

WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

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CANADIAN women are impregnated with the idea that work on the land is degrading. Some think it beneath them, others that it is too strenuous, and others that it detracts from their femininity. Unless this prejudice is overcome the shortage in our harvest will be disastrous. The woman who helps to keep the farms going will contribute to the defeat of Germany as surely as the man who is fighting in the trenches. Farming is more popular with women in the United States than it is in Canada. There they have a Horticultural and Agricultural Society of women alone, and the well-known universities such as Cornell, Yale and Harvard admit women to their agricultural courses, but Canadian women are only now beginning to realize their privileges for agricultural training. Two girls are taking the full course at St. Anne de Bellevue, the Institute of Agriculture for Quebec, and many more are registered for special courses at the various provincial agricultural colleges.

RAISING poultry, keeping bees, growing small fruit, market gardening, growing seeds and perennials—all these are essentially women's work and they are naturally more efficient than men in the cleaning and whitewashing of stables, the care of young animals and dairy work. Even a good deal of the field work is eminently suited to them: there is the sulky plough with its comfortable seat, the hay rake where the driver is also seated, and if farm implements were made smaller to fit women's strength and stature, a great deal of the more strenuous agricultural work would be made quite possible for them. Hoes, hand cultivators, could easily be made on a smaller scale, and donkey carts can be used instead of heavy farm wagons. Women should never be allowed to overstrain themselves by using implements too heavy for their strength, especially as the work can be done quite as efficiently with lighter tools.

EXTRACTS from letters written by women who have been engaged in agricultural life in Canada for years may prove interesting in this connection. A teacher of dairy, poultry and laundry work in the Haliburton College, British Columbia, tells of the training that is given there to prepare women for ranch life in Canada:

"So far as chances for women in Canada are concerned, I correspond with several girls, and know what they are doing. All those who are competent and industrious have good posts, but I think it advisable for girls to be trained under conditions such as they will have on their own farms."

A WOMAN beekeeper in Ontario writes:

"Anyone going in for bees would be wise to work with a beekeeper for one season before starting alone. It is easier for two women to work together, as some of the heavy lifting can hardly be done alone. As to the financial return, that varies from year to year, but in a good season you can expect a return of \$5 to \$8 a colony, and two women should be able to run 150 to 200 colonies. From November to April there is practically nothing to do, so it is advisable to have some other occupation for the winter months. Beekeeping is a most suitable occupation for energetic women who have a real love for the little creatures, then only will they be prepared to overcome the many difficulties and take the poor with the good seasons. A certain amount of capital is required. An apiary of 100 colonies cannot be started with less outlay than \$1,000, but Ontario is a very fine country for bees, in fact, one of the best in the world."

FROM British Columbia comes this testimony from a woman poultry-farmer:

"There is no branch of agriculture that I think women are so especially fitted for as poultry farming, and no branch that will give better or surer return for the amount of capital invested. Two women can easily look after 1,000 or 1,500 birds, and it is a very conservative estimate to allow a profit of two dollars per hen per year. For those who have no experience the best advice is to go slowly. Starting in a small way we can make poultry a side issue till a competent living is

"One of the many advantages of poultry farming for women is that they are producers, not altogether consumers; they are not employees, but, if necessary, employers. They do not feel that a time will come when they will be pushed aside for younger faces. There need be no pension fund for poultry women—no sanatoriums for worn-out nerves."

A GIRL who studied fruit farming, tells of her training:

"Last year I spent eight months on a fruit ranch in Nelson, B.C., where I worked out of doors as a pupil. I had absolutely no training or experience in such work, and was totally ignorant of horticulture. I was lucky in being with charming and cultured people who were kindness itself to me, and made me very happy. Pruning, spraying, grafting were taught in their proper order.

"Every morning we had breakfast at 6.30 and finished at 6 p.m., except in the busy season, when we went on until dark. There were three greenhouses on the ranch where a great quantity of flowers and tomatoes were grown, and on wet days I was able to work in them, repotting, weeding, etc.

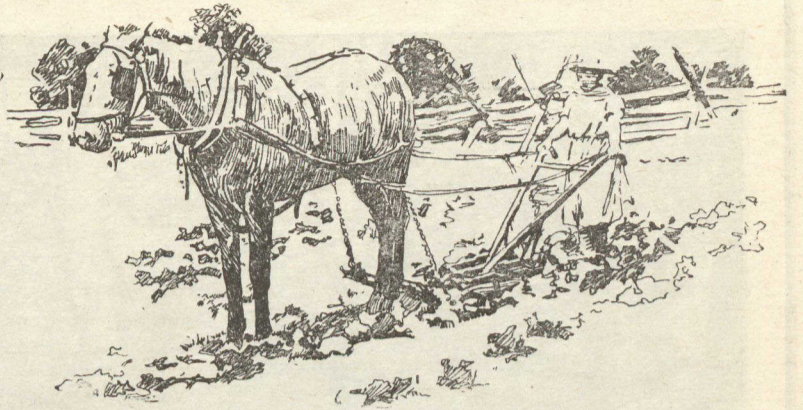
"Once the fruit season began I gave up all my time to picking and packing. Cherries, raspberries, strawberries, gooseberries and currants all claimed attention. Then came plums, and after that apples. The satisfaction that a well-packed shiny box of good coloured 'Wealthys' gives to the eye is not easily beaten.

"The life lived out of doors in that beauty spot with splendid climatic conditions, is almost ideal to the lover of fresh air. It makes you just glad to be alive, and the refreshing cool evenings quickly dispel the remembrance of the heat and glare of the day. As far as I could judge I see no reason why a strong, capable girl could not manage a small fruit ranch. She might require a man to help her occasionally with the heaviest work, such as ploughing, but the fruit culture itself can very well be managed by an energetic and strong woman."

ONTARIO women have been largely employed during the fruit-picking season, but the question of housing this casual labour is always a problem. This has been solved in some communities by a hostel where women can live and hire themselves out by the day to the farmers in the vicinity. One of the most successful of these was established by Mrs. L. A. Hamilton, who has a farm at Lorne Park, Ontario, and has in consequence been able to supply her own farm and also many in the neighbourhood with labour. A comfortable and inexpensive place to board with proper chaperonage for the girls is provided, also facilities for lake bathing, so that the health and happiness of the labourers is assured as well as opportunity for the industrious to earn good wages. A similar hostel has been opened in Oakville, Ont., and a group of college girls are employed picking strawberries.

The country is crying out for food, and as the men are leaving the land, it is the patriotic duty of women to fill their places.

IN our nervous haste to supply men and munitions for the battlefield, we must not forget the greater



Farm implements can be adapted to suit the strength and stature of women.

need—the care of the future race for whose welfare this cruel war is fought. There is no reason why boys and girls should not help with milking and the lighter branches of farm work out of school hours, but the new laws in England providing for the release of children of twelve years from school duties to do munition or agricultural work, will be far from beneficial to the country. Investigation shows that some children so exempted have been hired out as cheap household drudges.

For the Little Ones

ECONOMY is the slogan of the day, but the physical and mental welfare of our children should always come first. The Executive of the Samaritan Club at their annual meeting reported the need for cutting down expenses, but when the economy involved abandoning the summer rest cottage in Muskoka for tired mothers and delicate children, it was decided that a special effort must be made to continue this work. The Fresh Air Cottage at Britannia, Ontario, conducted by the King's Daughters, is now open. Over 300 delicate and needy children were given two weeks' holidays last summer, and during the winter months members of the various circles have made clothes for the children. Three rooms have been set aside for the Infants' Home, and a nurse will be in charge of the babies all summer.

The Subtleties of Hospitality

YOUNG folk, according to a writer in Vogue, are apt to be a little over-eager as hosts or as guests. Too often, as hosts, they organize a formidable plan of entertainment and mercilessly execute it despite the ill-concealed distress of the daily wearying guest. The sanitariums are always full of guests who have been over-entertained, and some foreseeing persons have been known to arrange for rooms at the rest-cure upon accepting an invitation to particularly arduous houses. But it is laid down in the etiquette books that not even the weariest guests should frankly go at once from the door of their hostess to that of the sanitarium; and hosts should remember that hospitality should not be fatal.

As it is the duty of the hostess to make the guest forget he is not at home, so it is the duty of the guest never to yield entirely to such amiable blandishments. The guest who manages to be always at ease without ever quite assuming that he is at home is the welcome guest. No matter how rich the house, the tactful guest does not needlessly call out horses or motor-cars, nor disregard meal hours, nor multiply the work of servants, nor in any way assume to change the order of the household. There are houses where the host seems glad to have his guests do any or all of these things, but even the most privileged guest does not avail himself of all his privileges.

There is another pitfall which the privileged guest must avoid. Men and women much in demand as guests need to be singularly tactful and self-effacing, strictly observant of the limitations set for the well-bred guest if they are to avoid taking on the touch of the professional visitor. No man with quite the nicest notion of what a guest's attitude should be can become a professional visitor, but even such an one can not be too careful to avoid every possible trace of professionalism. Sometimes a man needs to be an amateur to avoid being awkward.



Girls are largely employed for fruit-picking.