

Agricultural Journals.

The thought has often occurred to the writer, What would rural life be without agricultural journals and their influence. We maintain that no one can continue to read them intelligently but will be greatly benefited thereby; the benefit may not be directly felt, but the continual coming in contact with other people's thoughts and ideas will, in time, have its effect, and he will begin to imbibe new ideas and new inspirations that, perhaps, he never dreamed of; and, as almost all branches of rural economy are treated of in these papers, they are sure to touch upon subjects that we are interested in. For instance, one man is a lover of horses; another of cattle, sheep, pigs, poultry, fruit-growing, etc.; the moment he takes up the *ADVOCATE* he looks up the department that he is most interested in and finds an article, no doubt, from the pen of some one who is thoroughly conversant with that particular subject; he reads it and becomes interested, and says to himself "I can do that," and he goes to work, and whilst he is at work, at whatever the undertaking may be, he is thinking, (and here we might remark that when you get an individual to think and act you have accomplished more than half the task,) and he is not likely to turn back but continue to read, and think, and act. Thus it is, that through reading the *ADVOCATE* the farmers of Ontario are learning that the mongrel and the "ne'er-do-weel," which have hitherto prevailed; yes, they are beginning to understand that their unthrifty and ungainly cattle, sheep and pigs are not adapted to the new systems of agriculture and improved modes of feeding, and are opening their purses for the purchase of better farm animals of all descriptions. Many years since, a nobleman who was distinguished as being at the same time one of the most far-seeing statesman and one of the most eminent and scientific breeders—the late Earl Spencer—declared, that the breeding of fine stock was then only in its infancy, and that an enormous field at home and abroad, would, in the course of time, open to reward the science of the English breeders. To a very considerable extent this prediction has since been realized; but, there are not wanting abundant indications to show that the future is pregnant with yet more abundant promise.

The increased intercourse of nations and the desire in all lands for new and improved breeds of farm stock are everywhere most marked, and yet, on the whole, are only just commencing, so far as we can see; and here we would like to remark, that just now is the time to invest in the best specimens of farm stock of all descriptions, for it is more than probable that they will never be so low in price again in this generation.

The *ADVOCATE* (and other farm journals whose existence is probably due to the *ADVOCATE*), are doing a noble work among the farming community by giving them all kinds of useful information with regard to farm economy—the best kind of wheat to grow in different sections of the country, and all other cereals; the best kinds of stock to raise for their several different purposes, and by showing the enterprising and progressive farmer that there is plenty of room yet at the top of the ladder, whilst there is always a crowd at the bottom.

There are so many who put off the day of grace, that they find themselves so far behind that they cannot afford, so they say, to take a farm journal at the small sum of one dollar per year.

The want of inclination to change and adopt

new and better ways of farming has been the ruin of thousands.

The man who does not take a farm journal is not a success generally; he takes little or no interest in beautifying his home and surroundings, or other progressive work.

The Editor and Proprietor of the *ADVOCATE*, like the rest of mankind, will undoubtedly pass away and be forgotten, but the good he has done through his journal never will.

W. L., Aurora.

Increasing the Value of the Farm.

At a recent meeting of what its originators term a branch of the E. M. Farmers Institute, an elderly gentleman of considerable education and thoughtful originality, made the statement that "the man who increased the fertility of his soil twenty-five per cent., doubled the value of his farm." After considerable thought, we must admit this was quite within the mark. And yet, how rarely is this realized, or, if realized, how rarely acted upon. It can be done, however, quite easily without reducing the income from the farm. A careful study of the feeding and manurial value of foods, and an intelligent application of the same will enable almost any farmer to begin at once, and in time increase the fertility of his soil not only twenty-five per cent. but, in very many—yes, in a great majority of instances, fifty per cent. or even more. And still we have yet to meet the Ontario farmer who takes the manurial value of food into consideration when selling grain or purchasing food. The many bulletins issued by our Agricultural College and Experimental Stations, touch but lightly indeed on this matter. The tables of feeding value of most varieties of grain and roots were given in the December number of the *ADVOCATE*, 1887, and, if our readers so desire, will be reproduced at any time. The tables of manurial value of foods, compiled by that eminent authority Sir John Bennett Lawes, have been repeatedly given to the world, and are, we have every reason to believe, quite reliable at the English valuation, which is somewhat above ours, however. Artificial fertilizers are very uncertain in their action, which is largely due to the fact that they are in most instances special fertilizers, and should be applied where the special element of which they are composed is lacking, and this the farmer can only determine by actual experiment on the soil and crop on which it is desirable to use them. Barnyard manure is a general fertilizer, and if only one element is lacking it furnishes it, let it be what it may. While on the other hand, if but one element is specially needed, it may be supplied much more cheaply by using a special fertilizer when we have ascertained what it is.

There is, however, considerable difference between productiveness and fertility. Thorough tillage, while it increases the crop by making the soil friable, and thus enables the forces of nature to act on it and render the plant food therein contained soluble, so the crop can take it up, renders the soil productive, and thus takes from its fertility; hence many a man is credited with increasing the fertility of his farm, while in reality he is only increasing the productiveness at the expense of the fertility. Some soils are very rich in the latent stores of plant food, and with a very slight application of fertilizer occasionally, will continue to produce good crops for generations, others not so long; but the ultimatum will in time in any case be barrenness, though in some instances much sooner than in others, all owing to the amount of fertility in the virgin soil. In the near future, we hope to find space for a chapter from "Harris's Talks on Manures" by Sir J. B. Lawes on restoring fertility to the soil.

Garden and Orchard.**Manuring Orchards.**

There is no part of the farm that gives better returns for the manure expenditure than the orchard. Thorough work must be done in this matter for best results. Do not pile a little around the body of the tree and think you have done your duty, give the whole surface a good coat, and if you can secure a supply of ashes at event ten or twelve cents per bushel, put them on, too. Sixty to eighty bushels to the acre is a fair dressing, but half as much more will not be too much. No good farmer will starve his animals and expect them to give him good returns; but very many otherwise good farmers starve their fruit trees, and, because they do not yield heavy crops, say, "The Orchard Don't Pay."

Bark Louse.

D. Young furnishes his remedy for the oyster-shell bark louse, which he says completely cleared his 8,000 trees. A mixture is made of two pounds of copperas, and half a pound of blue vitrol, a fourth of a pound of saltpetre, and four pounds of common salt, all well pulverized, and mixed thoroughly with four pounds of hard soap. Cotton bags about two by four inches are filled with this mixture, and fastened with a carpet tack in the forks of the trees or upper sides of main branches. The rains dissolve it, carry it down, and it kills the lice. The old shells often remain two or three years, but there are no living insects in them. A separate orchard containing old trees was profusely covered with lice even to the fruit spurs; these were cut down as incurable, and burnt, branches and all. The ingredients given may of course be varied somewhat in quantities.

Pruning for Fruit.

Undersize fruit of any variety is not worth raising, either for market or home use. Fruit overcrowded is never of highest quality. The larger the number of specimens, the larger the proportion of seeds, core and skin to pulp or eatable portion. As the growing of seed makes the heaviest draft on the vitality of a tree, we should endeavor to have no more fruit mature than the tree can grow full size and perfect. A part of my Sheldon pear trees last season were pruned to thin the fruit. The unpruned trees produced four pears where the pruned ones produced one, but the one was as heavy as the four, and when sold brought four times as high a price. Pears have sold better this season than for several years, but there has been no profit except from those large and smooth. Extra choice fruit will pay for shipping considerable distance, but small stuff is only fit to feed to hogs or other animals. Judicious pruning now will encourage growth of fine large fruit. Cut back slim wood at this season, or before the buds start, as a means of thinning the next crop.—[N. E. Farmer.]

The peach crop this season in the Niagara district promises to be fairly good, and this will be a great boon to many fruit growers who have felt much discouragement during the last few years, in which not only has the peach crop failed, but the prices of small fruits have been so low as to leave little profit, and the apple orchard has been, in some cases, only a bill of expense. The peach buds are now swelling, and it is easily seen which are the live buds, even without cutting, from their bright, healthy appearance. Of the hardier kinds, such as the Alexander, Hale's Early, etc., there will be more than the trees should bear, while of the tender varieties such as the Early Crawford, there will be a fair crop, unless, of course, some disaster yet befalls them.