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The Editor's Corner

Fascinating Book Nearly Three Centuries Old

Once a book is printed, the particular message it wishes to impart to the world never dies. Imprisoned forever in black and white we find the thoughts, fancies and ideals of the author. Thus it is that each one published adds a little to the spiritual and intellectual side of life. Some of course, give the world a great deal more than others. In the field of science, books and records form the steps upon which each succeeding generation climbs to further knowledge.

Through the interest of one of our readers, we were permitted to go down a few rungs in the ladder, and glimpse the rural life of England as it was nearly three centuries ago. The volume which holds the information was printed in 1687 at "Ye Corner of Chancery Lane in Fleet Street, over against the Inner Temple Gate, for Thomas Dring". The book is quite a large one, beautifully bound in tooled leather, and is in an excellent state of preservation. Opening the cover, the first thing that meets your eye is the coat-of-arms of Edward Augustus, Earl of Aldborough of Upper Ormand, Viscount Amiens, Baron of Baltinglas, etc. etc., to which nobleman's library the book originally belonged. Being the Lord of the Manor, doubtless the Earl took a great interest in agriculture, and in order to be of as much help as possible to his tennants, would wish to acquaint himself with all the details of the "Mystery of Husbandry", which is the title of the book in question.

It was fascinating to read the book. Before we actually started in to read, however, some of the external details of the volume impressed themselves upon The print itself was quite large and easy to read, once we caught on to the old form "s", which resembles an "f", except for the crossbar, and some of the quaint spellings (i.e. rustick, critick, usefull). The paper still appears quite strong. The pages are numbered at the top, and at the bottom of each, in the right-hand corner, appears the first word of the next page. The information contained in the book is not set forth in the stereotyped form of today, but is interspersed with bits of poetry, Virgil, personal observations, and ancient history. Evidently the book was to be sold by only one retailer whose name is designated on the first page.

In it the "Mystery of Husbandry is Discovered," as the frontispiece explains. "Treating of several new and most advantagious ways of tilling, planting, sowing, etc.," is found therein, and also ways to improve all kinds of agricultural produce. Going back again to its own quaint wording the volume also contains "an Account of the several Instruments and Engines used in this profession, also the prognosticks of Dearth, Scarcity, Plenty, Sickness, Heat, and all kinds of weather."

There's an elaborate steel engraving frontispiece, showing the plan of the feudal estate, and the tennants at work in the fields using the most "up-to-date machinery". Opposite the drawing is an explanation of the frontispiece, which we found so interesting we'd like to pass it on just as it is written. Unfortunately the linotype cannot reproduce the old-fashioned "s" properly, but other than that, here is the poem as it ap-

"First cast your Eye upon a Rustick Seat, Built strong and plain, byet well contriv'd and neat; And Scituated on a healthy Soyl, Yielding much Wealth with little cost or toyl. Near by it stand the Barns, fram'd to contain Enriching Stores of Hay, Pulse, Corn and Grain; With Bartons large, and places where to feed Your Oxen, Cows, Swine, Poultry, with their Breed. On th' other side, hard by the House, you see The Aplary for th' industrious Bee. Walk on a little farther, and behold A pleasant Garden, (from high Winds and Cold Defended by a spreading fruitful Wall With Rows of Lime and Fir-trees streight and tall,) Full fraught with necessary Flow'rs and Fruits, And Natures choicest sorts of Plants and Roots. Beyond the same are crops of Beans and Pease, Saffron and Liquorice, or such as these; Then Orchards so enricht with fruitful store, Nature could give (nor they receive) no more: Each Tree stands bending with the weight it bears, Of Cherries some, of Apples, Plums, and Pears. Not far from thence see other Walks and Rows Of Cyder-fruits, near unto which there flows A Gliding Stream, The next place you discover, Is where St. Foyn, La Lucern, Hops and Clover Are Propagated: Near unto those Fields Stands a large Wood, Mast, Fuel, Timber yields; In yonder Vale, hard by the River, stands A Water-Engine, which the Wind commands To fertilize the Meads; on th' other side A Perfien-Wheel is plac't, both large and wide, To th' same intent: Then do the Fields appear Cloathed with Corn and Grain for th' ensuing Year. The Pasture stockt with Beasts, the Downs with Sheep: The Cart, the Plough, and all good order keep: Pienty unto the Husbandmap, and Gains Peruse the Book, for here you only see The following Subject in Epitome."

Byery imaginable phase of agriculture is dealt with, as may be permised from the above introduction. The present owner of the book a let more about agriculture than your editor, and he says that

BELL TELEPHONE CO.

Some interesting statistics appear in the annual report for 1943 of the Bell Telephone Company, just released.

In the past two years 5,400 new employees have been engaged, to offset losses to the war service, resignations, etc. There were 11,915 Bell workers as of December 31, and 2,199 have enlisted for war service, of whom 22 have already given their lives.

There are 24,491 shareholders, 4,684 being employees and pensioners. Over 95 per cent of the shareholders live in Canada and hold 72 per cent of outstanding stock.

pensions and disability benefits. Bell's wage bill last year was \$21,-340,267. Taxes took \$13,609,000. figure includes the refundable portion of the Excess Profits Tax \$1,664,000. Dividends paid to the more than 24,-000 shareholders were \$6,779;109.-Although the gross revenues

creased wages and taxes, was \$6.95 per share as compared to \$8.76 in 1942. There were 134,060 telephones installed in 1943 and 103,360 taken out,

a net gain for the year of 30,000. There were 956,113 Bell and 169,801 connecting talephones in service December 31, and average daily long distance calls were 98,000.

YOU CAN HEAT YOUR HOUSE WITH SUNLIGHT

One way to beat the coal and oll shortage is to let Ol' Sol do the heat-Last year \$891,622 was paid out in ing. Dr. Robert D. Potter, science editor, writing in The American-Weekly with this Sunday's (Feb. 13) issue of The Detroit Sunday Times, describes a new house which sunlight helps to heat, and how old houses of can easily make use of the same prin-\$60,222,184 were 6.5 per cent more than ciple. Get Sunday's Detroit Times.

for 1942, the net income, due to in- HOT RECEPTION FOR NEWSPAPERMEN

> Eight Canadian newspapermen on month's tour of Britain arrived in sire to see factory mochari. London last Saturday night just after a Nazi aid raid in which 26 persons Kipp, Ottawa Journal: J.

were killed. The editors, guests of the Ministry son, Winnipog Free Press, & of Information, arrived by train from J. Rankin, Haliffer Herald, the port where they landed shortly ing daily nemperous; R. P. after the last gun fell silent and the Courier, Kelowns, B.C., and

last German raider had fled. The newsmen, who will spend the senting weekly newspapers; first week with the forces, settled R. Wilson, Maclean's Ma down in their hotels for the weekend. They were greeted by representatives of the services, Canada House gasines.

and the Ministry of Information. Their program for the first week includes: A visit to an ROAF fighter station and a reception by Air Marshal L. S. Breadner, air officer commanding the RCAP overseas, Monday; a tour of the bombed area of London Tuesday and a visit to Caxton Hall, where British rationing will be explained, after which they will be luncheon guests of Rt. Hon. Vincent Massey, Canadian High Commissioner.

Carletten Acres trail ed Wednesday and the navy Friday. Lett. Britain and expressed & The party consists of Le Boleff, Quebec; Cleanys. Albion Record, Springhill, ronto, and Willeon Woods day Night, Toronto, repres



many of the same methods are employed by our farmers of today, as are set forth in the ancient volume. The great difference lies in the mechanized part, of course, and it was amusing to see an illustration of the 16th century grain drill. This "modern machine" boasted one spout, mounted on a four wheeled cart, attached to which was a loose whiffletree to accommodate one horse a far cry from our thirteen spout affairs of today. Also illustrated was a primitive-looking water wheel, used for irrigation. In discussing the construction of carts, evidently then quite a modern innovation, the author says "In Holland a waggon was lately framed, which with ordinary sails carried thirty people sixty English miles in four hours. I have seen much done of this nature and more might be done, as to make a cart or waggon move against the wind: and the more the wind blows, the faster it shall move against it, by the help of the Perpetual Sharew But these being not to our present purpose of advanage, I shall leave

to others." There are several blank pages in the book at the front, left presumably for notes, and some were used for this purpose. Written in ink, on one page, is the method "To cure ye biting of a Mad Dog. or prevent-Madness." Something about the recipe smacks of the potions brewed by the witches in MacBeth, though of course it is a real recipe, and used for no evil purpose. Here it is, but we don't recommend it for modern use: "Take of Rue leaves picked from ye stalks and bruise 6 ounces; of Garlick picked and bruised, Venice treacle, Mithridate and scapings or filings of Pewier each 4 ounces, Boyl all these over a slow fire in 2 quarts of strong beer or ale till a pint be consumed, then bottle it and keep it close stop'd, and give of it by spoonfulls, to a man or woman seven mornings together fasting, and six spoonfulls to a Dog." Much easier to call the Doctor, isn't it.

The art of fishing comes in for a good deal of discussion in the book. Many devotees of the sport will agree with the author, who prefaces his advice on "Angling" with the statement that "There is not any Exercise more pleasing nor agreeable to a truly sober and ingenious man, than this of Angling; a moderate, innocent, salubrious, and delightful exercise; It wearleth not a man over-much, unless the Waters lie remote from his home: it injureth no man, so that it will be in an open large water; he being esteemed a Beast rather than a Man that will oppose this Exercise. Neither doth it anywise debauch him that useth it: The delight also of it, rouzes up the Ingenious early in the Spring-mornings, that they have the benefit of the sweet and pleasant Morning-Air, which many through sluggishness enjoy not; so that Health (the greatest Treasure that Mortals enjoy) and Pleasure, go hand in hand in this exercise. What can be more said of it, than that the mest Ingenious most use it?" Instructions are given for making Rods and Stocks, which in those days were gathered from the tree, dried for a year and a half, in a "smoaky" place and rubbed with "oyl" to preserve them. If the top was brittle or decayed, you were advised to whip on a piece of Whalebone made round and taper. Hair lines were the best in those days, and we really mean hair. The author says "Let the Hair be round you make your Line withal, and as near as you can of a size."

Bees played an interesting part in most country holdings in those days. Reflecting this, the author has produced a very fine bit of writing about these insects. We can't resist giving it to you to read. "There is no Creature to be kept about our Rural Seat, that affords unto us so much variety of Pleasure as the Bee. Although they are small, yet they are numerous; and although they are busied up and down on poor and mean things yet the matter they collect is Rich and Noble: they never rest, nor are idle but in the extreamest cold and wet seasons. In the Spring the first warm Sun invites them abroad to seek after imployment, which they daily follow, till the bitter frosts, cold and stiff winds, and great rains hinder them. They are out early in the morning; you shall hear them like Swarms humming on the Lame-trees by the Sun-rising, when they send forth the fragrant scents from their Blossoms. And in the Evening late shall you have

them return from their hard, yet pleasant Labours." A long chapter entitled "Of Prognosticks", was hard to leave. We wish we could remember all the signs and portents which were said to govern want, plenty, sickness, joy, and all kinds of weather. Many of these sayings and beliefs are still held today. Dipping into the chapter we picked out a few that were new to us and pass them on. One circle about the moon signifies rain, but if more circles appear, they signify winds and tempest to follow; also if the Horns of the Moon appear blunt or short, it signifies a moist air and inclinable to rain. The North-wind is best for sowing of Seed, the South for grafting or innoculations. If at the beginning of the Winter the South-wind blow and then the North, it is like to be a cold Winer; but if the Northwind first blow, and then the South, it will be a warm and mild Winter. In a fair day, if the Sky seem to be dappled with white clouds (which they usually term a Mackarel-Sky) it usually predicts Rain. All sorts of conditions of the sea indicate weather to come, and even animals will let you know what kind of weather to expect, if rightly observed. The book states that a cat by washing her face, and putting her foot over her ear, forshews Rain. A certain foresight of a change in the weather may be also taken from fowl. If the breast-bone of a duck be red, it signifies a long winter, if white, the contrary. If in frosty weather, birds seek obscure places, and seem dull and heavy, it signifies a sudden thaw. Fish and insects, play a part in observations and prognostics too? One saying is that great quantities of Frogs, small or great, appearing an unusual times and in unusual places, presage great Dearth of Corn, or great Sickness to follow in that place where they appear. The book also says it is usual that a dry Autumn precedes a windy Winter; a windy Winter, a rainy Spring; a rainy Spring, a dry Summer; a dry Summer, a windy Autumn. It is observed, that how far the Prost penetrates the Earth in the Winter the heat shall in the Summer.

As we couldn't begin to give you a comprehensive review of the book, we've tried to pick out passages here and there which seemed especially interesting to us, and which conveyed the atmosphere which the book created. When we finally closed the tome, it was as if we had shut the doof on another world, a world held captive within its pages, and epitomized by the following bit of verse contained therein:

> "And Blest is he who tired with his affairs, Far from all noise, all vain applique, prepares-To go, and underneath some silent shade. Which neither Cares nor anxious Thoughts invade Do's, for a while himself alone possess; Changing the Town for Rural Happiness."

St. Valentine's Day

It seems that we are historically minded this week, but as St. Valentine's Day is next Monday, we thought we'd like to know just how and why the custom of observing it arose. Probably the young people already have one or more chosen ones in mind to whom they will send the pretty tokens of affection, and many older people still like to observe the day with some kind of remembrance. The elaborate Valentines of peace-time are not to be had this year, but nevertheless those still obtainable are very pretty and express the necessary

The fourteenth of February is called St. Valentine's Day, as the name day or feast day of eight different Christian martyrs named Valentine; that is, in the medieval church, services were held on that day in memory of their martyrdom. The custom of sending valentines or gifts has nothing to do with the martyrs, however. It happened that a spring-time festival which was kept by the Romans fell on the same day. The making of gifts on that day has come down from this old festival; but the origin of the custom was generally forgotten, and in time the gifts were called valentines, from the name given to the day. ..

This is a good example of the way customs survive, sometimes for centuries, among people who do not remember how they arose.

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