

Correspondence.

MR. EDITOR—DEAR SIR,—I have been thinking for some time of the question, "What shall I write about?" and its answer. Not that subjects are scarce, but quite the contrary, too numerous. One time draining is uppermost, then plowing, and then I fall back upon the sensation of the present time, viz., Shows, and I have resolved that Shows shall be the subject of this paper.

AGRICULTURAL EXHIBITIONS: WHAT ARE THEY AND WHAT OUGHT THEY TO BE?

I attended the South Brant Exhibition, and shall now tell you what I saw there and the thoughts that have run through my mind since.

I paid my entrance fee like an honest man, and walked into the capacious grounds. The first thing I saw was a crowd. Thinking I would like to see the 'elephant,' if it was there, I elbowed my way to the front rank. And what did I see? A beautiful cow? No! A race-horse? No! Well, what then? Why, I saw a man standing in a buggy with a board in front of him. He was giving away money. "Who," says he, "will give me ten cents for twenty-five?" "1, 1, 1," from the crowd. "Where?" says he, "I say I came here to give away money, and I do what I say. Who will give me twenty-five cents for fifty?" "1, 1, 1," says the crowd. Well, Mr. Editor, this looked very favorable for the crowd. But hold, he soon changed his tune from giving to taking, for under the whole thing was a lottery. On the board in front of him, was written several columns of numbers, and some of these had written under them the sign \$ with a figure beside it, but the majority of them were blank. He had also a large lot of common envelopes in a box, and in each envelope was a ticket upon which was written a number corresponding with some number on the board. "Now," says he, "who will try his luck at drawing a prize?" Then he holds the box to some innocent boy and tells him to draw out two envelopes. These two envelopes he sells for a dollar, giving in a little bar of his magic soap. He then sells tickets until a pool of nine or ten is formed. Then the anxiety of the crowd was at its highest, as he commenced calling out the numbers on the tickets sold. One poor fellow had tried his luck pretty extensively, and how anxious he looked! His eyes, ears, and mouth were open to catch the slightest sound of good luck. One ticket after another was called off, and as often the countenances of the hopeful dupes fell one degree. When the last was drawn all looked very despairing, but still a ray of hope was visible. "May-be," says one, "this has the thirty-five dollar prize." But oh! all their fond hopes were blasted by the cry of "blank." So much for Honest John, the soap man. "You cannot always win and you cannot always lose," said he consolingly. I thus watched the proceedings for some time and at last I saw one ticket draw a prize of two dollars. I asked myself who got the prize. But some one got it, and the soap man apparently lost two dollars.

But then another man was calling a crowd: "Come, old and young, great and small, weak and strong, come try your strength at lifting," he says, as he rubs with a rag his instrument, to keep it bright. "Only five cents to try your lifting powers." But I passed on to another crowd.

This crowd was assembled around another strength-trying machine. Every moment or so I heard a heavy blow and then a clang of iron, as a ball ran up a staff, and, catching fast, showed the force of the blow. Each paid a certain sum for two strokes. Thus they gave away their money, and then exerted their muscular force by using a sledge hammer.

Besides these crowds there were several others. One round another lottery, another round a man who had a set of dies

and stamping names for twenty-five cents, another lottery with its crowd, and there was also to be seen a canvass tent containing a man who could cut his head off and put it on again for ten cents.

Have patience, and I shall soon have them all enumerated. Another man had a square board which was set over with iron pins, in one hand, and ten iron rings in the other. Another, most honorable of all, was exhibiting his powers of calculation.

Besides all these wonders I saw a good deal of pure board in the Crystal Palace. It is not at every show that you can get a good view of rough boards upon which there is room enough to seat all the people, without crushing any fruit or flowers. Outside I saw a reaper and mower, two rollers, a straw-cutter, a dog-power, and many things, each of which took a prize, because there were no more articles than prizes.

The above is a general view of what I saw at the South Brant Exhibition, with the exception of a few sheep and swine. Who, I often ask, were the directors of this Exhibition, or any Exhibition at which the only things that drew the crowds were gambler's stands? Does not this show that demoralization of the worst kind is encouraged by the directors of Exhibitions? Who knows how many young men took their first lesson in gambling that day? Some little boy, no doubt, went home and proclaimed his luck at throwing ring on the board of pins, all over the farm. Who, I ask, were the exhibitors who took the most prizes, the farmers and manufacturers or the gamblers? The answer is easy: the gamblers, of course. How many dollars did "Honest John" make that day? More, I venture to say, than any ten exhibitors. I actually saw a woman encouraging her son, a little boy, in buying in a lottery; needless to say he lost his money as fast as he paid it out. Better have no shows whatever, than make our show grounds a safe retreat for idle men, whose business it is to extort money from foolish and perhaps poor people, by chance games.

Now, what ought our Shows to be? What is the original object of such gatherings? To promote the interests of farmers and manufacturers by causing a competition between the members of each class. The competition is caused by offering a prize of a few dollars or perhaps cents for the best articles exhibited. Shows also answer the place of advertisements, by bringing articles to the view of many people at a small expense. Let the directors of Exhibitions have an eye to these things. How many police they will swear in to keep some poor boys from defrauding them out of the entrance fee, yet they will allow gambling of the lowest and meanest stamp to enter the gate, and protect and perhaps patronize the gambler's dishonest ways. Let our Shows contain what they ought to contain and no more. If the number of entries be small or insufficient, canvass amongst the farmers for exhibition articles, rather than admit dishonest men to practice within the Society's grounds.

The above is not written with any spirit of malice against the directors of any exhibition. I have painted nothing blacker than the original, and I have told of nothing but what was seen. I felt it my duty to expose one of the errors into which our Shows have fallen. Let our gates be shut against men of low craft, even if they offer large sums of money for the privilege of practising on the grounds. Make our Shows what they ought to be. Select directors who will strictly follow the dictates of an upright conscience, and then we will show something besides bare boards as well as enjoy the blessings of a thankful commonwealth. Yours truly,

B. J. P.

New Durham, Ont., Oct., 1871.

We insert the above, as it opens a question for discussion, and hope some one may reply. For our part we believe in having amusements at our Exhibitions

but let us discuss where the line should be drawn. We want amusement as well as business to suit all classes. We thank our correspondent.

THE ONTARIO BEE-KEEPER'S ASSOCIATION.

This Association met on the evening of Sept. 28th, 1871, in the Sons of Temperance Hall, Mr. Mitchell, of St. Mary's, in the Chair, and Mr. A. C. Atwood, of Vanneck P. O., Secretary. The following were the subjects on the card for consideration:

- 1st. What amount of ventilation should be given to stock in winter?
- 2nd. What is the cause of bees swarming?
- 3rd. What is the cause of bees leaving the hive after hiving, and how to prevent them?
- 4th. What are the troubles to be met with in bee-keeping?
- 5th. What will bee-keepers gain by using the extractor?
- 6th. What is the great secret of successful bee-keeping?
- 7th. What is the best method of introducing queens?

The first subject elicited a brief but pointed discussion, when it was

Resolved—That no rule can be laid down for ventilating a hive, but bee-keepers must use their judgment in regard to the place for wintering the strength of the stocks, &c.

The second question, "What is the cause of bees swarming?" was laid over for future discussion.

The next question, "What is the cause of bees leaving the hive after hiving, and how to prevent them?" was then taken up, and after some debate it was

Resolved—That the cause of leaving the hive after swarming is greatly owing to careless management and exposure to strong sunshine. The only remedy is artificial swarming or plenty of ventilation for natural swarms. Carried unanimously.

The fourth question, "What are the troubles to be met with in bee-keeping?" was then taken up, and after discussion it was concluded that the troubles were so numerous and varied under different circumstances that they had to be discovered by each bee-keeper for himself.

The fifth question, "What will Bee-keepers gain by using the Extractor?" was then taken up. The extractor is an instrument used for removing honey from the comb without injury to it, thus economising the wax of the comb, and saving the honey which otherwise would have to be used in constructing it. After a short debate it was

Resolved—That this Convention recommend all bee-keepers to use the extractor, from the testimony already given by those who have used them. Carried.

A. C. ATWOOD,

Sec.-Treas., O.B.A.

Editor Farmers' Advocate.

SIR,—The potatoes I had from you last spring have yielded well, and prove themselves to be of excellent quality, and surpass most other kinds in this respect, possessing a splendid flavour. The spring wheat has also turned out well with us, and we are highly pleased with it as well. I may mention that a person was round here vending a patent fork, and setting forth he had a line from you guaranteeing satisfaction. Never having seen mention in your paper of any fork the same as he had, I did not believe him. Please inform me if you gave any one such authority.

Yours truly,

CHARLES POWELL.

London, Oct. 25, 1871.

We have had no one selling forks. If we have anything worthy of commendation you will see it in our list. We would caution our readers not to be deceived by any praulers who may say they are from our office, and use our name as a cloak to deceive you.

Editor Farmers' Advocate.

SIR,—In the July number of the Advocate, there was a short article on the deterioration of varieties of potatoes. I was in hopes that some one of your many readers, more experienced in raising potatoes than I can pretend to be, had written to you about it. I am of the opinion that the deterioration is mainly owing to carelessness in the selection of seed. There is nothing perhaps that ripens so irregularly as the potato. But instead of improving on the hint, and selecting the best for seed, the smallest

or worst are more frequently planted. And when this is continued from year to year, what will be the result?—the produce must degenerate. For whatever animal or vegetable is brought up to a higher state of cultivation and growth, by selection, care and food will, as a matter of course if that care, selection and food is not continued, return back to their original state. My plan is to raise potatoes intended for seed entirely by themselves; enrich and cultivate the land thoroughly; plant the largest potatoes (your show bushels), and do not spare the hoe. Take the best potatoes from the patch for your seed, and the very best for your seed patch again next year, and with this treatment they may perhaps deteriorate, but it must be very slowly. I wish you had given us some of Mr. Patterson's experiments, and if he had tried anything like this we would know if anything would be gained by it. I would also like to know whether new varieties raised by crossing do not sooner deteriorate than those raised without any crossing or pure blood, so to speak. But only an extended series of experiments can test if this is the case. We hardly know the meaning of crossing potatoes. We do not admit of grafting being a cross, as the eye implanted in any other potato will produce its like in the same as a graft. New varieties of potatoes are procured for seed from seed bulks, and when such is raised it must take a series of years and inoculation with the bumble bee and other insects to produce a cross, even then from the seed bulks. We have nothing to depend on as hundreds of different kinds may be produced from the same stem. In animals the result of crosses is more surely and easily defined, and our purest bred animals are the result of judicious crossing. When anything is raised to perfection, the best plan for the majority of farmers is to procure as direct from the parent stock as possible.

Yours, &c.,

LAMBTON.

Editor Farmers' Advocate.

SIR,—I am sorry I did not see you when I was in London last week, but I saw your establishment and heard of your success. I am glad of it, and hope you will keep going ahead. I can't do much for you in this locality. I will give you a sample of my neighbors. One of them when helping at threshing, on passing through my potato field, and looking at my Early-Rose potatoes, was induced to take two home in his pocket, and I think that he will venture to plant them next spring. This is the amount of enterprise he is possessed of, and many others here. But he is Scotch, of course.

Yours truly,

ROBERT STREET.

Lambton, Oct. 7, 1871.

Editor Farmers' Advocate.

SIR,—I received the "Digger" and remit the amount. I think well of the "Digger" as it does its work satisfactorily. My old varieties of potatoes crop poor alongside the new kinds I have had from you. I give you some returns and have no doubt, under more favorable circumstances, the yields would have been much greater, but we suffered much from the early and long-continued drought. I have taken several first prizes on my new varieties, having shown thirty kinds in all. Fall wheat has yielded from thirty to forty bushels per acre. Spring wheat from six to twenty bushels per acre. Hay—light crop in this Township. Other spring grain average crops:

From 12 oz. King of Earles, I lifted 13 lbs.	
" 12 oz. Seedling (Breeses) " 17 lbs.	
" 7 1/2 lbs. Calico, " 3 1/2 bush.	
" 15 " Willards Seedling, " 8 "	
" 15 " Excelsior, " 5 "	
" 15 " Climax, " 7 "	
" 30 " Breeses Prolific, " 20 "	
All good table potatoes. Yield of my older varieties of potatoes.	
6 bushel Early Rose produced 200 bushels.	
4 " Goderich " 60 "	
4 " Garnet Chile " 50 "	
Flukes, Cups, Blue Pink Eyes, Carters, Californias—all look as mean and small as potatoes can be.	
From 15 lbs. McCarling Wheat I thrashed 1 bush, 30 lbs.	
From 4 lbs. 12 oz. Marshall Oats I thrashed 2 bush, 30 lbs.	
From 17 lbs Black Tartar I thrashed 4 bush, 30 lbs.	
From 8 lbs. 5 oz. New Brunswick I thrashed 5 bush, 30 lbs.	
From 8 lbs. 8 oz. Norway Oats I thrashed 5 bush, 30 lbs.	

Yours truly,

L. WELLER.

Stephen, Oct. 13, 1871.

[We thank Mr. Weller for his report, and should be glad to have others do likewise, as reports compared elicit facts and become of importance and advantage to all farmers.]