

Diary Of A Vagabond

by Dorothy Barker
From Coal to Wrought Iron

The stature of a nation is often measured by the disasters it has weathered over the years. Canada has been fortunate in many respects for only a few times, with the exception of war, has there been a tragic toll of human life.

Early in the century, the village of Frank in the Rocky Mountains was wiped out by a landslide. It will be many moons before the people residing in the region that used to be called Upper Canada can forget Hurricane Hazel. Even fresher in memory are the coal mine disasters in Nova Scotia.

But, though remembrance often tickles our conscience, it is human nature to push tragedy out of our thinking processes and live very much for today.

This attitude had something to do with my surprise and delight in the long range program of re-establishment being carried on for the miners of Springhill, N.S. Long before the disaster which closed down producing mines, oil and natural gas had reduced the potential earnings of these stalwart miners considerably.

Perhaps you have to live among the people of the Atlantic coastal provinces, or inherit one as a relative as I did, to realize their immense capacity for intestinal fortitude. It takes more than an explosion or other freaks of nature to defeat or completely disillusion a Maritimer.

They can, however, be forgiven the pall of depression which descended on the disaster-ridden town of Springhill. Only recently has an upswing in the town's economy lifted the gloom that followed experiences that would have drained the lifeblood from communities with less courageous citizens — says an article from the Industrial Review and Forecast for 1963, pictorially produced by the Halifax Chronicle-Herald, The Mail Star called, "The New Nova Scotia".

It told of many developments in this town which will eventually find employment for 200 miners. To me, the paragraph on vocational training for both men and women and the progress being made in teaching them crafts, was most illuminating.

The men's section, known as Springhill Community Crafts, though still on a shoe string, is producing hand-wrought metal articles for the tourist souvenir market. Since an emergency training program ended in August, 10 ex-miners in the over 45 age bracket have taken up furniture refinishing and wrought iron work on a full time basis. The Government of Nova Scotia launched the project and a committee of Springhill businessmen gave it their full support. Both are optimistic about the project's future.

Competition is Healthy

When I was excitedly telling a group of people about my summer CN tour of the province and of visiting Springhill after the disaster and viewing the almost hopeless dejection of its citizens and how I instinctively knew they would rise above their defeat, I was asked the question that often puts the halter on many budding souvenir industries: "How can they overcome foreign competition?"

Surely the answer is in producing artifacts others cannot match. For instance, hooked rugs. Have you seen the almost petit point beauty of those hooked by the women of Cape Breton? They are priceless. Tourists will pay for quality and design. That is why a course such as the Nova Scotia Government has sponsored is so important.

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On The Farm Front...

A.A. Wall, Agricultural Representative for York County.

Our Farm Management Association met last week to take a look at the financial results for 1962. The members had their farm accounts analysed at O.A.C. and while gross incomes were up last year, higher expenses held profits down quite seriously. In fact, red ink appeared in the labour income figure for about half the group.

It's very hard to cut farm expenses in our modern farm setups and yet on many farms, this is about the only way to improve profits. It's very rare that one single step can be taken to slash costs. Cost cutting has to be approached across the board. Even a 10 to 15% saving on several items can readily affect net income.

Fertilizer bills can illustrate the point. Using materials like Ammonium Nitrate, Superphosphate or Muriate of Potash instead of mixed fertilizers, can save money. Seasonal discounts should be used too. Attacking fertilizer bills in these ways, is much better than cutting the amount put on.

Feed costs are important too. Bulk buying is worthwhile and if a man has any spare time, he can usually make good wages by mixing feed at home.

Forage seeds are expensive this year, and there isn't much chance to cut costs. Usually a little saving can be made through, by home mixing. Over a long term, seed money can be saved with longer rotations. It takes gas, machinery and seed to break up a sod every two or three years. Improved varieties, well fertilized are built to last for four or five years.

Machinery costs often get blamed for putting total costs out of line. With some careful thought, however, machinery need not be the villain. Farms that are well mechanized are often the most successful. Any machine that gets lots of use in the year, is almost sure to pay well for itself. Some caution is needed on those that just do one job for a few days each season. Seed drills, combines and swathers are examples of machines that should be kept going as long as possible, and when they do wear out, the chances of renting should be considered before buying new ones.

Again, a little pressure has to be put on expenses all along the line. Good shopping habits can pay well. If an hour's work with paper and pencil can save even a few dollars, the manager's ability moves up a few notches.

Beef producers have a good chance to select a herd sire next week. 151 beef bulls go up for auction at the Ontario Bull Sale on March 12th and 14th. The sale is at Hays', and nearly all the bulls have been performance tested. Angus, Short-horn and Galloway breeds will be sold on Tuesday, March 12th, and Herefords sell on Thursday, the 14th. The Government premium of 20% of the purchase price, up to \$150.00, applies on all tested bulls.

Sunday School Lesson

GOLDEN TEXT: For even the son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. —Mark 10:45

In every sense it was uphill all the way for Jesus and His disciples as they went to Jerusalem; the wind of opposing forces blew constantly in their faces. Mark's terse, but graphic description of that journey makes clear to us that Jesus went on ahead with the amazed disciples following at a distance, and perhaps behind them a frightened crowd.

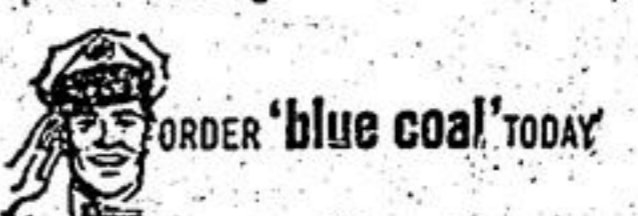
There must have been something very striking about the resolution with which Jesus walked for them to have made this impact on crowd and disciples alike. Then He took the Twelve apart from the others (Mark 10:32b) and explained to them in detail the trial, sufferings, death, and Resurrection to which He was steadfastly going. He made clear to them that the days of His revelation of ministry were now running out and it was therefore imperative that they grasp these vital truths. We are studying today a most vital lesson of the Christian life and one which is applicable to each of us. To the credit of the disciples they persisted in following the Lord despite His solemn warnings of the impending storm, and this proves the reality of their faith. Sometimes we are amazed and bewildered by the ways of God, but if we truly tasted the joys of fellowship with Him, we shall persist in our following, being magnetized by His love.

Heart of the Lesson
Dr. Campbell Morgan writes about the 45th verse: "Of the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ in the gospel according to Mark this verse constitutes the central statement... All the story of Jesus, the Servant of God,—from His introduction in the briefest words, to the last picture of Him passing back into the heavens, and from that exalted height working with His own,—all the light is focussed in this text." His sole ambition was to do the will of His Father in Heaven, and this meant the outpouring of Himself in life and death. If we can only grasp this great fact, our petty squabbles and jealousies, issuing as they do out of our pride and self-seeking, will be resolved. This is why Jesus insisted that the denial of self is the prerequisite of discipleship (Mark 8:34). A self centered Christian life is a contradiction.

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