

FARMING AS A MORAL EQUIVALENT FOR WAR

BY FRANCIS E. CLARK

THAT always interesting pragmatic philosopher, William James, suggested that something should be discovered as a moral equivalent for war. He desired some occupation that will develop manly qualities, that will require grit and vigor, and that will whet what Mr. Roosevelt calls the "fighting edge" of character, which at the same time will be useful for the community and State, and not destructive and barbarous as is war between men and nations. He suggested various useful but humdrum employments, like washing windows, washing dishes, mending roads, fishing on the Grand Banks, and the like, for the gilded and idle youth who now speed in automobiles or loll on piazzas and lead frivolous or vicious lives, a menace to society and the Nation.

I think, with all due deference to the great philosopher, that I can improve on his suggestion, and propose an employment which, in the classic language of the colleges, will "put it all over" these other occupations as a useful development of the fighting instinct, a hardener of muscle, a quickener of the brain, a developer of resourcefulness, and a sharpener of the will on the hard grindstone of opposition.

This occupation is as old as Adam, as respectable as Cincinnatus, as beautiful as the Garden of Eden. It is none other than the ancient and honorable profession of farming.

But what I am chiefly concerned about in this article is not its age, its respectability, or its beauty, but its strenuousness, its useful development of the combative elements in our nature, which were evidently implanted for some good purpose; in fact, as my title indicates, I desire to consider farming as a moral equivalent for war.

Some people are very much afraid that when all our swords are beaten into plowshares, and all our spears into pruning-hooks, the race will deteriorate, the manly virtues, with manly muscles, will become flaccid, and the race of heroes will die out. Do not be afraid of this,

my friends, while farms remain to cultivate, and weeds grow, and worms wriggle, and moths fly. Let no one deceive himself on this point. The Creator has furnished for any one who owns or cultivates a rood of land all the opposition that a healthy man needs to keep his fighting edge keen and bright.

Here is my little farm, for instance. It furnishes as good an illustration as any other. The winter's snow and rain and frost no sooner relax their hold on my few acres than the fight begins, and if I fail to be on my guard for a single week—yea, for a single day—the enemy takes advantage of my carelessness, and my forces are routed.

With eagerness I waited for the soil to get sufficiently warm and mellow to plant the first seeds, and, with hope of a glorious harvest, I planted my earliest vegetables, which are warranted to withstand a little frosty nip. My peas and radishes and cauliflower were buried in their appropriate beds, and lovingly left to Nature's kindly care. A little later my corn and beans and cucumbers and melons and squashes were planted, and then my tomatoes and egg-plants were set out.

I fancied that only my family and myself and a few kindly neighbors, who, I was conceited enough to suppose, rather envied my agricultural skill, knew what I was doing. But I was mistaken. Ten thousand little beady eyes watched my maneuvers, ten thousand wriggling creatures congratulated themselves on their coming victory.

I heard the crows in the neighboring pine trees cawing and caucusing together, and, in my manlike folly, which pooh-poohs at anything it does not understand, I said: "Those foolish crows have just one raucous note. Why can't they say something sensible and melodious?"

In reality they were saying to each other: "He's planted his corn; he's planted his corn! I know where I'll get my breakfast to-morrow morn."

Sure enough they did, and as they get

up an hour or two before I thought of rising; they were in my corn-field long before I was, and the first round of the battle was theirs. To be sure, I could replant my corn, but that was a confession of defeat, as though a general allowed his troops to be mowed down and then had to fill up his regiments with raw recruits, which in turn were just as likely to be slaughtered.

The cutworm brigade of the enemy were more patient than the crows, as they needed to be. They bided their time, and just when the cauliflower and Brussels sprouts and cucumbers timidly pushed their green heads above the brown soil, they bore down upon them, gorged their loathsome bodies with the tenderest juices of the young plants, and left me defeated and my garden strewn with the wilted and dying remnants of the crops that only yesterday gave so fair a promise.

All this in a single night. Each plant had its own worm, just one single worm, but there were enough worms to go around. It was as if the worms met together in a council of war, and the general-in-chief marshaled his troops with consummate skill, assigning to each soldier his post—a cauliflower, cabbage, or cucumber, as the case might be. They all obeyed orders implicitly, and I was routed, horse, foot, and dragons.

I could have borne the disappointment, and attributed it all to the notoriously uncertain hazards of war, if the enemy had been less wanton, if they had eaten the rations they captured; but no, they simply cut the plants in two, near the ground, and left the beans to wither in the sun and the roots to dry up in the ground. They were like a regiment of looters who could eat but little and carry away nothing, and who, for the mere fiendish pleasure of destruction, burned and ravaged everything that came in their way.

However, I replanted and reset my vines and plants, protected them with fences of tarred paper, and placed mines of "bug death" and "kno worm" around them on every side, and girded up my loins with patience once more.

By that time the battalions of the air were descending on my trees, and I hastened to turn my attention to them. Here I seemed more helpless than before. It

was as though the new war aeroplane had been perfected and the enemy came flying from the blue to discomfit me.

The gypsy moth, the brown-tail moth, and, above all, the codling moth, all attacked me from above. The latter flies only by night and does not begin his depredations until honest folks have gone to bed. Then he gets in his deadly work, and, it is estimated, ruins half the apple crop of the United States by his nocturnal attacks.

How cunningly he plans his campaign against this king of fruits! No Napoleon ever better understood the act of harassing the enemy. He waits until the right moment, and when he sees the blossoms falling, he comes flying by myriads to the orchard. He glues his eggs to the embryo apple or near them. In about a week these eggs hatch, and the little worms wriggle their way into the cup-like blossom end of the apple. Here they hide and feed for several days, then bore their way into the apple to the very core, and the days of that apple are numbered. The apple indeed may live and grow, but it will always be a poor, knurly, wormy, worthless thing.

But the codling moth is only one of the enemies of my trees. There are the regiments of lice that get into the leaf and curl it up, and the light infantry of the apple maggot, a tiny worm that burrows into the fruit in all directions, and the tent caterpillar that camps on my trees and houses a thousand troops under the dome of a single tent, and the scale of different kinds, San José and oyster shell and scurvy, all of which attack the bark.

Every tree in my orchard, and every part of the tree, has its own particular enemy. The cherry has the "May beetle," the "rose bug," and the "brown rot." The pears have the "pear tree slug" and the "pear blight;" the plum has the deadly curculio and the "plum gorer;" and the peach has the "yellows" and the "peach rosette."

But not only does every tree have its own enemies, but every part of the tree has its foes. The bark has its borers and its scale, the leaf its lice and curlers, the blossom its moths, the fruit its borers. Each enemy knows exactly the weakest part of the citadel he has to attack. He

knows the exact moment when his attack will be most effective. He has the accumulated experience of a thousand ancestors behind him. He never makes a mistake in his maneuvers, or fails to avail himself of the psychological moment.

What, then, can I, a mere man, do with a thousand watchful, unwearied foes to combat—a mere man, with only one pair of hands and one poor brain to oppose these multifarious enemies; or, if I do not forget to count my Portuguese assistant farmer, two pairs of hands and two poor brains at the most and best? Shall I give up the fight and call myself beaten by the worm, and the moth, and the crow, and the weed—which I have hitherto forgotten to mention, but which is always ready to spring up and take my plants by the throat and strangle them? By no means! Here comes in the joy of the struggle. Here is the delight of a fair fight and no favor. Quarter is neither asked nor given. I will oppose the wisdom and skill and resources of my kind against worm and weed and moth and bird.

Come one, come all! I defy you to do your worst. I have got my artillery ready. My battery consists of two sprayers, one for the trees and one for the plants. My ammunition is of various kinds, but largely consists of Bordeaux mixture, Paris green, arsenate of lead, whale-oil soap, and tobacco tea.

I spray, and spray, and spray again. As often as the enemy attacks, I sally out to meet him with my long and deadly tube of poison. I do not wait for him always to assume the offensive, but as soon as he shows his head I train my artillery upon him.

It is a fight to the finish. There can be no drawn battle in this war. One or the other must win. Little by little I find my enemy giving way. The spraying pump drives the worms out of their fastnesses. The potato bugs give up the fight. They are conquered by Paris green and the sprayer. The cutworms are overcome by constant watchfulness and frequent replanting. The scale I attack with kerosene emulsion and whale-oil soap. The curculio I knock off and destroy. The tent-worms I burn in their own gauzy tabernacles; and, lo! when autumn comes, in spite of innumerable foes, foes that creep and crawl and fly and bore, I am the victor. My apples are rosy and fleckless, my peaches downy and delicious, my cauliflowers lift up their great white heads out of their chalices of green asking to be plucked, my tomatoes hang red and luscious on their vines, my potatoes are smooth and spotless, my corn is full-eared, sweet and juicy; and if I am not a better and stronger man for my tussle with Nature and the enemies of my farm, then there is no virtue in war and no value in the "fighting edge."

THE NEW BOOKS

Mr. A. T. Quiller-Couch has for some years written no story as attractive as his "Lady Good-for-Nothing." It is a romantic tale of Massachusetts in colonial days, with a singular but not unreasonable situation. Its leading character, a brilliant man of the world, Collector of Boston, is far from being a saintly person, yet he compels the selectmen to put him in the stocks side by side with a poor young girl who has been lashed through the town for breaking the Sabbath and resisting a constable. He takes charge of the maid, brings her up in all honor, makes her a scholar and a woman of rare quality, and is to marry her, but she breaks away at the ceremony because the minister is a hateful and vile sycophant who has insulted her. Her lord knows this, or part of it, and her pride

revolts. Nevertheless, her love continues, and the two live a beautiful life in the woods and later in a splendid Italian villa called into existence by vast expenditure and the skill of a noble architect; the union unhallowed by priest is otherwise true and fine. The ending is worked out with art and care, but need not here be told. The book has life and movement, and is written in a manner few romance writers of our day could equal. (Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. \$1.20.)

A story of English caravan journeying, as far removed as possible from Mr. Lucas's "The Slowcoach," which Outlook readers have been enjoying, is "Caravaners," by the author of "Elizabeth and her German Garden." A middle-aged Ger-