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**The Fight with Weeds.**

We read in Grecian mythology of a contest between Hercules and the giant Antaeus, son of mother Earth, and famed for his strength and skill in wrestling. Although Hercules was able to throw his antagonist to the ground, from each fall Antaeus would rise from mother Earth stronger than before. Hercules finally killed him by lifting him from the ground and squeezing him to death. The struggle of the farmer to free his fields from the domination of noxious weeds has been appropriately likened to that of the Greek fable. Everyone who is interested in agriculture knows well the great extent to which weeds exist in our cultivated lands. Hitherto our farmers have been about as successful in their fight against weeds as Hercules was in the earlier stages of his contest with Antaeus. They have been fighting away blindly, treating all kinds of weeds in the same way, with the result that some weeds are killed, some are merely kept in check, and some flourish and increase. If they are ever to be eradicated entirely, their habits of growth, their strong and weak points, must be studied by the cultivators of the soil, even as Hercules studied the weakness of his adversary.

During the last year or two a great deal has been done by the agricultural departments through the medium of newspapers, bulletins, and agricultural meetings to disseminate information on this subject. The process of education, however, is necessarily slow, and it seems to be the general opinion of progressive farmers, as revealed by the farmers' institute meetings all over the country, that the time has come when a herculean effort must be made to lift this giant of "seed domination" from the earth and destroy it. This is why the bill regarding "The Inspection and Sale of Seeds," recently introduced by the Hon. Sydney Fisher, was pronounced by Mr. Girard of Chicoutimi and Sagunay to be "the most important that has ever been submitted to Parliament in the interest of farmers."

In explaining his bill to the Committee of the whole, the Minister of Agriculture pointed out that extensive tests by the seed laboratory of his department had revealed a rather startling state of affairs in connection with the seed trade of the country. The investigations showed that in many instances a large proportion of the seed sold would not grow; in other cases samples contained a large amount of dirt and other inert matter. This condition of affairs was bad enough, but it was comparatively unimportant in view of the fact that many of the samples of grass and clover seeds were found to be foul with seeds of noxious weeds, which can only be eradicated from the soil by years of labour. One could well understand the incalculable loss inflicted on the farmers of the country in that way. In other countries efforts had been made to protect the farmers from the results of the trade in bad or impure seeds. In England, in Germany, in Switzerland and in other countries attention had been directed to the matter, and various forms of legislation had been adopted. In some of the

States of the Union, in Manitoba, and in the Northwest Territories the magnitude of the evil had been recognized, and efforts had been made to lessen it by legislation, but no general attempt had yet been made in Canada to grapple with the evil. The proposed bill, which required that seeds offered for sale be tested for purity and vitality and graded according to quality, was the result of two years' careful study, and he did not think it would interfere with legitimate trade. However he was desirous of having the details threshed out in committee and was quite willing to accept such amendments as the House might deem desirable.

In the course of the discussion member after member, Conservative as well as Liberal, spoke of the seriousness of the weed problem and expressed approval of the principle bill. Here are some quotations from Hansard:—"I fully sympathize with the object of the bill" (Mr. Clancy): "This has become a very serious matter, and I think this step has not been taken one day too soon" (Mr. Fowler): "I can readily see that it is absolutely necessary that some law should be put in force in order to regulate the sale of such important farm products as seeds" (Mr. Ross, Ontario): "I regard this as one of the most important measures for our farmers ever introduced in this Dominion parliament" (Mr. Wright): "I admit the desirability of trying to prevent the use of seed containing an admixture of the seeds of noxious weeds" (Mr. Sproule): "The Minister of Agriculture is to be congratulated in introducing this bill. If he will make this bill workable and succeed in eradicating foul seeds from this country so that our fields will grow nothing but what is sown on them he will double the value of our farms" (Mr. Robinson, Elgin): "What we want is a law that will in some measure stop the spread of these foul seeds and the depreciation in value of farms all over the country" (Mr. Maclean): "I am thoroughly in accordance with the purpose of this bill" (Mr. Richardson): "I think it will have a most decisive effect in checking the spread of weed seeds; it would be wasting time to urge the point any further" (Mr. Angers, Charlevoix).

About the only objection to the principle of the bill were raised by one or two members who seemed to have no practical knowledge of agriculture and who failed to realize the gravity of the subject. The details of the proposed legislation came in for considerable criticism, which was to be expected, in view of the fact that it is based upon the system of seed control which have proved successful in other countries and with which few of the members appeared to be familiar. It was pointed out by Mr. Ross, (Ontario) that, as this year's crop of seed will be harvested, threshed, and in the market for sale at an early date, it would be impossible for the trade to offer seed such as the bill called for by the first of September, the date specified in the bill. The Minister of Agriculture and the Committee generally agreed with this view, and concluded that it would not be advisable to bring the bill into operation until next year. A similar procedure was followed in the case of the Fruit Marks Act, the details of which were rather severely criticized on its introduction, but which time has shown to be of inestimable benefit to the fruit interests of Canada.

Before the Committee rose to report progress the Minister of Agriculture summed up the result of the debate in the following language:—"I think I have accomplished what I had hoped for in the discussion. I have had the advantage of the opinion of the members of the House which I asked for when I first introduced the bill in committee. I am sure that these opinions and the discussion which has arisen here will assist very much in the perfecting of this law. If its passage is delayed for another year, the discussions which have taken place this session will not be lost by any means. I trust that as a consequence of the discussion the people who are interested in the seed trade, the farmers who purchase, the men who handle and the dealers who grade the seed, will study the proposed law, and will give us the benefit of that study. And I trust that, as a result of all this the law will be more perfect than it could otherwise have been made on a first attempt at legislation of this kind. Then Mr. Bruce of Hamilton, the well known seedsman and a member of the opposition, closed the debate with the following words of tribute to the spirit in which the bill had been handled by the minister:—"I desire to thank the Hon. Minister of Agriculture for the painstaking and careful way in which he has listened to every suggestion that has been offered."

**How to Checkmate the Book Agent.**

Arthur Roberts, one of Emporia's numerous book agents who are out over the United States helping decide the literary tastes of the nation's yeomanry, has written a



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tough luck story home to his parents. He went to Iowa with a big seller and lit in a territory where the rural telephones were well established. At the first house he tackled he was turned down, and the news that a book agent was in the community was telephoned to the neighbors, and by night every one in his territory had been warned to look out for the book agent. He says he has been able to find only a few people at home, and those that were at home recognized him before he got started and his story lost its effect. He is now out of funds and wants to come home.—[Emporia (Kan.) Gazette.

**The Lilac.**

In The Delineator for September, N. Hudson Moore writes charmingly of that favorite of old gardens, the lilac. In the language of flowers, the lilac, it is said, is unrequited love. Many superstitious fancies hover about this flower, particularly in England, where in some rural parts it is regarded with especial disfavor by lovers. In many small hamlets in the heart of England, to give to your sweetheart a sprig of purple lilac, is to say you wish the engagement broken, while stout-hearted bachelors sport a boutonniere of it to show that they are proof against the charms of woman. The white lilac is called less unlucky than the mauve, but neither should be made a gift between lovers. "She who wears lilac will never wear a wedding ring," runs an old proverb, so wise mothers with marriagable daughters see to it that no sprig of this unfortunate flower is brought inside the house. In Devon and Cornwall, pixie ridden counties, the lilac is the May-flower and a peculiar virtue attaches to it, if gathered before the sun is up.

**What The Shopman Advised.**

James started courting, and as it was Polly's birthday he thought he would buy her a pair of boots. So he took her to the boot-shop, and out came a young man in a big apron. "Yes, sir, what can I do for you?" "Please try a pair of boots on this young lady," said James. Whereupon he brought out a large box about a yard square. "What size does the young lady take?" "Small twos," said Polly. So he tried twos on, and then tried fours, and then sixes, and then eights, but he could not get them on her corns. At last he looked at James with tears in his eyes, and said:—"Does this young woman belong to you?" "Yes," said James. "Then," said the shopman, "take her home, put a thin pair of stockings on her, and let her come back and try the box on."

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Feb. 25-6m

**If Russia and Japan Fight Single-Handed.**

On Thursday, July 23, in the House of Commons, Lord Cranborne, Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, said that the British government shared the uneasiness evinced by its ally, Japan, at the prolongation of Russia's occupation of Manchuria, which, had the promise given by the St. Petersburg Foreign Office been kept, would have been evacuated 1st April. He went on to describe the Russian government as a "despotism," which the Czar himself would scarcely deny, but expressed the opinion that it was not homogeneous, two parties existing at the court which were not agreed as to the course to be pursued in Manchuria.

It would be easy to exaggerate the significance attaching to the description of Japan as an ally. The treaty of alliance concluded with the Mikado does not bind Great Britain to assist him in the event of his becoming engaged in a single-handed contest with the Czar. England's support cannot be claimed until Japan finds herself assailed by two powers at once. That Russia can secure the aid of France if she asks for it is usually taken for granted, but the recently improved relations between France and England might render the Paris government reluctant to take a step which would necessarily convert England into an enemy. It is probable that Russia, underrating the military and naval efficiency of the Japanese, will refrain from seeking co-operation on the part of France, unless she should encounter a severe reverse, and even then she may deem it doubtful whether French aid would not be more than offset by England's enmity.

The Russian generals in Manchuria seem to be quite confident of their ability to beat the Japanese, so far as operations on the mainland are concerned, while, on the other hand, the Mikado's subjects feel sure of victory if they have to deal with the Russians alone. There is no doubt that a war, if confined to Russia and Japan, would be one of the most interesting of modern times. It would test, as nothing else could, the solidity of the progress with which Japan has been credited, and it would also test the competence of the St. Petersburg Government to maintain a long and exhausting conflict at the extremity of its enormous empire. Can it really hope to accomplish at the further end of Siberia what it failed to do in the Crimea? We believe that the contest would be a long one, because the Japanese are a high-spirited people, not to be daunted by one or two early defeats and they are in a position to throw large bodies of troops in Corea. Moreover, even if their navy should be beaten by the Russians, which is improbable, they need not dread invasion.

Should they succeed in capturing Port Arthur, and in expelling the Russians from Manchuria, the prestige of the St. Petersburg Government would suffer an eclipse, and years might elapse before Russia could resume her movement toward ascendancy in the Far East. In the meantime Japan's reputation would be so heightened that the Chinese might be inclined to accept her claim to the hegemony of the Mongolian race.—New York Sun.

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