the farmers, fruit-growers, market-gardeners, poultry men, bee-keepers and others can beat the amateur every time. The city man who tries it will find that he is only trying to make money in unfamiliar surroundings, in unfamiliar ways with competition that is much too keen for him. The man who could make money on a farm could make money in the city by employing the same industry and thrift.

And yet in spite of this I shall never cease urging everyone to move to the country and live there. The explanation is that no one has yet been able to convince me that it should be necessary for anyone to "get ahead" or to make money. To the man who having food and raiment is therewith content there is no place in all the world like the country. Moving to the country in the right spirit is much the same as getting religion. You must give up all the things that you are better without and then it becomes to you what it should be—a land of refuge. Its offer to the weary and heavy laden is not wealth or fame or social distinction but "Rest."

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NOBODY seems to understand the country—least of all those who live in it. To the weary who go to it in sincerity it is a temple, a home and a refuge. It teaches lessons of right living, or rather the one only lesson of right living, and breathes healing for both body and soul. At the present time the country is crowded with money-changers and the tables of those who buy and sell and there is no one to make a whip of knotted cords for the backs of the unworthy. It is in the country that a man can get a true idea of his dependence on nature and of what his life might be if he had not sought out many inventions. Since the beginning of time Nature has been playing her part in the endless drama of life. Year after year she brings the seed time and the harvest to fill her part of some immemorial compact. In this respect she has made for herself an excellent reputation. No matter what a man's beliefs or scepticism may be he believes that if he sows seed and gives ungrudging labour Nature will give to him

a bountiful harvest. If we could only live in a state in which our dealings would be entirely with Nature there would be no need of judges or of courts. Taking it year in and year out Nature gives to those who deal with her more full returns than they can get from any earthly partnership.

Though Nature has been teaching this truth from the beginning man is full of distrust. He has no faith that she will treat him fairly next year so he has invented money in order that he may be able to buy from those who have an abundance. From this one invention has resulted all the struggles that have defiled the life of man. Before the invention of money a man's wealth consisted of corn and wine and oil and his flocks. These were all perishable and could not be placed in trust for generations yet unborn. They must be renewed yearly by fair dealing with Nature. Because of this the primitive rich man could only make display of his wealth by the extent of his hospitality. He lived near to Nature and was her almoner to aid the needy. It may surprise you to know it but it is possible to get behind the money-changers and resume the olden compact with Nature, but only those who do it in sincerity enjoy her largess to the full. Those who try to live the Simple Life and make money and "get ahead" would do much better to stick to the streets and the skyscrapers. While Nature is bountiful man does not get rich in dealing with her. Riches are acquired by dealing with or stealing from our fellowmen.

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IN talking with city men who are dreaming of what they could do in the country I find that all of them are haunted by one terror. They do not know what they would do in case they should lose their jobs. If they are past middle-age they know it would be practically impossible for them to get employment again in any office position. The commercial world is being more closely organised every year, so that the needed work can be done by the smallest possible number of men. When a vacancy occurs the position is almost invariably given to a young man who will grow up with the business. There is no place in this vigorous age for the old employee. No wonder such men are dreading a possible discharge and thinking of a chicken farm or garden somewhere where they can make another start. They can make a fresh start if they give up all notions of "getting ahead." Nature is the one employer who will never discharge them. With a very modest start they can raise their own food and necessities and if they are capable of the not very trying act of faith needed to believe that Nature will give them seedtime and harvest in the following year they can enjoy comfort and happiness.

I have stood beside the grave of more than one man who discharged all his obligations in life and at his death left no cause for a Villon to write a ballad mourning because he had died with a couple of sous that had not been spent. But in the short and simple annals of the poor the names of such men should be blazoned. If you do not like the picture do not look to the country as a place of refuge. Stay on in the city and try to "get ahead."

A TRAGEDY OF FIRE AND WATER



The recent crash of a water-tank through four floors of the Herald Building, in Montreal, caused a fire which resulted in the loss of many lives. The scene at the fire was one of the most tragic spectacles ever witnessed in Montreal. The second picture shows the public funeral of ten of the victims.