

FARM AND FIELD.

For THE RURAL CANADIAN.

WALKS AND TALKS AMONG THE FARMERS. NO. XIV.

In all parts of the country there are pleasing evidences of improvement in the style of houses, barns, and outbuildings generally. The old-fashioned, square, and untasteful structures are giving place to edifices with more or less architectural beauty. People are not satisfied with ample accommodation, but are beginning to care more for "looks." There is, however, a great deal to be learned yet about these matters. The importance of a good site is but little realized. To have a healthy home, a high and dry spot should be chosen. Many build in flat, low places for the sake of convenience, or because the earlier buildings were put there, and it would involve trouble and expense to remove them. It should be well understood that without thorough drainage it is impossible to have a wholesome dwelling. The cellar should be as dry as any other part of the house. Where this is not secured, unhealthy exhalation is sure to exist, and this is always detrimental to health. Medical men testify that typhoid complaints are very common in farmers' families, and these are always the result of undrained premises. With proper precaution this class of disease may be banished from rural neighbourhoods altogether.

The great objection urged against high sites for dwellings in the country is that they are cold on account of exposure to wintry winds. Tree shelter is the natural and proper remedy for this. In clearing up a farm, provision should be made for protecting the buildings by leaving a sufficiency of the younger forest growths, and by planting evergreens. Instead of so doing, a clean sweep is usually made, and the building site laid completely bare. Tree-planting is one of the last things a settler thinks of, whereas it ought to be one of the first. As the result of the common practice, when a really good house comes to be built it stands out in a condition of naked exposure, and no building looks its best without proper surroundings in the way of trees, lawn, and shrubbery. These constitute the outside furnishing of a dwelling, just as tables, chairs, sofas, curtains and carpets form its inside furnishing. It takes time for trees to grow, and, therefore, even when the first, rude, temporary log structure is put up, if it is placed on or near the permanent sites for the dwelling, as it usually is, trees should be left or planted in such abundance as to admit of their being thinned out in course of time, when their growth becomes large and spreading.

Too often the house, whether old or new, stands in the midst of a "door-yard" full of chips, old logs, abandoned knots, broken boards, and all sorts of rubbish. The pig-pen, chicken-house, waggon-sheds, and various unsightly structures are not far away. Some things look better by contrast, but it certainly does not improve the appearance of a good house to have such surroundings. A house not costing half as much would look better with trees, lawns and shrubbery around it, and would create far more of the home feeling in the minds and hearts of its occupants. Even a log-house, festooned with creepers and vines, environed with trees and shrubs, fronted with a nice lawn, and having a gravel drive up to it, presents a far more attractive appearance than a costly mansion standing lonely and undraped in the midst of a bare field, or a slovenly chip-yard. These beautiful surroundings are comparatively cheap. The facilities for making them are within easy reach. Yet how generally

they are neglected, even when every endeavour is being strained to erect a fine house. It reminds one of the story of Baron Rothschild, who was once asked why people thought venison such a luxury when mutton was better. He replied in his imperfect English: "People always prefer vat is dear to vat is sheep."

I was talking not long since with a well-to-do farmer who, many years ago, built a good, substantial stone house with some architectural pretension about it, for it had a gothic pediment over the front door. The sight was a commanding one, and the house was conspicuous to all the country round. But there was not a solitary shade or ornamental tree in front or at the side of it, and the road to it from the highway was a long lane which had not even been turnpiked, still less gravelled. I pointed out to him what an improvement it would make to have the front tastefully laid out, and a nice gravel drive made up the lane. Thinking the argument from utility would have the most weight, I urged how much better a good gravel road would be in the spring and fall than the muddy road his family were compelled to travel. He objected that it would cost too much. I asked, "How much?" He named \$30 as the probable cost. "Well," I said, "you have been here over thirty years, and I think you would have saved the account before now in shoe leather." "Oh no!" was the reply, "there is nothing harder on shoe leather than gravel." I ventured to dissent, and contended that mud and water were worse than gravel for wearing out boots and shoes, to say nothing of the discomfort to the wearers.

I do not think it would cost that farmer anything like \$30 to gravel a road up his lane. With abundance of first-class gravel on his own farm, it would be easy at odd times to do the job without feeling the expense of it. Calculating the time of team and the value of labour, it might foot up \$30 or even more; but farmers do not and cannot use that kind of arithmetic. Much is done on the farm which it would be folly to estimate at a money value, because it does not cost money, will not fetch money, and does not interfere with other work that will bring money. That man's lane is a worse piece of road than the public highway in the spring and fall. There is another farmer of my acquaintance, whom I sometimes visit, and the road into his place is always bad. Even in the summer time, when the highway is level and smooth, no sooner do you enter his gate than the road is rough and rutty, and as the house is pretty far back, there are two serious joltings in store for all comers and goers. I hold that it is discreditable for a man to have a worse road on his own premises leading to his own dwelling than the highway travelled by the miscellaneous public.

HOWEVER indifferent a man may be himself to such things, they are appreciated by his wife and daughters, and he has no right to ignore their comfort and tastes, even if he is unwise enough to be regardless of his own. I have not much sympathy with the blatant form of women's rights which covets the political arena, and aches to make a big noise in the world; but I am always ready to stand up for women's rights in the home circle, and in the matter of home surroundings. There is a great deal of petty tyranny in regard to these things of which men ought to be ashamed. I once heard a farmer who owned 400 acres of land refuse his wife and daughters a bit of ground in front of the house, which they wanted for a flower-garden, because it was enough to raise two bushels of potatoes. This is an extreme case, but there are hundreds, aye, thousands, all over

the land not much better. The wife is supposed to own one-third of the farm, yet is grudging an eighth or a-fourth of an acre for a flower-garden and shrubbery. One would think a husband and father would take so much pleasure in seeing his wife and daughters enjoy their plants and flowers, as to give them freely all the land they wish for garden purposes, and lend a hand now and then in helping them put it in order. But some cannot rise to such sublimity of feeling.

Fools never raise their thoughts so high,
Like brutes they live, like brutes they die.

THE boys of a farmer's family are not indifferent to these things any more than the girls. A rustic youth likes to have a button-hole bouquet on Sundays and on holidays as well as the city bank clerk. Boys of an unsophisticated age love flowers and pretty gardens just as much as girls. If they are brought up by a rough father to despise such things and to think them silly, they may by-and-by come to consider it a sign of mauliness to laugh at their mother's and sisters' fondness for tasteful surroundings; but it is far more likely that they will grow tired of a home that has none of these attractions, and prefer to betake themselves to town and city where they abound. I have recently spent a few days in Hamilton, a city noted among other things for its many lovely private residences. I went there from a country neighbourhood where my own is almost the only dwelling that can boast an ornamental front with gravel drive, shrubbery, and flowers. It is a very simple and limited "lay-out," and beside the generality of places in Hamilton, a quarter or half-an-acre in extent, is "nowhere"; but as I have realized that nearly all the homes in my part of the country are destitute of even the small amount of attraction that surrounds my own, I have said to myself, no wonder young men who live on bare and unornamented farms are charmed when they come to a city like this, and are fired with ambition to go into business or enter a profession, that they may become possessors of one of those little earthly paradises of which they see so many here. It may seem to prosaic, matter-of-fact farmers a trivial thing to urge making home beautiful; but until this is done, and life in the country rendered more attractive, we shall have to deplore a continued and increasing exodus of young men from the farm to the city. "Home's not merely four square walls." It is more than roof and room. It "needs something to endear it," and outward charms are not without their influence in creating and fostering love of home.

W. F. C.

WEEDS AND HOW TO TREAT THEM.

A correspondent of the *Cermantown, Pa., Telegraph*, writes:

"Of course one cannot in a short article for a paper treat the subject other than briefly and imperfectly, and can only refer to a few of the most prevalent and noxious. I read more complaints of Canada thistle than I do of all other weeds. I know it is a great nuisance, especially so when it abounds in grain crops of various kinds. I do not understand why so many remedies are proposed (and some of them nearly impracticable), when the simple remedy of mowing them at the right time is sure destruction to them. When in full blow do not wait for the seed to ripen; the germ for the next year is then perfected and mowing will be harmless to them then.

"Are you troubled with the common raspberry in your sheep and cattle pastures, sapping the soil and choking out the grass? The remedy is the same as for thistles; mow them at the right time, and I know from experience the remedy will be complete. The time to mow them is after