

The Farmer's Advocate

and Home Magazine

"Persevere and Succeed."

Established
1866.

VOL. XLI.

REGISTERED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COPYRIGHT ACT OF 1875.

LONDON, ONT., AUGUST 9, 1906.

No. 724

EDITORIAL.

Plowing Matches.

One thing strikingly noticeable in going through the country in these days is the indifferent character of the plowing done on most farms. Time was when farmers' sons and servants were taught that straight furrows and neat, uniform work was the only kind that was creditable, and that slovenly work in plowing was a mark of a poor farmer; but now neat plowing is seldom seen, and carelessness in this regard excites but little comment. Apart from the difference in appearance notable between good and inferior work, and apart from the aptness of the adage, "What is worth doing is worth doing well," there is a real and substantial advantage in good plowing, as we shall endeavor to show. The object in plowing is to move and mellow the surface soil to a uniform depth, to invert, and leave it in the best condition for being disintegrated and reduced to a fine tilth by the implements used to follow the plow. It therefore follows that if the land is unevenly turned, some parts deep and others shallow, the furrow wide in some places and narrow in others, some parts are not properly broken up, a "cut-and-cover" class of work is the result, and the implements of cultivation which follow the plow cannot catch and move the soil to a uniform depth or in a thorough manner, and the consequence is an imperfect preparation of the seed-bed, imperfect germination of the seed, defective nourishing of the plants, a reduced crop yield, and an uneven surface, rendering the work of harvesting machinery less efficient and more tiresome to the teams. Since plowing is the base of all cultivation, and cultivation the essential to success in crop-growing, it follows, as a logical sequence, that good plowing is one of the most important of farm operations, and should be done in the most thorough and effectual manner possible, in order that the best results may be secured.

In order that the young men of the farm may be stimulated, and induced to take a pride in this part of their work, the question arises whether the plan of holding competitive plowing matches, which more generally prevailed some thirty years ago in Ontario, might not be profitably revived and encouraged. There is no doubt that these matches were effective in inciting not only those who participated in them, but also those who were spectators, to greater care and effort to do their work in a workmanlike and creditable manner, and the observer can readily distinguish, as he travels through the country, the better quality of plowing and more general neatness of all the work on the farms in the sections where plowing-matches were formerly held, and where men and boys made for themselves and district a reputation for first-class plowing.

The writer recalls the case of a farm in Central Ontario where the father and the sons were prize-winning plowmen, and where, on visiting the farm, it was distinctly noticeable that not only in regard to plowing was neatness and thoroughness observed, but the same spirit of pride in doing the work well was manifest in everything about the place, even to laying the rails of a snake fence with their ends even, cutting the stakes off at an equal height, and piling a heap of unused rails with their ends plumb. Such an education in thoroughness will prove wholesome and helpful to a boy or man in all the relations of life.

It is true that the style of plows used and the kind of work seen at the matches of years ago may not be considered best for the changed conditions of the present, but these may be provided for in the rules and regulations as they are in Manitoba, where the requirements are, in many respects, different from those in vogue in the East, and where plowing-matches are becoming increasingly popular, and are having a good effect as an incentive to more neat and thorough work. It is generally conceded that the autumn is the most suitable season for holding plowing-matches in the older Provinces, and now is a good time to consider and discuss the desirability of organizing and arranging for such. We offer the suggestion that the officers and directors of local Farmers' Institutes might well take the initiative in the matter, as they have the necessary official machinery for such a movement. We shall be pleased to have our



Turning the Sod.

readers take part in a discussion of this subject through the medium of our columns.

The value of ideas lies in their application. A man may have ever so bright a brain, with well-balanced judgment to boot, but unless he gets down to hard work his talent will do him little good. Unused talent is like a miser's money lying in the vault—with this difference, however, that when the miser dies his property is liable to be discovered and used. When a gifted man departs from the terrestrial sphere, his genius goes with him. Give to the world the best that is in you; if you do not give it now, you never will.

The Fall Fairs.

The autumn agricultural and industrial exhibitions, displaying representative specimens of the best products of the farm, the factory and the studio, constitute at once an educative institution and a welcome relaxation from the toilsome tasks of the harvest, and the shop, and are well worth all they cost in money and the care expended in their management. Probably no other influence has done so much to stimulate the spirit of improvement in the character of our live stock and other farm products, and the invention and introduction of mechanical contrivances for facilitating the work of the farm and lessening the labor connected therewith. The spirit which moved men of influence in this country half a century ago to organize agricultural exhibition associations, and offer liberal encouragement for the importation and dissemination of improved stock and the introduction of labor-saving devices, challenges the admiration and gratitude of the present generation. And the good work goes on in ever-widening circles of area and influence. The boundaries of Agricultural Canada have extended towards the setting sun, and the little one has grown into a giant, with promise of yet greater development in the comfortable home-making of a happy and contented people, where there is room for millions more to work out a desirable destiny.

The midsummer exhibitions of the mid-Western Provinces, held early in the season, owing to the comparative lateness of their harvest and the rush of farm work in the fall, have been more than usually successful, and the prospects for the Eastern shows are big with promise. The Toronto Industrial, claiming the title of Canadian National, is now by common consent the greatest annual exhibition of the kind on the American continent, in extent, in variety, in excellence and influence. With buildings and equipment insured for \$3,000,000, an ideal location on the lake shore, a prize-list of \$45,000, and the certainty of a record display of high-class horses and other stock, including a contribution from the Royal Farms of His Majesty the King, the Toronto show this year offers attractions greater than ever before.

The London and Ottawa exhibitions, always attractive in themselves and in the beauty of the cities in which they are held, with added buildings, increased prize-lists, and improved facilities, have every prospect of a successful outcome, while the Dominion Exhibition, to be held at Halifax, down by the sounding sea, with a \$50,000 Government grant, enlarged grounds, extended building accommodation, and a liberal prize-list, should draw visitors from all sections of the Maritime Provinces, as it will exhibit from far beyond their boundaries. Later on, British Columbia, with her outlook westward on the Pacific Ocean, will present more than the usual excellent exhibi-