

city the Canadian Horticulturist, edited by our Secretary, Mr. Cowan, and there are also valued farm journals that devote a number of pages to the work of the horticulturist.

Fruit, flowers and well-kept lawns and ivy-crested homes have a far-reaching effect for the betterment of humanity. Many societies are doing an excellent work in distributing seeds, plants and bulbs to school children. I would suggest that, when seeds are distributed in this way, the teachers get in touch with the members of horticultural societies and follow up the work by visiting the homes of the children, and showing that an interest is being taken in the work that the little ones are doing. Many of our working people are endeavoring in a small way to beautify their humble homes, but they do not go about it in the best possible manner. Many of them try to produce flowers and vegetables where the sub-soil has been turned up from cellars, and success does not follow their efforts, and they cannot understand why they fail. If members of horticultural societies would visit the cottars' homes, showing them how to improve their soil, and the best kinds of flowers, plants and vegetables to grow, they would be doing an unselfish work in assisting to beautify humble homes, thereby making the lives of those citizens more pleasant and happy.

We must encourage the local press to take cognizance of the work we are doing, and members of the societies should frequently send items of interest on horticultural matters for publication. Many societies hold monthly meetings at the homes of their members, and have discovered that this method is an effective one for increasing membership and adding interest to the work.

I have to thank you ladies and gentlemen for the kindly and courteous hearing you have given me. I hope that when any of you visit Toronto, you will come to my office and talk over any matters that may arise of importance to your societies, and anything I can do to further the work in which we are engaged will be gladly done. It is encouraging to see so many ladies here, and I trust many others will join us in the near future, because they are the ones who know best how to train the tender plants to grow upward, and they best understand how to care for things that are beautiful.

WHAT CAN HORTICULTURAL SOCIETIES DO TO PROMOTE CIVIC IMPROVEMENT?

By Major H. J. Sneigrove, M. A., Ph. B., Cobourg, Ont.

[A paper which may be made to apply equally well to the rural districts.]

To this query my answer is: By arousing and uniting all citizens to develop beautiful and wholesome surroundings.

By raising the standard of municipal taste and tidiness. By materially contributing toward making our Canadian home life brighter, healthier and happier.

To DO these things by means of organization, which we have at hand, working out its salvation by dint of patience, stick-to-itiveness and common sense.

I submit that the prime object of our horticultural societies should not be merely to cultivate a love of flowers per se by the distribution among the members, once or twice a year, of seeds, plants, bulbs, shrubs and trees, but our constant aim should be to educate public sentiment along lines of civic improvement, and thereby achieve the greatest good to the greatest number.

Can we not, in most cases, furnish the initiative, the motor power, "the push and the pull" behind the throne, by suggesting reforms in some department of civic administration, resulting inevitably in the

creation of a public sentiment that will either impel or compel our municipal authorities to DO THINGS which hitherto have been utterly neglected or sadly misunderstood in the average community.

Perhaps someone will ask, "What is the meaning of civic improvement?" It is a recognition of the rights of the people to the free and unobstructed enjoyment of the natural beauties bestowed upon us by a beneficent Creator. It is a war against ugliness everywhere.

In our natural life we are at the turning of the ways. We have commenced to think of living, but how can we live happily amidst an environment of ugliness, the defacement of nature, loathsome home surroundings, and dearth of rational recreation, the products of sordid commercialism?

We must reorganize our civic life in harmony with that domestic interpretation given by John Ruskin, when he said that the exterior of our houses is not private property—unless we build in a wilderness. Our mission should be to create a conviction of the beautiful along the highways and byways of our modern Canadian life, and to unite private individuals, voluntary associations and industrial corporations in the outward expression of this conviction. Public beauty is the dominating idea of the twentieth century.

At the annual meeting, held in January, a "Publicity Committee" and a "Look-out Committee" are appointed. The duty of the former is to contribute paragraphs to the columns of the local newspapers, offering suggestions touching every feature of the development of the aesthetic and civic side of town life, and showing that the character of the community is formed by the surroundings which even the humblest citizen maintains about the threshold of his home; also illustrating, from time to time, how efforts to beautify will induce every tenant in the block to follow suit. People who will allow weeds to grow luxuriantly about their premises are occasionally "written up" as a sort of "horrible example." The effect of this publicity is often magical.

The town is divided into wards or districts which are assigned for purposes of observation to the different members of the Look-out Committee. For two or three months this committee goes about quietly taking note of all eyesores and offences against the sense of sight, and also noting how much better the town would look if certain improvements were made with the common property of the municipality. In the spring, a meeting of the committee is held, at which notes are compared by the members, and a report prepared for submission to the town

tative to point the way. At least, that has been our experience in Cobourg.

You have heard the story of the Sunday-school teacher who, quoting the words of the Bible verse beginning "Many are called," asked the class to repeat the remainder of the text. Only one hand went up, and the precocious child was asked to give the class the benefit of his biblical lore. "Many are called, but few get up," was little Johnny's revised version of the Scriptural proverb, which is lamentably applicable to the work of our societies to-day.

Unquestionably, the most prominent single factor in the movement for civic improvement is the influence of our women. God bless them. They are our good housekeepers, and what is more proper than that they should become good civic housekeepers. They abate nuisances in the household. Why not in the town? They make the home a place of beauty. Why not the town? Moreover, patience and perseverance more frequently characterize their efforts than those of men. This is the coin of success. "The work that never lags is woman's work." Yet, there is no dearth of opportunity in any city, town or village in this Province. It is intelligent concentration and application that tells every time.

In undertaking this work, we should not attempt to remake the town in one year. We do not purpose meddling officiously with the work of our municipal bodies, or offensively dictating to them what they should or should not do. Appreciating their responsibility, we approach them deferentially, and politely offer to co-operate with them for the good of all. Every town official who has an eye for the public good should certainly welcome the co-operation of our influential societies for bettering municipal conditions.

The making of the ideal modern town is essentially and unpolitically a business proposition, wherein the health and happiness of each citizen is considered a tangible asset equally with the annual tax bill, where the costly, ruinous regime of the incompetent, self-seeking politician is ostracized, and where public service, as an honor and a duty, is cheerfully assumed by the ablest and best citizens.

If, as has been suggested in Chicago, art is a corrective for crime, then art should be made effective as a preventive of crime. Educators are beginning to see that the sphere of the state embraces not only the redemption of those who have fallen from grace, but equally the prevention of those walking in the paths of virtue from falling out by the wayside and becoming moral castaways. "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." As a consequence, we rejoice to find that our schoolhouses are becoming more and more to be the centers of refinement for those who enter their walls. The schoolhouse should be made a real civic center of the community, and a perennial source of hopeful, helpful uplift to all classes. Unkept school-grounds leave bad impressions on children, which in after-life will surely be reproduced in their homes and work-a-day surroundings. There is no doubt the refining influence of school gardens takes out of boys the tendency to pilfer fruits and flowers. Each child feels that he has a personal stake in some living, growing thing. It implants in his fresh, impressionable mind a love of the beautiful. The public schools, wherein most of our future electors and legislators are being made "fit" for the responsible duties of citizenship, is the place where we should turn our attention in our efforts to promote a more beautiful public life in Canada. "If the Athenians desire good citizens, let them put whatever is good into the lives of their children," was the advice of a



A Vine-covered Home.

Imagine this scene were both vines and trees taken away.

The town beautiful is no longer a dream of the idealist, but in many places it is becoming an accomplished fact. Wherever one travels, whether by railroad, boat, or carriage, he cannot fail to be struck with a remarkable tendency everywhere toward embellishment. Beauty and art in the truest sense are no longer reserved for the rich few, are no longer the perquisite of luxury-loving aristocrats; but are made the common heritage of the common people, for the benefit and uplift of all.

Throughout the American continent we find gentlemen possessing the ability of statesmen devoting themselves unselfishly to the pursuit of citizenmaking and citymaking, strenuously striving to prepare a model city for the future. It is the awakening of a general civic consciousness, which means the redemption of our communities from the sordid and the shabby. The old order, the old love grown to be the old hate, must give way to the new order, the new love grown to be the new promise. To exile ugliness and en throne beauty is our common interest.

May I describe some methods of conducting a civic-improvement campaign, which have been efficiently carried out by the Cobourg Horticultural Society.

Through the chairman, the mayor is requested to call a special meeting of the council, when a typewritten report of the committee is presented and discussed, clause by clause. A committee of the council is then appointed to co-operate with the directors of the society in carrying out, as far as possible, the recommendations of the Look-out Committee, which are handed out to the local press for publication. The effect is marvellous, the natural impulse for civic improvement manifesting itself in a general attempt to clean up and fix up throughout the town.

In appointing our civic-improvement committees, we should endeavor to avoid misfits. I mean by that, merely ornamental members with only names, who do nothing and are not worth a cent to the work-a-day purpose of any live association. And it may be said, by way of parenthesis, that even a well-selected committee, with a sincere desire to do things, rarely gets anywhere unless the chairman has the gift of initiative. Someone has said that all the world's great prizes go to initiative; that is, the faculty of seeing for one's self what should be done, and of doing it without ado. Usually an entire committee or a whole society hold back, waiting for the man or the woman with the ini-