

Chronicles of Ginger Farm

Written Specially for the Acton Free Press by Gwendolene F. Clark

Until quite recently we knew an aged farmer who lived alone—never took a daily paper and had no radio. Unless someone called in to see him, or he met other farmers down town, he knew nothing at all of what was going on in the world, even in his own province or district. Often we thought it was a terrible way to live. On the other hand what a lot of headaches that man was saved!

He went his way, minded his own business, and had no worries about current wars, politics, accidents, murders or shipwrecks. And in regard to weather forecasts—they could be right or they could be wrong—he wouldn't know. But he did use his own judgement. He would look at the angry red sun and brace himself against the high winds he knew were coming. Or if the wind was in the east and a chill, raw feeling in the air, he gave the young cattle extra feed and kept them in for the night.

This old man was in the world but definitely not of it, yet he was a good neighbour and always ready to lend a hand in time of trouble. He lived simply and lasted a lot longer than many of his friends and neighbours who possessed greater knowledge of a sort—but who certainly worried a great deal more than he did.

This old man, without help of reading or radio, had been a wonderful farmer. His cattle were well looked after; his horse his joy and pride; his fields clean and his buildings in good repair. Before we heard much about soil conservation this farmer practiced contour ploughing on the hilly fields of his farm—not through having read about it but by figuring out the need for himself.

Sometimes one is tempted to wonder if too much information isn't picked up the easy way—and then not enough use made of it. Reading is sometimes like eating—it isn't the food we eat that counts but how much our digestive system assimilates. Learning by doing also has its advantages. And the difference in people has to be considered. Some folk can follow directions from a book or article and do a perfect job—whether it is remodelling a stable or knitting a sweater.

I belong to the look-and-learn class. Following closely written instructions on how to do this or that bores me to tears. Just laziness, I guess. But give me a few basic directions and a sample of what the finished article should look like and I'm away. At the same time I envy the person who has the patience to follow minute directions faithfully.

Patience! Yesterday I came across a photograph of Partner's grandmother who died in Marlborough (England) at the age of 103. This photograph shows her, at 88, making pillow lace. Old country people will probably know the kind of lace I mean; others may never have heard of it. So much skill and patience is required for this art that I am afraid it is one kind of handicraft that is or soon will be completely obsolete. The stiff pillow is held on the lace; the design is pinned on the pillow and the lace is woven by means of fine thread wound on bobbins, the number of bobbins depending on the pattern—anywhere from ten to thirty.

The lace closely resembles Maltese lace. During the reign of Queen Victoria, many of the best lace-makers in Buckinghamshire had a busy time making lace for the Princess Royal. At present I am doing a bit of research on the historical background of pillow lace. If any readers have any information they would like to pass along it would be greatly appreciated. Perhaps you may also know of a modern type of pillow lace.

Well I suppose right now everyone is feeling thankful for the

Knox Ladies' Aid Plans Busy Year

Mrs. A. Robinson, Lake Ave. was hostess for the January meeting of the Knox Ladies' Aid. Mrs. F. McCutcheon presided and opened the meeting with a good-will message. The devotions were taken by Mrs. W. McArthur and Mrs. H. Mainprize.

Mrs. S. Mathews read the yearly report on finances which was most gratifying. The activities for the new year were discussed and plans made for some. The first is a turkey dinner to be given the choir in appreciation of their faithful service. Committees were appointed to arrange the dinner and a program to follow.

Following the business period Mrs. Robert Parker contributed a humorous reading and Mrs. W. G. Masales a reading on New Year's thoughts.

Mrs. R. M. McDonald moved a note of thanks to the business committee and to the treasurer Mrs. S. Mathews for her careful tending of the finances. The meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer. The monthly group in charge were: Mrs. W. G. Masales, Mrs. J. Leishman, Mrs. W. McArthur and Mrs. F. Anderson, assisting Mrs. Robinson.

Fall Fair Meeting Held in Toronto

Eight hundred delegates representing 250 fall fairs, are assembled at the King Edward Hotel, Toronto, February 4, 5 and 6 for the fifty-third annual convention of the Ontario Association of Agricultural Societies. According to F. A. Lashley, Association Secretary, this group represents the oldest farm organization in Ontario. It was in 1792 that the first Agricultural Society was established at Niagara-on-the-Lake, but the Society holding the record for continuous operation is the St. Lawrence Valley (Williamstown Fair), organized in 1814.

A debate is being held on a resolution suggesting that too much stress is being placed on Midways and Horse Racing at Fairs. Participating in the debate are Tory Gregg, Wingham, and Mrs. Alex. Anderson, Stratford for the affirmative and Ray Wilson, Avonmore, and Miss Charlotte McCullough, Georgetown, who will advance the negative argument.

Other convention speakers include—Prof. J. C. Steckley, Ridgeway Agricultural School; E. F. Pineau, Canada Dept. of Agriculture, Ottawa; Dr. Wm. Moynihan, Toronto; B. L. McLean, Lindsay; Dr. A. E. Cavanagh, Carp; F. Q. Dench, Renfrew. The Women's Section covers a wide variety of topics. Thor Hansen, Toronto, discusses arts and crafts and John F. Clark, Toronto, on Flower Exhibits. Mrs. Norma Robertson demonstrates rugs. The president of the women's section is Mrs. Norma Hyslop, Caledonia and Mrs. H. A. Dickenson, Mount Hope is Secretary.

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railway strike that didn't come off—except that our own feeling of relief is tempered with distress as more news is received every hour about the terrible storms in England, Holland and Belgium. Without a radio we wouldn't know so much—but how could we bear not to know, down to the very last detail, if any of these countries should be our homeland? If we have lived in England we know what these east coast storms are like—and thus, apparently, is the worst one yet. And our Canadian winter seems to have come at last. The thermometer registered four above when Art, Dee and Betty set out for Toronto a short while ago, after having dinner here to celebrate Daughter's birthday. We had Christmas pudding, saved for the event and a good fat hen, camouflaged as roast chicken!

FEBRUARY CLEARANCE SALE

Bargains Galore!!!

We're offering bargains galore in this giant February Clearance. Good quality merchandise is greatly reduced to clear our shelves and make room for spring stock. You can't afford to miss the opportunity. Take advantage of the bargain buys now. Don't wait until the selection is limited and be disappointed. Check the items you or the family need and come to PALLANT'S. Sale starts Friday, Feb. 6 and continues to Saturday, Feb. 14.

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