

to be caught in one of these "blizzards" in the open plain. The wind drifting the snow in his face, blinds his eyes, covers over his track, confuses his horse, and chills him to the very bone. Nearly all the cases of freezing to death which have occurred in this country (and, all told, they have not been many) have happened during one of these sudden storms. Fortunately, they are not of very frequent occurrence, there being perhaps, on an average, not over four or five during a winter. Whole months will sometimes pass during which we enjoy charming winter weather. The atmosphere clear and dry, the temperature sharp but bracing, the bright sunshine, and the crystal skies all combine to render the very fact of existence a pleasure.

To pass on from winter to spring, I may say that during the months of May and June the rainfall is very heavy, rendering the travelling very unpleasant, and exceedingly difficult, by reason of the depth and peculiar stickiness of the mud. Just a word *en passant* about our Manitoba mud. It is certainly, par excellence, the mud of the continent. It is a kind of compromise between grease and glue, being so exceedingly slippery, that it is no uncommon sight to behold some of our grave Senators or city magnates "sitting down to rest" in the middle of our street crossings, and so very sticky that there is a considerable rise in real estate each time one lifts one's feet from the ground. We comfort ourselves, however, with the reflection that a particularly disagreeable quality of mud is the necessary corollary of a particularly rich soil. The rainy season passes off in the beginning of July in a series of exceedingly severe thunder-storms, leaving the rest of the year almost entirely free from anything like continuous rain.

Our autumn weather is decidedly the pleasantest season of the year. The weather, as I have said, is nearly always fine, the roads are in beautiful condition, the mosquitoes which appear in such numbers in the early summer have all disappeared, and one can travel almost anywhere over the prairie, the swamps being nearly all dry and therefore firm enough to allow of horses and vehicles passing over them. We generally have a little cold weather in the end of September and beginning of October, and then Indian summer, during which the air is heavy with the odor of manifold prairie fires and the days soft and balmy. This lasts till the middle or sometimes even the end of November, at which time winter sets in.

Before closing this article on Manitoba climate, I should like to make a few remarks upon the special bearing which our climate has upon our future as a great cereal-producing country.

In an able and intensely interesting lecture lately delivered in Winnipeg by Professor Macoun of Belleville, under the auspices of the Manitoba Historical and Scientific Society, it was stated by the lecturer that in his opinion Manitoba owed fully as much of its powers as a wheat-growing country to its climate as it did to its marvellously productive soil. Let us seek to verify this statement by a close scrutiny of the actual facts of our climate. Our snow-fall is not more than half that of any other Province in the Dominion, excepting of course British Columbia. This brings it to pass that early in April the ground is clear of snow and a foot or so thawed out and therefore ready for the commencement of spring sowing. In May and June come heavy rains. These have the very beneficial effect of keeping back the growth of the straw and therefore causing the roots to grow strong and vigorous. Then in the latter end of June and in July comes great heat, causing the stem, already furnished with a very vigorous root, to grow with astonishing rapidity. There is another item, however, which must not be omitted from our calculations, and it is this: owing to the severe cold of winter and the small amount of snow upon the ground, the frost penetrates to a very great depth, so that it does not come out of the ground entirely until quite late in the summer. Thus while the surface to a depth of three or four feet is quite dry, there is a continual moisture at the roots of the grain from constant oozing out of the frost beneath. Another circumstance greatly in favour of wheat-raising is the fact that there are nearly always dry harvests. During a residence of seven years in the North-West, I have only known one season during which harvesting operations were at all interrupted by the rain.

In my next article I hope to deal with some other features in the North-West which point it out as being pre-eminently the wheat-growing portion of the North American continent.

Canadian.

### WORLD-MENDERS.

How does it happen that we none of us have a good word for men who take up the business of mending the world? That the world wants mending, urgently enough, we all agree. It has suffered a good deal in wear and tear, and is, in many respects, sadly out of repair. Even a patch here and there, a splash of paint to brighten up some dark spot, or a drop of oil to lessen the friction in the grooves, is acceptable. Yet society has set its face dead against the efforts of the individual who volunteers to lend a reforming hand, and has no term of contempt more harsh to throw at a man than to dub him "a world-mender."

Presumably the main reason is that people who go into this business are almost certain to be obviously unsuited for it. For the most part, their chief

qualification for interfering in other people's business is that they have been unsuccessful in their own. It is a pretty safe rule that if a man fails in small matters, he is not likely to succeed in large ones. If I cannot grow mustard and cress in my garden-patch, it is not reasonable to expect that I can take charge of a landscape garden. Yet the world-mender usually starts from this false position. Unmindful of the fact that he can do little for himself, he is apt to think he can do everything for everybody else.

And even if he is not unfortunate in his own affairs, he is still most likely to take a very exaggerated view of what he is capable of effecting for the world at large, and of his importance to its welfare. A wise man once laid down this modest rule of life: "Let everyone help one, and be a good boy himself." Simple as this seems, it would, if carried out, effect a revolution in life—perhaps all the revolution that is necessary. But then it is so simple. What is there in it to satisfy the yearnings and sustain the ambition of the enthusiast? "Help one!" Nonsense!—he would help millions. He would embrace in his capacious philanthropy the entire race. As to being "a good boy himself," that seems such an insignificant matter. Surely the benefactor of his species can afford to be indifferent to his own petty individuality. In fact, he does not regard himself as entering into his own system, whereby he and his system usually come to grief; for as, according to the axiom, "the strength of a thing is the strength of its weakest part," so the world-mender, being morally or intellectually weak, finds sooner or later the whole superstructure he has raised and is trying to sustain—for, after all, the man must be the foundation of his work—comes toppling down upon his head, "the weakest part" himself being solely to blame for this catastrophe.

Under the most favourable circumstances, world-mending is sure to present itself to the ungrateful world—which is to be mended—with or without its leave, as arising from overwhelming conceit. It sets everything down to its benefactor's belief that society cannot get along without him. This is indeed the cardinal point in the world-mender's faith.

But, after all, we are a little hard on world-menders. Say that they are vain and presumptuous—well, society owes much to these qualities. They underlie most public movements by whomsoever effected. In combination, they form the impetus which has forced on the greatest men to their highest achievements. A man must have some "spur to prick the sides of his intent," and to induce him to overcome his natural indolence and love of pleasure in the interests of his fellows, and nine times in ten this spur is vanity. We use prettier words where the heroes are concerned. We call it "ambition" in the statesman, and "love of fame" in the poet; but it is essentially the same thing. Of course there have been examples of people actuated by high and abstract considerations to sacrifice themselves for others, but they are unfortunately scarce. A lofty patriotism, a sublime unselfishness, heroic virtue, and incorruptible honesty—history has supplied us with examples of these qualities; but they are rare, and cannot be relied on—even if history can be relied on about them—as motive powers in human affairs. I have sometimes thought that we really owe more to the vices, than to the virtues, in the affairs of life.

A phrenologist will tell you that force of character greatly depends in the development of the organs behind the ears, most of them bad, and all questionable organs; and force is in itself a good thing, for, as the poet says, "to be weak, doing or suffering, is miserable," and perhaps the world has suffered more from amiable weakness than from indiscriminating strength. Let us even assign world-mending to the lowest motives if you will, but let us be just. We owe something to those who, from whatever motive, elect to follow this essentially idle trade.

Besides, we have most of us had a short turn at it ourselves in our hot and generous youth. We have burned with a fierce indignation at the sight of wrong, and been stirred with ardent impulses to break a lance in behalf of the victims of injustice. It comes upon us of a sudden in our salad days, the realization that somehow the world is not as perfect as we thought it; and with this revelation is born the impulse to be up and doing, so that the wrong may be set right and the rough places be made smooth.

Our first impression is that others cannot surely see with our eyes, or they would detect what is amiss, as we detect it, and apply the remedies which seem to lie so readily to hand, and then if we are of a hot and sanguine nature, we begin to talk or to write, or both, about what strikes us so clearly, in the firm belief that it is only necessary to call attention to evils and iniquities to secure their speedy removal. So we preach loudly and impetuously—and our friends laugh at us. We are ready in our new-born zeal to proclaim our convictions from the house-tops—to the affrighted sparrows. We grow earnest and unpleasant—earnestness is unpleasant—and get the cold shoulder, and are snubbed and sneered at, and, finally, perceive that people will not see what they do not want to see, or give heed to that which they would rather have left unsaid; that, as Emerson puts it, they insist in regarding the kitchen clock as more convenient than sidereal time, and that, although it is to be regretted that the world is "out of joint," it clearly is not our mission "to set it right," whereupon we subside into agreeable indifference.

The difference between ourselves—I mean the majority of us—and the world-mender is, that we only have a slight touch of what in him becomes