

much money that is now spent in horseshoeing could easily be saved without injury or discomfort to the horses. So far as clipping horses is concerned, we would give it no place at this season of the year. If done in November, so that a protecting growth of hair occurs before cold weather sets in, it is often a decided advantage, especially to a heavy-coated horse or one inclined to be lazy. Comfortable blanketing must be resorted to following clipping at any season. After December sets in we much prefer singeing the parts inclined to sweat, viz., flanks, belly, sides, breast, etc. This may be done fairly closely at any time without attendant evil. We have used the singer for several winters on our road horse, and like its effect.

In the series of letters referred to, an important point has not been touched upon, viz., that of fitting a thin horse for the market. Our readers would very much like to hear from those who have had success in this line, as the difference between the price of a thin and fleshy horse is a great deal more than the cost of putting him in the better condition, especially so when a wise system of fitting is pursued.

Public Officials, Wake Up!

Our Veterinary Department in this issue, which is sometimes thought to be technical in its nature, contains two letters that are likely to arouse attention, as they both deal with *live* subjects of very great interest and importance to farmers and stockmen generally, viz., the Administration of the Dominion Veterinary Department and Inspection for Tuberculosis in Cattle, both of which need careful attention. The writers do not beat about the bush in expressing their convictions. Dr. Sankey's letter indicates how the tuberculosis scare has been exploited in anything but the public interest. Mr. Hopkins is severe on our Chief Veterinary Inspector, Dr. McEachran, but it will not do to lay upon his shoulders the whole blame for the lamentable record of the Central Experimental Farm at Ottawa in the matter of tuberculosis. Regarding glanders among horses, one of the most serious maladies affecting animals, being practically incurable and also communicable to man, we have within a week's time received two reports of its existence in a town within thirty miles of Toronto, Ont., where some nine horses in one livery stable were found in various stages of the disease, and other cases were reported existing in the same locality—in all sixteen cases, more or less severe. Members of our staff are personally investigating the matter. We have reason to believe the disease has been there at least a month. There is an Ontario statute under which cases may be dealt with, but the Provincial authorities do not assume the direct responsibility of stamping it out, provision being made whereby cases may be dealt with by a justice of the peace upon information laid by any individual, the question of compensation being left with the municipality, which is not, to our mind, an effective method. The Province of Manitoba has a veterinary inspection staff of its own, and undertakes to deal with such matters vigorously without regard to the Dominion Inspector. Glanders, we notice, is one of the ailments covered by the Dominion Contagious Diseases Act, and the Dominion has a staff of inspectors in Ontario, so that there should be sufficient machinery for dealing with such cases promptly. There should be no dilly-dallying, particularly in cases like the above located in livery stables, from whence it is easily spread in all directions, endangering the farm horses of the district. It is our conviction that the question of jurisdiction should be definitely settled, so that there could be no shifting of responsibility or shirking duty. We understand that the above outbreak was reported to the authorities some ten days ago, but all that time has been allowed to pass without an investigation being ordered to determine the facts or action taken for stamping out the disease.

Farmers' Reading Circles.

To the Editor FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

SIR,—I believe this is a line of work open to be promoted by journals of the nature of the FARMER'S ADVOCATE, which, so far as I know, has not been taken up in Canada. It has been a source of regret to many that such associations as the Patrons of Industry, Grange, and farmers' clubs have to a large extent as educational factors become inactive, having been largely diverted into other channels. The Farmers' Institute, its meetings, reports, etc., are without doubt doing a great work, notwithstanding the fact that, taken as a general rule, the members of the Institute are already men of large practical experience and who have attained a good degree of success along the several lines which they are following, while those who most need the instruction afforded are not members and do not as a rule attend the meetings. Another of the features of Institute instruction is

that it is of necessity fragmentary and not continuous in its nature. The action of the Ontario Department of Education in deciding to introduce the study of agricultural science into the public schools is a move in the right direction, but it will, from obvious reasons, fail for many years in accomplishing a great deal, and in some respects fail utterly in attaining the results desired. Lack of practical knowledge on the part of the teacher and the scholar will be, no doubt, one of the chief obstacles. The prejudice against what is called "book farming," or scientific farming, is now fast passing away, no doubt owing much to the later publications on such subjects being much simpler, less burdened with scientific terms, and more practical than heretofore, bridging over the gulf which seemed to exist between theory and actual practice. An agricultural literature to accomplish most good must be expressed in simple language and in an entertaining manner that will induce those not accustomed to much thought or heavy reading to peruse it with satisfaction to themselves. That such literature is possible we have many evidences at the present day.

While it is necessary that our agricultural colleges should be maintained in the greatest efficiency, it is obvious that but a small proportion, comparatively, of our young farmers can or do avail themselves of the opportunity offered there of acquiring a scientific knowledge of their calling. And even of those who graduate a large percentage use the knowledge gained in a semi-professional capacity. They fill positions in similar institutions, the ranks of Institute workers, editors of agricultural journals, professors, veterinarians, dairy experts, etc., while those who do return to the farm, from the very fact that their parents have been in a position to give them such opportunities, enter farming on a scale above the average, and are able on that account to enter into operations beyond the reach of their neighbors who are not financially in such favorable circumstances. Even if he becomes an example to his neighbors in practice, those who imitate him without the same knowledge of the laws of cause and effect do so in a mechanical manner, unless he acts daily the role of an oracle and explains the theory on which his practice is based.

The local farmers' club, an institution useful in its day, though now scarcely ever heard of, had many things to commend it as a rural educator. But they had no higher source to draw their information from than that furnished in their own immediate vicinity, and very often the person proficient in wordy phrase, though mediocre in real ability and practice, held sway, while the quiet, industrious, and perhaps more successful neighbor would fail to give expression to his views. These, with other causes, limited its efficiency.

Even in the agricultural journal itself it is thought by some that too much attention is given to thoroughbred stock, or, more strictly speaking, show-bred stock, which might almost be called a distinct business from that of the general farmer.

[NOTE.—Practically all the improvements made in Canadian live stock can be traced (in conjunction with good care and feeding) to the studs, herds, and flocks of pure-bred animals. Improved stock and good farming go hand in hand, and live stock husbandry is the most important branch of farming. Were there no good pure-bred sires, whence would come prime export steers, improved dairy cows, high-grade mutton, or well-wooled sheep or bacon hogs that have made a name and money for us in Great Britain? At times show stock may be overfitted, but in the main it represents the highest types—the ideals—toward which all must strive. Canada must pay more attention to improved live stock husbandry. Having to deal with all branches of farming, together with general topics, such as "J. M." introduces, the ADVOCATE aims to give each in season according to its needs, as the present issue, for example, would indicate, its due share of attention.—EDITOR.]

I have no intention to belittle the good work of the several agencies mentioned, having for their object the instruction of a class who must ever be the dominant part of our population in point of numbers at least, but rather to suggest what would supplement them. I write from the standpoint of a young farmer, one of the majority who, having a good common school education, regrets that he had to a great extent at the threshold of the public school to lay aside the weapons which he was taught were to serve him in fighting the battle of life. Not being able to attend the Agricultural College, he is still anxious to know the why and the wherefore of agriculture and its successful pursuit, with, perhaps, not sufficient time and application, undirected, to seek the desired knowledge and training on his own account.

Could not something be done, not only to furnish material but also to give incentive to those who from any cause fail to grasp intelligently the available means at hand for further self-improvement along scientific agricultural lines? Such a scheme was first suggested to me by participating in "The Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle." This course of reading extends over four years. It is intended for those who have not had educational advantages, as well as college graduates, and is designed to pro-

mote close-connected, persistent thinking along a particular line, strengthening the memory, instructing the mind, creating a distaste for light reading, and giving a brighter outlook on life. A set of books is furnished for each year's reading, which a magazine directs, and which is supposed to be done daily or so much per week. The required readings are of a permanent and useful nature, as far as general knowledge is concerned. But it was a matter of regret to me that they were not so practical as might be. In looking over the list of the Rural Science Series in the FARMER'S ADVOCATE the suggestion came to me: Why could not some such series, with perhaps some additions, such as a book on farm accounts, etc., be made the basis of a course one, two, three or four years in length, with examinations at the end of each year or period? A course could cover four months or more of each year. The FARMER'S ADVOCATE might devote a page to directing of the readings, with the assistance of one of the Agricultural College professors or some other person conversant with the needs of the rank and file of the farmers, bringing out the most salient points, allotting weekly readings, and writing articles on current questions, examining papers, etc. The books required would be of such a nature that they could be used for reference in future, and be made a nucleus of a farm agricultural library. Few have better opportunities for instructive reading than the farmer in the quiet winter evenings. A circle might be composed of two or a dozen. They might form the itinerant system of meeting at their own homes, thus combining the social with the intellectual and practical. The ladies have not yet been mentioned. But to speak of a social feature suggests the need—yea, more, the necessity—of their presence in a circle of this nature. They could read domestic economy, horticulture, in conjunction with the other members.

The actual cost of a Rural Science Circle would be small compared with the C. L. S. C., and its usefulness might be made great in developing a higher perception of the farmer's calling. J. M. Perth Co., Ont.

[NOTE.—"J. M.'s" letter deserves consideration. Carried out in some simple way, under wise auspices, farmers' reading circles would promote a deeper study of the science of agriculture, and lift the life of many a neighborhood to a higher plane. Besides the Chautauqua Circle referred to, the National Home Reading Union in England, under the patronage of the Princess Louise, has a large membership; the *Cosmopolitan* magazine has what is called a correspondence university upon that plan; the Michigan Agricultural College runs quite an extended farm home reading course, and such young people's societies as the Epworth League have reading circles. In Canada the latter issue four books for each winter's reading, the work being in many cases left largely with the local circle, examinations at the close not being imperative. The books are read simultaneously, members meet to discuss them, ask questions or read papers, so as to fix in the mind what was read. Its success depends mainly upon the energy of some one person or more in the neighborhood. The more extended plan means correspondence, the issue of circulars, examination papers, to be covered by a membership fee, besides the cost of books. We have found considerable demand for such works as Roberts' "Fertility of the Land," King's "The Soil," and others, which we have placed within reach of the farmers of Canada at a very low rate or as premiums for obtaining new subscribers to the ADVOCATE. The present is an opportune time for the consideration and expression of opinion on the Reading Circle question so ably presented by "J. M."—EDITOR.]

President Mills on the Merits of the "Farmer's Advocate."

To the Editor FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

DEAR SIR,—Allow me in a word to say that I am very much pleased with the Christmas Number of the FARMER'S ADVOCATE. In quantity, quality, and variety it is excellent—a credit to Canadian journalism. The article on Agricultural Education, by John Dearness, alone is worth a year's subscription to any one who is interested in awakening and elevating the rising generation of farmers in this country. I wish to thank Mr. Dearness for so able a contribution to this important subject. Let our public school teachers be equipped and trained as suggested by Mr. Dearness, and the problem of Canadian agriculture will be solved. Our young farmers will be interested in their work; they will be more prosperous than they are at present, and their homes will become brighter and happier as the years go by.

When I look over the great variety of well-written practical articles in your paper, study the illustrations, and consider that the price is only \$1 a year, I feel that every farmer in the Dominion should have a copy. I wish you a happy New Year, and hope that your subscription list may increase from day to day. Very truly yours,

JAS. MILLS, Agr. College.

Guelph, Dec. 29, 1897.