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EDITORIAL

FARMING AS AN EDUCATION.

An educated farmer is an educated man. That is to say, he who has mastered the problems of the farm has acquired a stock of knowledge and, what is better, a degree of intellectual efficiency that lift him above the level of the common run of people, and mark him as a man with a developed or educated mind. Education does not consist in a knowledge of reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, history, and the like, however useful and advantageous these subjects may be in an elementary course of study. They are all good, and have their proper place, but it is worth remembering that there are men who, though possessing little of the knowledge commonly taught in schools, are yet educated men. They have acquired knowledge of another character in the world of agricultural, industrial or commercial activity, and, in acquiring it, have trained their minds to a greater degree of efficiency than that of some fellow citizens who had all the privileges of the school. There are problems on every farm which will tax the ingenuity of the greatest intellects to solve to the best advantage. And yet they can be solved. It is a question of bringing thought and study to bear upon them, of reading, conversing, and listening to lectures on agricultural subjects; above all, of cogitation and earnest thought, followed by definite, purposeful action. The drainage of the fields, the tillage of the land, rotation of crops, the maintenance of fertility of the soil, the harvesting and disposition of the crops, the breeding and feeding of live stock, the general business and the science of farming, afford opportunities for the exercise of the best intelligence. Every farm offers its own problems; and, in solving these, the way is open to a most practical and self-satisfying education. Study the problems of your farm.

RAW GROUND PHOSPHATE ROCK AS STABLE ABSORBENT.

Leading American authorities have been strongly recommending the use of raw ground phosphate rock as an absorbent in stables, about a pint to a cow twice a day being the quantity advised. The advantages claimed are twofold: By absorbing the urine, the phosphate insures the retention and application to the soil of some nitrogen that would otherwise escape in volatile gaseous form; and in the second place, the phosphate itself contains an important element of soil fertility—to wit, phosphorus.

There is a good deal of phosphorus in most of our soils, but the usual systems of stock husbandry and grain-raising, as practiced on our farms, tend to deplete the supply, so that on many old-cultivated soils the proportion of this element existing in available form is more or less deficient, resulting in considerably reduced yields of grain and clover. It is thought that deficiency of phosphorus in the soil, and consequently in the feed produced on certain farms, is in a measure responsible for the depraved appetite which induces in cattle the habit of chewing bones, pieces of wood, etc. In some cases of which we have personally been told, it is related that applications of phosphates to the soil have been followed by a cessation of such habit in the cattle. However this may be, we do know that many of our soils are benefited by applications of phosphatic fertilizer, and that on farms where plenty of bone meal or other phosphatic fertilizer is used, more particularly when used along with potassic fertilizers and lime, the yields of grain and clover have been increased.

Now, there are various forms in which phosphorus may be applied to the land, but the cheapest is untreated ground rock phosphate. This material has the disadvantage of being quite insoluble, and hence is but slowly rendered available in the soil. If the raw rock is merely spread on the land, little or no result may be seen for some time, but it is asserted that when this raw ground phosphate rock is mixed with manure, the fermentation forms certain acids that set free or render available the phosphorus in the rock. Thus we see that, not only is it good for the manure to have the ground rock used as an absorbent, but it is also good for the phosphate to be applied to the land in this way rather than alone. When not used in the gutter, it may be mixed with the manure in the pile, at the rate of 100 pounds to the ton.

The use of raw ground rock phosphate as an absorbent in stables is commended by American experts, and approved by such reliable Canadian agricultural chemists as Prof. Harcourt. It is strongly endorsed by the editor of Hoard's Dairyman, who has used it on his farm, and we feel justified in urging Canadian farmers to give it a trial. We have taken the trouble to inquire what would be the cost in Canada, and the well-known and reputable firm, the W. A. Freeman Co., of Hamilton, Ont., inform us that they carry it in stock, and sell fine-ground rock phosphate, carrying about 68 per cent. of bone phosphate, at \$14 per ton in Hamilton. There is reason to believe that on many farms it would prove an excellent investment at this price, and we trust many of our readers will try it and report results.

THE WINTER FAIRS.

The long list of autumn shows having had their day, the coming winter fairs now call for attention from farmers, feeders and breeders. In many respects these winter shows are the most interesting and important. As conducted in Canada, they are essentially educative in design and character, the exhibits being mainly commercial stock, designed for the butcher's market, competing for preference on the basis of suitability for that trade and purpose, the animals in many cases being compared both alive and in the dressed-carriage form, while in the lecture-room, in addresses by expert breeders, feeders and purveyors, the most approved methods in all branches of the business are explained and discussed. The constantly-increasing interest manifested by the ever-growing crowds attending these events from year to year, is the best indication that they meet the approval of the people and are being conducted on sensible and sound lines. The International Live-stock Show, at Chicago, while partaking more largely of the spectacular, and less of the practical and educational elements, is certainly the greatest of its kind, and is well worth to the visitor what it costs to attend. There not only is seen breeding stock of the best in vast numbers, in the finest show-yard condition, and representing many breeds, but also finished fat stock of many varieties, in car-load lots, as well as individual entries. The horse-show section of this great event, the dates for which are Nov. 28th to December 10th, also adds greatly to its attractiveness, and makes it the crowning function of its sort on the American continent.

The Maritime Provinces' Winter Fair, at Amherst, Nova Scotia, the dates for which are Nov. 30th to Dec. 3rd, and which is conducted on similar lines to that at Guelph, has steadily improved in character and interest, and the prospect is that this year's event will eclipse all its predecessors. The Ontario Provincial Live-stock, Dairy and

Poultry Show, at Guelph, is slated for Dec. 7th to 11th. The classification of stock in the prize-list for this event has been considerably enlarged and extended, several special classes for amateur exhibitors have been added, a strong staff of lecturers has been engaged, the dairy and poultry sections give promise of being better than ever before, and everything points to a very successful show. The reduced railway rates arranged for these events render the expense of attending moderate, and the favorable season of these shows, together with that for Eastern Ontario, at Ottawa, January 18th to 22nd, will afford a good opportunity for a pleasant and profitable outing for farmers and their families.

THE LATE DR. FLETCHER.

Canadian agriculture has lost one of its best friends by the death, on Sunday, Nov. 8th, of Dr. James Fletcher, Dominion Entomologist and Botanist, Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa. Dr. Fletcher was justly ranked as one of the leading economic biologists of America, while, as a man, his splendid personal qualities had made him a host of friends. Enthusiastic, kindly and sympathetic, with an excellent memory for faces, he possessed the priceless faculty of popularizing his subjects, thus imparting to his audiences and readers a large stock of information in terms which even children could not fail to understand. The value of his work to Canadian agriculture, in the fight against plant and insect foes, cannot be estimated. By lectures, conversation, articles and bulletins, he systematized and disseminated a mass of helpful knowledge which has become woven into the best agricultural theory and practice. His timely identification of the brown-tail moth, which was found in Nova Scotia a year ago last summer, was, no doubt, of great value to that Province in enabling it to fight the pest before it had gained greater headway; and this is but one instance out of thousands where his expert skill and knowledge have served us to good purpose. The economic value of his work alone must be reckoned by the millions of dollars. One of his most admirable traits was his dignified simplicity. "Farmers sometimes address me as the Entomologist and Botanist," he used to say. "I had rather they called me the bug-and-weed man." Especially will he be remembered by the thousands of school teachers who, as students of the Ottawa Normal School, found their greatest delight in trooping after him through woods and over fields, receiving inspiration in nature-study, and useful hints as to injurious weeds and insects.

Dr. Fletcher was born at Ashe, near Wrotham, Kent Co., England, on March 28th, 1852. He was educated at King's School, Rochester, Eng., and came to Canada in the service of the Bank of British North America in 1874. In 1876 he became librarian at the Parliament Buildings, Ottawa, and from 1884 until 1887 acted as Honorary Dominion Entomologist to the Department of Agriculture. In the latter year he was transferred to the position at the Experimental Farm which he held until his death. He filled at different times the offices of president of the Ottawa Field Naturalists' Club, president of the Association of Economic Entomologists, and of the Ontario Entomological Society, and honorary secretary and honorary treasurer of the Royal Society of Canada. He was elected a Fellow of the Linnean Society in 1886, received the honorary degree of LL. D. from Queen's University in 1896, and attended as delegate the annual meetings of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. He was also the author of many reports and papers relating to insect and plant life in Canada.