

QUALITY

SERVICE

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Flocks of sheep in Colorado are being put on an onion diet to reduce the surplus stock of onions. The lamb stew will be already flavored.

Stirling News-Argus: Of all the vices on earth the one that is the most difficult to understand is the vice of gossip. For most crimes we can find some explanation, but for gossip there is no explanation except depravity or insanity. How people can find enjoyment in making life hard for others is one of the eternal mysteries.

Bruce County Councillors are being petitioned to accept a ten per cent cut in their pay for attending the three sessions of the year. As they receive \$5 per day, the various Women's Institutes and other bodies believe they can do with less. Five dollars per day, we say, well how about York County council which is pulling off \$3 per day and a higher mileage than they receive in Bruce county? Personally it would pay the tax payers a whole lot to pay York County fathers \$5 per day to stay at home. A committee of six or seven could do their work more judiciously.

We are never too old to learn. When you buy a 100-foot flag pole you may think only a pole that would be capable of doing the job at 100 feet would be made for the purpose, but the Parks Commission of Stouffville know otherwise. They paid a big price for such a pole four years ago, but find that it was not heavy enough for the job, and the Ontario Wind Engine Co. who sold the goods to the town, disclaim any responsibility, despite the fact that they drew a blue print of pole at the time and recommended its purchase.

The school board has just been compelled to pay \$12 per day (for 6 days) for a man to preside over the recent middle and lower school examinations held at Stouffville. Any intelligent person could have done the job, but the Department of Education sets this ridiculous high rate of pay to the detriment of the tax payers and to the advantage of the teacher who gets the appointment. Not only is the rate too high, but the examinations being held in the month of June the teacher presiding is getting double pay. He or she already received pay from the school board for the month of June in the school where they had been engaged throughout the year. That's overlapping with a vengeance.

Story of Western Mennonites

(Continued from front page)

while the girls and younger children are often seen in print dresses though always in quiet shades.

Their dresses are all made after one and the same pattern. The skirts are long and plain with a few gathers at the back. The waist is long-sleeved, high-necked, and fastened down the front with inconspicuous buttons. It may have a few tucks down the front which serve to conceal rather than reveal the form. No older woman's costume however, is complete without its black lustre pinafore. This may be adorned by an edging of black lace at the lower hem.

The one article of feminine attire which gives the Mennonite woman a chance to indulge her natural vanity is a fancy little black cap or bonnet which she dons at marriage. This, though black, may be made entirely out of lace or net, with a spray of black ornamental flowers fastened across the front and peeping through frills of lace and ribbons. Little flat black ribbon bows are sewn across the top just back of the border of lace and flowers. Black ribbon streamers extend from each of these bows and hang down over the top of the cap, where they are fastened at the lower edge. These caps are seldom seen by an outsider as they are carefully concealed by a shawl or two. It is only when visiting each other's homes that they are displayed in all their beribboned splendor.

The Mennonite woman selects her shawl with as great care as we do our hats, and certainly spends more time in putting it on. No young man is more fastidious in arranging his tie than the Mennonite girl in putting on her shawl. It must be loosely tied in a graceful knot below the chin, with ends hanging in a certain way; the top of the shawl must be brought to a perfect point directly above the middle of the forehead. To omit this point is considered very poor taste indeed. You rarely see a Mennonite girl without her shawl, and in winter two or three are worn for warmth. Brilliantly colored flowers may be embroidered in the corner that hangs down the back, and the "best" shawls may have a fringe around the edge to give variety and swank.

Most of the women have beautiful hair, which seems to thrive well in spite of the singular treatment to which it is subjected. Every Saturday it is taken down and washed. Should you pass through a Mennonite village some afternoon in summer you would see groups of girls gathered in the yards drying their hair in the sun.

Unlike their dresses, their hair comes in almost all shades of blonde, red, brown, and black; and reaches almost to the knees. When nearly dry it is parted in the centre and a tiny braid is begun at either side of the parting with as few hairs as possible. At every twist of the braid a few more hairs are added; thus it is continued to the back of the head, fastening the braid close to the head as it proceeds. When the centre braid is reached the braids are completed in the ordinary way and wound about the head and fastened with some colored yarn or string. Its owner then worries no more about it until the next Saturday, when the same process is repeated.

Nowhere can be found finer gardens than those owned by the Mennonite. An agriculturist for generations back, he has developed a rare physical strength and hardiness, which, coupled with an unusual industry, places him among the chief horticulturalists of the world.

Consequently every Mennonite home is surrounded by gardens of most luxuriant growth. There is of course the great field of potatoes and vegetables, but no Mennonite garden would be complete without at least half an acre of sunflowers, the seeds of which are roasted and eaten as nuts in winter. Next in importance to the sunflowers comes the plot of water melon and musk melons. You rarely visit a Mennonite home in autumn but what several of these melons are brought in and served.

Practically every home in the village has its own orchard or fruit garden. Here are found various native fruit-bearing trees and shrubs such as crab apples, plums, choke cherries, pin cherries, black and red currants, raspberries, gooseberries, and occasionally strawberry plants.

Her garden is the one outlet for her love of beauty in the life of the Mennonite woman, and she indulges

this passion to the extreme in the cultivation of flowers. I have visited many a Mennonite home in summer, but was never in the house more than half an hour before I was invited out to see the flowers. They always formed the chief topic of conversation, and I have never left without an armful of beautiful old fashioned flowers; nasturtiums, marigolds, snapdragons, sweet peas and asters. It is hard indeed to find a home without its flower beds and fancy borders in the fore ground.

The Season of Visiting: Winter and autumn, after the crops have been gathered, are the seasons for visiting. Whole families, packed in great democrats or sleighs will set out to visit relatives or friends in neighboring villages.

Many a cheerful evening they spend in each other's homes. As soon as the hand-shaking and greetings are over, and the visitors are properly seated, a bowl of sunflower seed is passed around, and conversation and laughter go on apace amid the soft crackle of these seeds which are eaten throughout the evening. By the time the company leaves the hostess is literally covered with shells. Some, especially women, have become so addicted to this habit that they carry a pocketful of seeds about with them, eating them constantly, even in church.

In spite of their narrow existence I found the Mennonites a wholesome and refreshing people to visit. It is a relief and a rare change to associate with people who are not forever trying to impress you with the superiority of their own country—not having one—and, moreover, they do not try to force their beliefs on you as so many other religious sects do. All they ask is to be left alone to live their religion rather than talk about it. Neither are they social climbers who try to force themselves into higher circles. Their conversation, though at times tending towards gossip, is on the whole helpful and instructive as they compare their own little problems and try to find their solutions.

It would be hard indeed to find a people who enjoy each other's company more than they do. Neither do they lack in neighborliness toward outsiders. Their extreme kindness is displaying to its best advantage in case of sickness, when the patient becomes the recipient of many a bowl of savory soup or chicken. They think nothing of sitting up all night long in silent sympathy with the afflicted.

One of the most outstanding social events is pig-killing. Days before the event takes place the good housewife is busy baking bread, buns, and peppernuts. All necessary tools are gathered up, scrubbed and scoured so that all is in readiness. Very early on the appointed day the invited guests begin to arrive, bringing with them such members of their family and tools as may be useful in their work. A great cauldron of water is heated outside over an open fire. The men then proceed with the killing and cleaning of the pigs.

Then follows the work in which both women and young folks join; that of cutting up the fat meat into small cubes and rendering the lard in the huge iron cauldrons. The spareribs are cooked at the same time in the boiling fat, and later packed away in the lard for winter.

Then comes the sausage-making at which everybody works. Amid laughter and chatting they turn out sausages of all shapes and sizes—meat sausages, liver sausages, and blood sausages.

The first lull in activities comes when dinner is served at noon by the efficient hostess, whose table is loaded with baking, supplemented by fried liver, potatoes, and dill pickles, and again in the afternoon about four o'clock, when coffee, buns, peppernuts and jam are served. These festivities culminate at night, when a sausage supper crowns the day and all guests return to their respective homes, each with a generous bundle of fresh meat, the gift of the hostess.

It was on a bright sunny morning in June that I had the privilege of visiting a Mennonite church of the old faith, accompanied by one of its members.

The church was a low barnlike building, displaying the rough unplaned beams and rafters on the inside. The floor was thickly strewn with sawdust. Long backless benches served as pews; consequently sitting on one of these through a three hour service made an impression on me which I shall not readily forget.

You do not go to church to enjoy ease and comfort but to do penance for your sins," my friend explained to me afterward.

The minister entered, dressed in what looked to me like a green riding habit, with high top boots and red handkerchief about his neck. The hymns, consisting of some twenty to twenty-four verses and sung in the minor strain, dealt mostly with the life hereafter and pictured most vividly the wailing and gnashing of teeth and fire and brimstone applications accompanied by the rattling of monstrous chains. Then, by way of contrast, we were shown a picture of heaven with its snowy robes and harps of gold.

After several of these hymns, alternated by Bible readings, the minister still further enforced their lessons by upbraiding his people for their sin and exhorting them to follow the footsteps of their Savior. After an hour or so of this discourse the whole congregation knelt on the sawdust-covered floor for silent prayer, broken only now and then by the sound of quiet weeping. Another hymn brought the three-hour service to a close.

Their minister is chosen from the congregation, and may be any good man able to read and write. I am told that he requires private confession of his people, thus keeping strict watch over their thoughts and actions—a true shepherd of his flock.

But he is not alone in his work. The church is well organized, and a number of zealous assistants help him to keep watch over his flock and to punish such members as go

astray. A private school under the supervision of the church is conducted in every village during the winter months. A primer and the Bible are the only textbooks found in the school, as a knowledge of these and the elementary rules in arithmetic are considered sufficient to help the individual through life. The main object of these schools however, is to guard the children against all contact with knowledge that would tend to undermine their faith.

Being naturally sociable, the laws which the most intelligent and progressive Mennonite finds the most irksome are those respecting his association with, and imitation of, outsiders. His love for the beautiful is rigidly suppressed as vanity. He is not allowed to buy cars, use telephones or acquire any kind of up-to-date furnishings for his home. The use of sword or weapons of any kind is strictly prohibited—hence the opposition to war. "Thou shalt not kill," is considered sufficient reason. Neither is he allowed to affiliate himself with any lodge or organization of any kind outside of his own church, as these are looked upon with suspicion as being in league with the devil.

Anyone breaking these laws is placed under what is known as "The Ban" and is practically ostracized by his own family. He is not even to eat at the same table with his brother or shake hands

with him; instead he merely touches his knee. If the husband is "banned" and the wife refuses to leave him she must share his fate. Naturally, as the young people mingled more and more with their English neighbors in a business way and learned their views, they rebelled against these restrictions, with the result that a new sect was formed who call themselves "Berghaters" to differentiate them from the "Old Colonists" or "Rosenarter."

What happened to the new body which broke from the teachings of their fore bears will be told in another short article to be published in our next week's issue. (This first hand story is secured through the courtesy of McLeans.)

An interesting estimate of the number of Jews in the world has been made by the Jewish Chronicle. According to this account the world has roughly 15,000,000 Jews their distribution being: Europe, 9,300,000; Asia, 600,000; Africa, 500,000; America, 4,600,000. The number in Australia and other parts of the South Seas is negligible, perhaps 25,000. In all countries the Jews make good citizens and contribute fine artists, musicians, writers and statesmen. The rich Jews are exceedingly generous as public benefactors.

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