

Canadian Live-Stock Journal

PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY

THE STOCK JOURNAL COMPANY,
48 John Street South, Hamilton, Ont.

Terms, \$1.00 per Annum in Advance.

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All communications to be addressed STOCK JOURNAL Co., 48 John street south, Hamilton, Ont.

HAMILTON, CANADA, MAY, 1886.

Please examine your address tag. If it reads, Dec., '85, or any month of '85, your subscription expired with that issue, and we will be obliged if readers in arrears will renew at once.

STAYING at home and attending closely to business is usually an excellent practice, but, like many other good things, it may be carried too far. Many a one well adapted by nature to be a most successful cattleman has lived and died in obscurity, because his ambition never felt the stimulus that is sure to follow when better animals are seen than those that we possess at home. There can be no denying what one sees with his own eyes, even by those who assume, through lack of better information, that the drawings furnished by periodicals are overdone. Yet there is a time for going abroad to see what one's neighbors possess, and that time is not the busy season. Those of our farmers' sons who have made such a pilgrimage should take it into account now, and by observing the utmost diligence the coming season, prepare the way by the return of another winter.

MANY persist in using a mongrel sire though convinced of the wisdom of trying to improve their herds. They buy a good specimen of a grade bull or of a cross-bred ram, and simply because they are good in themselves, without staying to inquire into the character of the ancestors. These men spend their labor for naught. They may make some improvement, but with expectations realized, others may be blighted, as there is a constant tendency to revert to former types in the offspring. Thus it is that after a life-time spent in this way the stud, the herd, and the flock are of that character in which the owner would feel no pride in showing to any one. How much simpler and wiser would it not be in every instance to use pure-bred sires, which, if chosen with ordinary care and judgment, would make the lot respectable, of whatever class they might be? It is surprising, indeed, that individuals, wise and discreet in other things, are so numerous found who persist in the adoption of a course that is so detrimental to their own best interests.

It is estimated that not more than *fifteen* per cent. of the agriculturists of the United States read a farm or stock paper. We feel quite sure that in our own Ontario the proportion is quite as large. We know it from the returns giving the number of our farmers, and from the combined circulation of our farm journals. It is true, however, that a goodly number of those who do not take a paper devoted exclusively to their own profession read a good deal on agriculture in the general newspaper. With all due allowance for this, we hold it is a stigma on the calling, that not one in seven of our "intelligent" farmers takes a paper treating of his own particular business. We need not so much wonder in such a case that men will persist in growing wheat in large quantities at 77 cts. per bushel, and in keeping scrub cattle that require four seasons to produce a very indifferent steer for the shambles.

In forming a herd or flock it is a very common practice to do so by purchasing young animals that have never bred. We are by no means sure of the wisdom of this, as a dam may not produce offspring equal to herself, owing, it may be, to some deficiency in the make-up of her immediate ancestors. In some instances young stock fail to breed at all. When they breed regularly and the character of the offspring is what it should be, this method is the most profitable; but oftentimes they do not so breed, in which case it had been better to have purchased dams that had already been tried. We have read of an instance of one of the best flocks of sheep in England having been built upon a foundation consisting of four-year-old ewes. The reason assigned by the flockmaster for taking this step was, that the best class of young ewes could not readily be secured. So it is oftentimes with cattle and other kinds of stock. The best of the young ones are most likely to be kept at home. One may not get so large an increase from animals that have been tried, but they will get what is exceedingly important, the right sort of a foundation upon which to build.

"As a general rule the farmer whose powers of observation are so limited that he cannot appreciate the superior advantages of improved stock over what he can pick up at random, will not see the importance of good care or understand in what good care consists, and very little satisfaction is likely to come to him from making live-stock the leading feature of the farm." These words were penned by the editor of the *Farmers' Gazette* (Dublin), and they enunciate a truth that is as old as stock-keeping. If they apply so well to the stockmen in the land where they were penned, where much of the stock that is fed is purchased, how much more will they apply to those who grow their own stock, as is usually the case here. We can understand how one always purchasing may in a manner be compelled to take inferior stock or do without in a time when it is dear, but no one is compelled by the law of necessity or by any other law, unless it is the law of a culpable inertia, to keep an inferior class of stock from year to year without trying to improve it. Such men certainly do not pay much regard to the "care" of their stock, but will usually measure their worth, not by their ability to put on flesh, but by their ability to keep out cold and live on scant fare. The writer in the *Gazette* attributes this indifference of the farmer to his own true interests to "limited powers of observation." In this he has but told a part of the truth, for a strong conservatism peculiar to his race evidently adds its influence, and there must be a strange dormancy of the perceptive and reasoning faculties as well. The strong

power of long practised habit is brought out very strikingly in witnessing a man who will stand half an hour in a sleet storm to get half a cent a bushel more on a load of peas in the town market, and yet every day of his life one-fourth of all the peas he feeds at home are wasted by giving them to inferior stock, and yet this illustration is but a type of hundreds and thousands of instances of similar infatuation. Very little satisfaction can be looked for from the keeping of an inferior class of stock and even less profit.

Speculators.

In these latter days there is somewhat of a stigma associated in the mind with the use of the term speculators. Now there never has been an effect without a cause, at least when we speak of material things; and therefore there must be some reason for the prevailing sentiment that we have just expressed. Where shall we seek for this cause? A popular dictionary gives as a definition for the term speculator, "One who buys in expectation of a rise in price." Now in this there is nothing condemnable, providing no deception is used on the part of the buyer in his endeavor to get his goods cheaply. Whence, then, has that sombre soiling come that we see clinging to the garments of those men whom we term speculators? Has it not arisen from the abuse of power? From the definition of the term speculator that we have given, it is clear that the calling of the speculator is quite as legitimate as that of the manufacturer or the farmer. But when successful, he grows rich rapidly, an ordeal that few men can come through unscathed, and therefore the tendency to become grasping, and; it may be, positively dishonest. Speculators more than any other class cry, "It is naught, it is naught," but when they go their way they boast to their fellows as to the good bargain they have made:

There are, of course, many classes of speculators. The huxter is a speculator; so is the ordinary grain-buyer. The man whose sole business consists in importing live-stock and selling them again, and he who invests in lands for the purpose of retailing them at a more or less remote period. Now all this may be done in a way that is not only perfectly legitimate, but positively beneficial. The huxter oftentimes relieves the farmer of his load that on dull market days would have to be taken home again; the importer brings good stock into neighborhoods where otherwise they would not through long years find their way; and the speculator in land, though oftentimes he may have retarded settlement thereon, has oftener facilitated this work. We think we are safe in saying that any honest calling that extensively obtains has arisen through the necessity of circumstances, and that until the necessity which created it is removed, so long will it find men to practice it. The vast company of agents that are supported now in modern countries, and that costs these more to maintain than their armies and navies, has arisen as a natural consequence of the constitutional tardiness of most men to put off to the last possible moment, necessary investments, linked with the competitive spirit of this most restless age. If, then, we have speculators, it is because the world wants them, for we have shown that the calling is not essentially dishonest. Nay, it may be, and is attended with many positive advantages, as we have already hinted. When countries have been literally filled with the products of a bountiful harvest, speculators have bought the surplus, and at better prices than would otherwise have been given for it, as a majority are compelled to sell, let the price be what it will. These immense stores put upon the market in a time less productive, have tended to pre-