

A Well-informed Woman.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

"And still the wonder grew

That one small head could carry all (s)he knew."

We are having to-day one of those cold east rains which drives the farmer indoors, and so, in my rude, filthy and uncourteous country way, have been helping a little in the house with those jobs so necessary at house-cleaning time, and which the women find rather awkward to manage alone; and for some reason, my imagination brought up a man of whom I have never heard—a Mr. Hopkins—poor man! I fear his lot has not been cast in pleasant places, and yet, if he has accompanied his better-half in her travels, he must have travelled through and lived in almost every portion of our Province, for she certainly handles the conditions, also the rule and exceptions of conditions, of the farmers in our Province, or probably our Dominion—I know not which—with a breadth of grasp which, if not imaginary, exceeds the knowledge of existing conditions possessed by any man in Canada.

Now, sir, I am a young farmer, and have been brought up on the farm, but have also lived and worked in the city, and would like to give your subscribers a few experiences and observations. On going to the city, I secured board with a respectable family, in good circumstances. There was a young man about my own age in the home, who worked in a foundry. He would get up a few minutes to seven, and make a rush for the breakfast table, unwashed, and with hair uncombed. I used to wash and comb my hair before breakfast, just as any other green youth from the country would have done. In the evening, this young man would wash, dress and comb up, and go out a sleek, courteous young man. I could go on and write pages to illustrate my point, but this is unnecessary; anyone who has had an insight to both knows that there is more genuine and all-round cleanliness, and more true courtesy, in the average country home than in the average city home.

I have been more pained by the slouchy, dirty, unbecoming dress of the city people who marched past my rig on the market than by the somewhat work-a-day attire of farmers at an auction sale. Stand at noon on a city street and see the workmen file past; many of them are filthy with dirt and grease, and their clothes are worse. But, why censure them? They cannot work in broadcloth. Why should they? Yet, because a few men from the cities appear dressed in black, some people seem to think the farmer at his work on the market should be dressed in his best. Out of respect and sympathy, I will draw no close comparisons between the girls who step out of the factories, and those who sell butter from a farmer's democrat.

Those of you who have been observant know, and to any others I would say that we have nothing to fear from a comparison of morals, manners, looks, or dress.

I feel that Mrs. Hopkins has thrown a slur at the young ladies of the country in saying, as she did in her letter of April 21th, that they leave the farm because their brothers do not groom themselves as they should, and that they seek the society of the smarter-dressed young man of the city. I believe, if the young ladies saw such a tendency on the part of their brothers, they would show themselves true women by correcting the evil, instead of running from it.

Our young ladies are not so apt to prefer a polished glass to a diamond in the rough, as Mrs. Hopkins thinks. She also states that the average farmer does not take a bath oftener than once in six months, and backs it up by a lifetime's observation. Let me ask one question: Would a lifetime's observation on her part enable her to keep accurate enough account of the baths taken by the rural male population of Canada, to prove her statement? Now, don't laugh when you think of it. "Oh," but someone says, "she judges all by local conditions." But I wish to know how she keeps track of her neighbor's bathing. In this part of the country, we do not in- vite our neighbors when we take a bath. Well, perhaps I am getting a little too personal in my statements, so I will just sum up and conclude my letter.

To look at it fairly, there are clean and dirty, courteous and uncourteous, in both city and country. The city man, from more constant social intercourse, may have his manners a little more polished than the farmer; and the farmer, from more intercourse with nature, is more genuine in what he has, and is not so prone to outward show without the inward feeling. Mrs. Hopkins says we resent anything but flattery, but students of human nature know that this depends on the spirit in which the reproof or advice is given, and I fear hers was given in the wrong spirit, for, instead of expecting that, as a result of her letter, the careless ones will spruce up a little, she tells us she expects a storm of curses to fall upon her. I should like to see Mrs. Hopkins come again, but this time I hope she will lay aside her ra-

pier, and appeal to her better and more womanly nature, and see if she cannot find at least a little love for these diamonds in the rough; and if so, in that spirit let her write, not to uphold the polished and smooth-mannered fop above the one who, though he has less outward polish, has yet a much more sterling and manly character, but to hold up to us a higher ideal, and to show the value of these little outward evidences of culture and chivalry in making life pleasant for one another, and I believe her letter will not be criticised, but prized.

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Hurrah for Mrs. Hopkins!

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

Good for you, Mrs. Hopkins! Thou has cast the bomb into a veritable hornets' nest. Ha! ha! but don't the farmers resent the home thrusts that you gave them in that much-abused and discussed letter! Now, it is all true; that state of affairs does exist this very day; yes, in this much-lauded twentieth century. I am a farmer's wife, was a farmer's daughter, and know whereof Mrs. Hopkins speaks. All those things that she enumerates have been, and are and do exist, and our young folks are still leaving the farm, and I don't think the problem is any nearer being solved than that of the vexed servant-girl question. The spirit of unrest is abroad in our land, and for the last twenty-five years our educational system has tended to professional life more than to agriculture. Not but what farmers are having their innings now; a lot lies within ourselves, in both making the best of our situation, and—I say it with all reverence—thank God all ye that live and work on a farm; 'tis a glorious life, in its breadth and scope, its grand independence, its freedom, its close contact with nature, and its need to bow to no man as master of his vote, or union of labor. We can all complain and criticise when we read such opinions in plain print, but let us "do our best, our very best, and do it every day"; be lifters, not leaneers. And, as for Nemo, why, woman dear, you are not alone; there are thousands of women like you. Men don't feel the way we do on money matters, seeing that they don't experience it the same; but as we grow older, things don't hurt so much, and my motto is, "Where there is a will, there is a way." As to the father's part in regard to the boys, I must truly say, O ye fathers, why make the chain to hang yourselves with in curt, unkind words? My life-experience in this has been and is very bitter. The blighted home-life of some boys! I don't wonder they leave, and 'tis the home they leave that suffers, not them, as cold statistics tell us.

ONLOOKER.

A Favorable Spring Crop Report.

The Ontario Department of Agriculture has issued a statement regarding agricultural conditions in the Province existing at the beginning of May. Vegetation.—The warm weather of March started vegetation unusually soon, from three to four weeks earlier than usual. The latter half of April, however, was very wet and cold, and further advance was much retarded, the result being that May opened with growth a week or two ahead of the average, and three weeks or a month in advance of last year. Forests were in early leaf, and many orchards were in blossom; pastures were green, and were furnishing a good bite for the many sheep and young cattle that had been turned out to feed.

Spring Sowing.—Field operations have been the earliest for many years. Most of the plowing had been done in the fall, and, owing to the mild winter, but little frost remained in the ground after the snow went away, early in March. The latter part of that month and the first two weeks of April were open, and comparatively warm. The seed-bed for spring grains, generally speaking, was excellent, the catch was unusually good, and the new crops were making a very early and most promising showing as correspondents wrote. The latter part of April, however, turned out to be almost continuously wet and cool.

Fall wheat entered into May well forward and presenting a good appearance on the whole, more especially where it had been got in early. Injury to the crop from heaving by frost was practically nil. The injury from insect pests is less than usual, there being but scattering mention of Hessian fly, wireworm and white grub.

Clover, like fall wheat, wintered well, and the spring was also favorable, there being practically no heaving from frost. As a result, very little had been plowed up. The crop suffered more from last season's drouth than from anything else. This had a tendency to thin many fields, but, taken all together, clover presents a good appearance.

Fodder Supplies.—A correspondent, describing the fodder situation, says: "The short and mild winter worked wonders," and others write to the same effect. The good corn crop of last year also helped farmers to save on hay and grain in feeding live stock. Straw has been scarce and dear.

The high prices offered for grain tempted some to sell rather too freely, while others were endeavoring to make even more by feeding for pork and beef, which have been realizing top figures. The early grass was a boon to owners of live stock. The general tone of the reports regarding fodder supplies is much more cheerful than those of more recent years.

Live Stock.—All classes of live stock are at a premium. Prices for horses are high and firm, attributed by some to the great demand from the Western Provinces. Their general health has been good, except for a form of strangles. Cattle have been remarkably free from disease, but are rather thin in flesh, owing to somewhat close feeding. Milk cows are fewer in number than usual, but in both dairy and beef-raising sections more calves are being kept. Fat cattle are very scarce, and stockers harder to procure than in former years, while local butchers find it difficult to procure suitable animals. A good deal of inferior beef has been disposed of at good prices. Sheep are doing well, lambs coming strong and plentiful in proportion to the number of dams. High prices for these also prevail. The rabies among dogs has been a boon to sheep. Swine are not so plentiful as in former years, as they have been rushed to market at prices characterized by one correspondent as "sky-high." In fact, there are complaints of too-hasty marketing.

Fruit Trees.—With the exception of a severe ice or sleet storm in the latter part of November, that broke off many branches, fruit trees have come through the winter in normal condition. The damage done was confined to a few sections in Western Ontario. Blossoming will average about a fortnight earlier than usual, peaches, cherries and plums being well in bloom in the more southern counties, together with some apples and pears. While there has been a profusion of blossom, it is possible that the heavy rains of the last two weeks of April may have washed off some of the pollen. The San Jose scale is spoken of as doing harm in different parts of the Province, and some farmers are cutting down their trees. On the other hand, much activity in spraying is reported. The general outlook regarding orchard conditions is encouraging. Small fruits are well advanced, and promise an unusually early market. There has been more planting of new orchards, including apples, peaches, cherries—in fact, all kinds of fruits—than has taken place for several years past. Nurserymen report all domestic supplies exhausted.

On Guard Against Weeds.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

Let me call the attention of the readers of your valuable paper to the fact that this is the time of year to be on the lookout for weeds. This is especially the case with perennial sow thistle. The writer has noticed many fresh patches of this pest appearing in the fields this spring. If these new patches are dug over at once, before the long, creeping roots are formed, the weed will be prevented, with comparatively little trouble, from getting a foothold. Once the long, creeping "roots" of this pest are formed, and get established in the soil, it is no easy matter to dig them out, and this requires to be done if a patch is to be thoroughly cleaned out. It would pay every farmer to go over his fields on the watch for fresh seedlings of the perennial sow thistle. If ever "a stitch in time saves nine," it does so in the case of this pest. The same applies to many other weeds, such as bladder campion and white cockle.

Watch should also be kept for the seedlings of annual and winter annual weeds, such as mustard and false flax. These are easily destroyed by harrowing. The writer has found, in fighting mustard, that running over the field with the light harrows, even when the grain is several inches high, will destroy a large number of mustard seedlings, and benefit, rather than damage the crop.

Guard against new weeds becoming established on the farm. If a strange weed appears, find out at once what it is; do not wait until it has secured a foothold. It may take weeks of time and labor to get rid of it, once it becomes established. The Botanical Department of the Ontario Ag'l College, Guelph, is at the service of farmers and others, for the identification of weeds, poisonous plants, fungous diseases, etc. Specimens as complete as possible, should be sent, carefully packed, and addressed to the Botanical Department, O. A. C., Guelph. Correspondence regarding weeds, fungous diseases, etc., is invited. Literature pertaining to such subjects will be sent free on application.

In conclusion, the writer urges all who desire to have clean farms to start the fight against weeds early in the season, and continue it until the last thing in the fall. There is no weed that grows which cannot be kept under control by proper crop rotation and persistent and