

October 1st has the chance of winning the elegant Toronto Mower, to be exhibited at the Toronto Industrial Exhibition, or a Sharp's Rake, or one of two other valuable prizes. We venture to say that the paper itself is well worth fifty cents a year, as the letters we have already referred to abundantly prove, and when to this is added the chance of winning one of the costly prizes we have mentioned, it would be folly for anyone not to become a subscriber. We hope to see our efforts appreciated before October 1st by a largely increased subscription list.

THE appalling disaster at Johnstown, Pa., by which a whole town was almost wiped out of existence and between four and five thousand lives lost, is without parallel on this continent. It was thought at first that the loss of life would reach fifteen thousand, but this has happily turned out to be an exaggeration. The loss to property is estimated at about thirty million dollars. What led to the disaster can be briefly told. Conemaugh Lake, fourteen miles above Johnstown, had been built into a reservoir for fishing purposes by a number of wealthy men who called themselves the South Fork Fishing and Hunting Club. It seems that warnings had been given from time to time that unless repairs were made to strengthen the breastwork there would be an outbreak, but these warnings were unheeded. About five o'clock on the evening of Friday, May 31st, the dam of the lake gave way, and the immense volume of water began a mad rush of death and destruction down the Conemaugh valley, sweeping everything before it. The details of the disaster were heartrending. To add to the horror of the scene the dry timber of some of the houses took fire from the overturned stoves, and human beings who had escaped a watery grave were roasted alive. The cry for help to the homeless and destitute survivors was quickly and nobly responded to, not only by sister cities but by cities in the Dominion and United Kingdom, thus evidencing the brotherhood of man. A few days ago we were favored with a visit from Mr. Donald, a representative of the Gaultier Steel Department of the Cambria Iron Company of Johnstown, who stated that out of 1,500 men employed in that department only 500 had reported themselves after the flood. The Gaultier Steel Department was entirely wiped out of existence, the heavy engines and rolling machinery, even to the foundation of the works, being swept away. Their loss will be over one million dollars. Mr. Donald had the good fortune to be away from Johnstown at the time of the disaster. When he returned, three days afterwards, the scene of desolation that met his gaze, as far as the eye could reach, was indescribable. The Gaultier Steel Department furnished the Massey Manufacturing Company with over 480 tons of cold rolled steel, nearly one-third of the enormous quantity of steel that will be used in the manufacture of the Massey-Toronto machines for the season of 1889.

A RECENT despatch to the daily press gave an account of the arrest of three young lads, sons of respectable families in Sackville, N.B., who were charged with committing a series of burglaries and petty larcenies, and it was stated that the minds of these young lads had been poisoned by reading dime novels and other baneful works. Something of a similar kind occurred in Streetsville, Ont., the other day, and in Toronto two brothers, who had received a good education and had been well brought up, were arrested for burglary and shooting with intent to kill. What must be the feelings of the parents and friends of these youthful criminals? By their unlawful acts they have not only heaped degradation and disgrace upon themselves, but have covered their friends with a mantle of sorrow and shame. It has been asserted—and we believe it to be true—that with a large number of criminals the seeds of crime have been planted in the youthful mind by reading trashy and sensational literature. In a majority of this class of books virtue is scoffed at, deceit and lying are

placed before honesty and truth and crime is glorified. But there is another class of books which are most pernicious in their tendency. We refer to the namby-pamby Sunday school books, where an idea of perfection is presented that is unattainable. When the reader contrasts his or her own life with that presented by the idealists it seems base and inferior. Children are discouraged by the infallibility of these unattainable models—they dwarf the aspirations of the average child, repress ambition and demoralize effort at improvement. It is to be wished that this pernicious perfection of character presented by the writers of a large number of Sunday school books should cease. It is creating false hopes and producing the damaging reaction among the young who are striving to climb to the summit of the lofty heights. Perfect in appearance and manners as are many of these good boys, they are weak as examples of imitation—they are spineless and goody-goody to an extent that ought to nauseate the moral appreciation of a healthy, natural boy. We do not wish it to be inferred that we are asserting that all Sunday school books are of this kind; but we have no hesitation in saying that a good many of them are, and it would be a step in the right direction to take them from the church library shelves and burn them. Parents cannot be too careful of the books they allow their children to read. As a writer in *Good Health* says: "It is as natural for children to form bad habits in reading as in anything else; good habits come only by cultivation. While all may not be able to read every book before their children read it, they may be able to judge of its quality. There are many they may know by the sentence already passed upon them by those whose judgment is excellent, and there are certain authors whom they know they can trust. But wishy-washy, distorted Sunday school tales (and there are many church library shelves heaped high with them), stories of girls who are cruelly misunderstood and unappreciated by their parents, and of boys who have sought the wilds of the West rather than endure the restraints and discipline of home—anything of an unnatural, unlikable and overdrawn character—anything leaving wrong impressions and fostering wilful and aggrieved spirits—is harmful, if not vicious, and, as you value the happiness and welfare of your child, should be consigned to the flames as quickly as a dime novel or a bawdy leaflet."

WE have several times drawn attention to frauds practised on farmers by glib-tongued rascals. Mr. Blue, the energetic secretary of the Ontario Bureau of Industries, has also had his eye on these gentry, and recently sent out questions to the regular correspondents of the Bureau on the subject, and has now issued a bulletin giving in an interesting and succinct form the results of the replies. In it he says: "The replies to questions sent out by this Bureau regarding frauds on farmers attest the timeliness of the enquiry. In fact, the answers received would lead to the conclusion that the rural population of the province is still reckoned as good prey by certain glib-tongued and unscrupulous fellows who are thriving on the ignorance, vanity or cupidity of their victims. But, on the other hand, the replies also show that the farmers are becoming well informed regarding the operations of the swindlers who infest the townships, and while this knowledge has sometimes been bought by a costly and painful experience, more frequently it has been gleaned from the warning columns of the press of the province, which has done good service in exposing frauds on agriculturists. With the exception of the notorious seed wheat and oat swindles, there appears to have been a marked falling off in the number of frauds practised on farmers during the past two years. Nevertheless, a system of deception and roguery has been brought to light which it is the purpose of this bulletin briefly to describe." This he proceeds to do, dealing particularly with the local agent racket, the hay-fork swindle, patent roller, fanning mills, lightning rods, patent right agencies, nursery agents, tricks of agents, shoddy peddlers, bogus jewellery, book agents, foul seed, green goods, promissory note trick, a marriage game, conditional sales of chattels and seed grain swindle.

Regarding the extent of the frauds he says: "Owing to the indefinite nature of the reports received on the subject and the extreme reticence of those who have suffered by imposition, it is almost impossible to form anything like a correct estimate of the extent to which frauds have been perpetrated in the province. The reports generally tend to show that of late a heavier loss has been sustained in the eastern than in the western counties. This may be attributed to the fact that the statements called for were to embrace only such frauds as had been committed during the past two years, and it appears that in the majority of cases the western counties were 'worked' prior to that time, while of late the eastern ones have been receiving the larger share of attention. Thus, while in some localities frauds have been extremely rare, in others they have extended to several thousands of dollars. At the same time there is not a township where fraud of some kind has not been perpetrated. Roughly speaking, the province might be divided into three districts, each having its characteristic frauds, although of course these grade into one another in a greater or less degree. Thus the southern district is pre-eminently the field for seed grain frauds; in the midland counties a greater variety prevails, such as implements, seed grain, fruit trees, book agencies, etc., while in the more northern districts of Parry Sound, Muskoka and Algoma the shoddy cloth peddler seems still to hold almost undisputed sway, although now almost obsolete in the south." Among the more feasible of the suggestions for the prevention and cure of the fraudulent agency pest the following may be noted: That in every county agents be required to obtain a permit or license, to be issued at the discretion of the Inspector of Licenses, or some duly authorized individual, after proving that their business is of a *bona fide* character, and that such license shall be shown to any ratepayer on demand; failing to do this that they may be summarily dealt with. A correspondent writes that the municipal council of Amherst Island has already adopted such a measure, and that it appears to work well. Akin to this are the suggestions that every agent be required to pay a heavy license or deposit before proceeding to do business, and that the law provide a very heavy penalty in all cases of conviction for fraud; that all implements subject to a lien be stamped with a metallic stamp, bearing a penalty sufficient to prevent its removal until discharge of said lien, and that fraudulent practices be discussed more unreservedly at the meetings of farmers' institutes, division granges, etc. These with greater publicity by the press appear, perhaps, to be the most convenient means that could be taken at the present time and without special legislation. The advice of some of the correspondents is well worth taking, such as "Deal with none but well-established firms and properly authorized agents;" "Never sign anything for a stranger, and in all cases read carefully what you sign;" "Read the newspapers and pay for them;" "Attend your farmers' institute, if you are a member—if not, pay your dollar like a man and become one."

Crop Prospects in Europe.

THE following report of the state of the crops up to June 12th are the latest reliable ones we have been able to obtain:—

GREAT BRITAIN.—Every prospect of an abundant harvest.

FRANCE.—Fair prospects of a good harvest.

GERMANY.—Good reports for all crops, except rye.

AUSTRIA.—Prospects satisfactory.

HUNGARY.—Prospects poor. 25 per cent. damage has been done to the wheat crops through drought.

ITALY.—Better crops than last year.

SOUTH RUSSIA.—Winter grain is very poor, but spring satisfactory.

RUSSIA.—Great complaints of damage through drought. (Cablegrams of later date bring word of abundant rains, and the prospects are more favorable.)