

THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME MAGAZINE.

THE LEADING AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL
IN THE DOMINION.

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JOHN WELD, MANAGER.

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to supply the demand of schools for its publications.

Experiments conducted at the Pennsylvania Station shows that steers fed in an open shed on succulent rations, including silage, made more rapid and cheaper gains, and attained a higher finish than similar cattle fed in the same way in the basement of a barn.

The dairy expert at the New York Experiment Station (Cornell University), in his work with milking machines, found that immersion of the milking parts in a ten-per-cent. solution of common salt between milkings was more efficacious than steaming. The germ content of the milk was found to be determined largely by the efficiency of the air filters of the machine.

Secondary Schools of Agriculture are making steady progress. Several States have established regular systems of Agricultural High Schools, while others grant bonuses to High Schools for giving agricultural instruction. Maryland, New York, North Carolina and Wisconsin passed laws during the year granting aid for such High School departments, and Minnesota and Virginia increased their grants. The farmer provides \$2,500 a year for each of thirty High School Departments of Agriculture, home economics and manual training, and \$1,000 each to fifty other such departments. Ten States now give aid to High School Departments of Agriculture.

During a test of a 50-bottom gang plow with oil tractors, at Purdue University, Ind., on the Agricultural College farm of that institution, fourteen acres were plowed in one hour, the plow moving forward two miles in this time, making a cut 58 feet broad, and turning furrows $4\frac{1}{2}$ to 5 inches deep. Three traction engines abreast, with oil motors, were required to haul it. They consumed about 22 gallons per hour of low-grade kerosene, and the fuel cost was about $6\frac{1}{2}$ cents per acre. These facts, quoted by the Literary Digest, with credit to the Engineering News, are perhaps more interesting than helpful to farmers in Eastern Canada, but it is worth while knowing what is being done in one's occupation elsewhere.

Reading.

By Peter McArthur.

Some time ago I saw a joke in the corner of a newspaper that led me to do a lot of thinking, and perhaps it will do no harm to tell about it now that the long winter evenings are with us again and we have time for reading. It was about a Scotch shoemaker to whom someone had given a volume of Plato. When asked how he liked the book, he replied:

"Very much. Plato has many o' my ideas."

The egotism of this was supposed to be very amusing, and yet if the Scotch shoemaker and Plato had not many ideas in common, Plato would have written in vain. The greatest benefit we get from reading is to find expression for our own ideas. Few of us can put our ideas in shape for ourselves, even though we may do much thinking, and the true mission of a great writer is to give form to what we have already thought out for ourselves. Most people read books to acquire knowledge, but I am coming to the conclusion that it is a somewhat profitless thing to do. People would do better to leave knowledge in the books that contain it, instead of cluttering up their brains with more than they need for their daily work. I have an excellent encyclopedia, and whenever I need some knowledge I look it up, use it according to my need, and then proceed to forget it. If I ever need it again, the book is there, and I can get it when I want it. The dry facts of life should be kept in books, instead of in people's heads. Whenever I think of that German professor of history who boasted that he could remember over seven thousand dates, and if called upon could name any one of them correctly, I always feel that he had no place among human beings. He should have been bound up with a leather back and paste-board sides, and put on a shelf in a Carnegie library. One should read to get thoughts, not facts, and to get thoughts you must think yourself and have experience of life. The greatest good a man can get from a book is a thought that casts a clear light on some experience of his own, and makes it forever intelligible to him. And when a man finds a book that has many of his ideas in it, he should read it over and over. If it is a really great book, he can keep track of the growth of his own mind by the new ideas he finds that he and the author have in common. If the man who wrote the book had a great deal of experience of life, and had, besides, the gift of expression, the reader will find, as he accumulates experiences and thinks for himself, that it contains a true expression of his own life, and when he has lived it all and mastered it all, he is equal in mental wealth to the man who wrote the book. If you found, at some time in the past, that some good book had many of your ideas, read it over again this winter and you will probably be surprised to find that it has many more of your ideas. There are a few good books that I make it a practice to read through every year, and at each reading I am amazed to find how much I missed in the past. Of course, I had understood all of them in the way that we talk of understanding things; my reason assented to the thoughts they expressed, but none of the great thoughts gripped me or became a part of my being until I had had some experience or some mental struggle that made me realize their wonderful truth. Emerson has said that a man never gets from a work of art but what he brings to it. This is profoundly true. We must have taken thought ourselves before we can benefit by the thoughts of others, and how glorious it is to find some thought that has been beating dimly in our minds expressed with finality. It is then our thought as much as it is the author's.

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In most cases reading is simply a bad habit. That is a dreadful thing to say, isn't it, when so many people think it is a compliment to a man to say of him that he is a great reader. I have come to the conclusion that if a man is not a thinker, reading is simply a waste of time. Leaving out the frivolous stuff that is written merely to kill time (and it is useful, occasionally, to give one's mind a rest and clear it of worries), most of the material that is usually called sound reading had better be left on the library shelf. I have no particular admiration for the man who

"Pecks up wit as pigeons do peas,

And utters it again as doves doth please."

And I have no patience with those tiresome people who know the exact facts and figures about this or that, and persist in cramming you with them whether you are interested or not. Take even such a subject as Canada, in which we are all profoundly interested. I am perfectly willing to have all the essential facts about it remain in Frank Yeigh's little book of "5,000 Facts" until I need them. I have it lying within reach,

and when I want to know how many bushels of wheat were raised in Alberta last year, I take it up and find out. Then I put it back in its place, and it keeps quiet until I need it again. Now, if I asked one of those human encyclopedias about the wheat crop in Alberta he would not be satisfied with giving me what I wanted, but would insist on airing his knowledge and telling me how many codfish are caught on the Newfoundland Banks, and a lot more things I did not want to know at that particular time. The man who has crammed his head with facts has usually been wasting his time. A book would keep the facts in much more convenient form, and hold them until needed.

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Now, this sounds rather serious, and might lead some good people to think that my favorite books are all heavy and solemn. Far from it. English literature is now so rich that you can get all human thought expressed to your individual taste. If you are fond of poetry, you can find every experience you have had, and every thought that has haunted your brain expressed in mellifluous language. If humor is your choice, humorists have illuminated with their good-nature everything you could possibly want to know. If you lean to fiction, you can find all human problems interpreted to your liking. It is the same in history, philosophy, science, and every department of human thought. You can find your own, if you will only look for it, and you can find it in the form suited to your taste. But perhaps the most important thing about reading is your own attitude towards it. If you will only realize that one man is not very different from another, you will soon begin to see that you have had the same experiences as every other man. The thing that is true in the palace is just as true in the farmhouse, if you will only do enough thinking to find where it applies. But you must think for yourself if what you read is to do you good and stimulate your mental growth. Unless you can find poetry or fun or philosophy in your own life, you can never find them in books; but once start finding them in your everyday experiences, and then the good books will help you to find a thousandfold more. There is no more mistaken idea in the world than that one man's life is very different from another's. The man with the hoe can find as much in life as the Prime Minister, if he will only take the trouble to look about him. He can feel as much, suffer as much, enjoy as much. If you do not find life interesting where you are, you would not find it interesting anywhere else. Learn to enjoy something within your own experience, and then you can get books that will enable you to enjoy more. But, above all things, do not set yourself to the task of reading as if it were a duty you had to perform. You should regard reading as a glorious privilege, and try to find books that will be to you as Plato was to the shoemaker. Hunt for the authors who have a lot of your ideas, but be sure that you have some ideas of your own to begin with. You can get them anywhere if you are interested in any phase of your life or your work. I dislike lecturing people in this way, but I get so much solid enjoyment out of reading that I want to share it with others.

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Yesterday afternoon I was asked to help capture and bring home a yearling heifer that had never felt a halter. She had been running in the pasture and woods all summer, and was as wild as a deer. We were told that we would find her in the barnyard, and then the trouble began. After holding a council of war, we decided to drive her into the stable, get a rope around her horns, tie her head down to her front foot, and then lead her home. But she had different ideas. While we were discussing our plans, she stood watching us with a distrustful eye. When we started to shoo her gently towards the open door of the stable, she began to rush around wildly in every direction except the one in which we were trying to drive her. She avoided the open stable door as if it were a death-trap. When we were finally out of breath, we stopped to "pause and consider," and that contrary creature at once walked right into the stable to pick up some hay that was scattered on the floor. There was a quick rush, the door was closed, and she was a prisoner. When she was finally cornered in a stall, the work of roping began. By skillful manoeuvring I got into the manger, where I was safe from her wild rushes and savage kicks. The other man put a board across the stall and pushed her up towards me. The experiences of the next five minutes greatly increased my respect for the cowboys who can ride at full speed and drop a lasso over the horns of a galloping steer. But I finally managed it, and with her head hobbled down to her front foot, and a second rope around her horns to lead her with, the stable door was thrown open. A three-ringed circus would be tame compared with the performance of the next few minutes. She jumped, plunged, reared up, turned somersaults, and yanked a struggling hu-