

Protect the Farm Homes.

The worth of protection is too lightly estimated by the farmers whose homes are without protection. When a man can raise the temperature of his immediate surroundings ten or fifteen degrees when storms are raging, or when he can do the equivalent of this by planting around his home a protecting belt of trees, it is surely important that he should do so. It would probably be safe to say that not one home in ten is protected thus. The time was when farmers were so occupied in clearing their farms that they could not give attention to such matters; but it is not so now. Trees in a great many parts of this country will grow well. When a tree is given half a chance it will grow, and it will grow quickly. It is not so, however, everywhere. Since such is the fact, let us grow them. We have simply to prepare the ground and plant them, and protect them, to have them grow. The process is very simple. Then let us all have the protection which they afford. I am of the opinion that a man is an enemy to himself, and he is, so far, an enemy to his family, if he does not plant trees to protect his home, if he owns the land which he tills. We have many kinds of trees to plant for protection, all of which will grow well. It is not so on the western prairie. Only a few kinds of trees will grow there. Some of the dwellers in those lands can only enjoy the protection of a cottonwood grove, even where the blizzards blow their fiercest, and in some instances they cannot have even that. But the farmer further east can have any kind of a tree to make his grove that he may desire to choose; that is to say, he can have any one of the many varieties that grow in this country. Even amid evergreens there is much variety from which to choose. The white pine grows sturdily, and shuts out the wind. The native spruce will form a close wall, even though it may not grow so fast. But the Norway variety is probably better suited to the rapid and effectual protection of a home than any other variety of evergreen. Get the boys and girls of the home to help plant them. They should feel that they are theirs, or, at least, that they have an interest in them, and they will be all the more anxious to help to protect them.

Changes of Seed.

Changes of seed are frequent, and changing seed has many warm advocates. It has been noticed on all sides that when grain is grown for a long time on the same land, the result is deterioration. And to prevent such deterioration the

practice has become common to import seed from abroad. This question is one of no little importance, but we do not consider it by any means settled; and it will not be settled finally until much careful experimenting has been done.

As the matter stands at present, the evidence would appear to be conflicting. It is a fact that certain varieties of wheat, and other grains which were at one time favorites in Ontario, are not now grown to any appreciable extent. Of these, the Liehl wheat is an example. And it is also a fact that, in many instances, the same varieties of grain are grown for many years without any deterioration in the yields, and, in some instances at least, with positive improvement. Two instances in wheat production may be cited. Two varieties, viz., the Velvet Chaff and Silver Chaff, have been grown upon the Ohio Experiment Station farm continuously for twelve years, without any decrease in the average yields. At the Indiana Experiment Station three varieties, viz., the Fultz, Michigan Amber, and Velvet Chaff, have been grown during eleven successive years without any diminution in the yields. The tendency has been to increased rather than to decreased yields in both cases. And instances are on record wherein persons have used constantly, for thirty successive years, the same varieties of corn, and have reaped increasing rather than decreasing yields.

And the further fact should be taken into the account that acclimatization exercises an influence. Some of the grains imported in 1889 to the Ontario Agricultural College Experiment Station did fairly well the first year, and then rapidly degenerated. Some of them, on the other hand, did poorly at first, and gradually improved. In view of all these facts, we cannot but conclude that, with reference to this question, we should form conclusions cautiously. There can be no doubt of the fact, however, that much care in the selection of seeds has a tendency to arrest retrogression, and in some instances, if not in all, to effect improvement. The evidence on this point is so widespread that it cannot be gainsaid. Starting from this standpoint, the duty of the farmer is so far plain. He should select his seed, as far as possible, from the parts of the field where it grew most perfectly where there is such variation. Other things being equal, he should select it from the parts first ripe, with a view to hasten the average period of ripening. And he should so clean the grain that light and immature seeds would be rejected. If this were done in all instances, we should hear very little indeed about deterioration in varieties compared with what we do now.