THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE.

Breed Improvement.

We have often wondered just what progress is being made in the improvement of our modern breeds of live stock. How would what we consider our best breed to-day, compare with what was considered the nearest to perfection thirty or forty years ago? A writer in an old country farm paper has the following to say on this question:

How often are faults excused or defended in this way? Is a Shorthorn patchy or is it uneven along its ribs? The half-excuse is apt to be forthcoming. "The breed has had more or less of this all along." And so with the older types of Border Leicester sheep, let one say. Many of them had wasteful, over-hanging rumps, and the blubbery mutton with its minimum of lean tissues was prone to slip from the sides of the spinal column down to the mid-ribs. Should Scotchman criticize the excessive amount of hair on the legs of representa-tive Shire horses, he is reminded of the fact that the bread always had what seems to him an abnormal capacity for growing hair, some of it of a very harsh, curly nature. The snouts of the old-time Small White pigs were bred so short that the creatures could scarcely pick up a potato unless they had it in a corner. But the puggy snout went with the breed In other breeds of pigs the ears tend to deprive the animals of sight. "Sure, sorr, them large cabbage-blade ears make then continted. They can smell the good and they can't see the ill!" That was the explanation and apology offered by a native of the distressful country.

In these days the poorest excuse for a fault from those who are concerned with a raint from those who are concerned with animal evolution is—"It goes with the breed." It is to some extent at least a weak copy of the weary fatalism. "That which hath been shall be," but as it is forever in touch with the forces of civilization and tendencies to betterment it has no call to be shirked or set among the practically nonendable things. The aim ought to be perfection. That may rarely, if ever, be reached, but the first duty is to clear off the almost easily remediable faults. When these are disposed of, much is gained. On the whole, there have been very great general improvements during the lifetime of the oldest men who are now taking the round of the shows. The larger horses are sounder and better fitted for their work, if one takes them in the mass, and if something has been lost in a few of the smaller breeds, a good deal has been gained on the average. At times a veteran takes to what sounds like pessimism. He maintains that the modern champions in horses and cattle are not up to the standards of far past years. He can go back a quarter of a century or more for better champions in sheep, but he rather thinks that the moderns have the advantage in pigs. It is quite easy to go a considerable part of the way with the supporter of the older order. In the Clydesdale sphere, for instance, show goers with thirty or forty years of a range will agree that the like of Moss Rose, Sunray, Lady Mar-garet, Boquhan Lady Peggy, and Chester Princess are not going in these days. Looking back across thirty years, Aberdeen-Angus men of the older race will hold staunchly to the opinion that Prince Inca remains an easy first when

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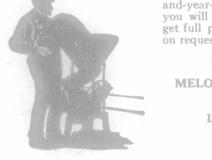
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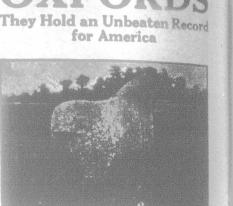
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