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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the land and loosen it up for the germinating seed. Maybe the old mower or binder is so badly the worse of wear that days of time and bushels of grain are lost in a hopeless endeavor to repair its rusty, weakening mechanism. And would it not, in many cases, prove wiser to keep a few of the good breeding stock to yearly make high returns on the money they represent, and if need be buy more than to sell all these, even though prices seem high, and take the money out of the business, and let someone else have it at a small rate for other business? Even all the stock the place will carry may not bring it to the maximum production. Perhaps a little artificial fertilizer in some instances could be used to advantage. Much more could be spent on most farms to lighten the work of the household, and make the home more attractive. This latter would yield the best interest of all. Cheerful surroundings and contentment in the home cannot be measured in dollars and cents, and the interest on the investment leading to them is outweighed many times over by the increased pleasure of living.

Valuable Advice.

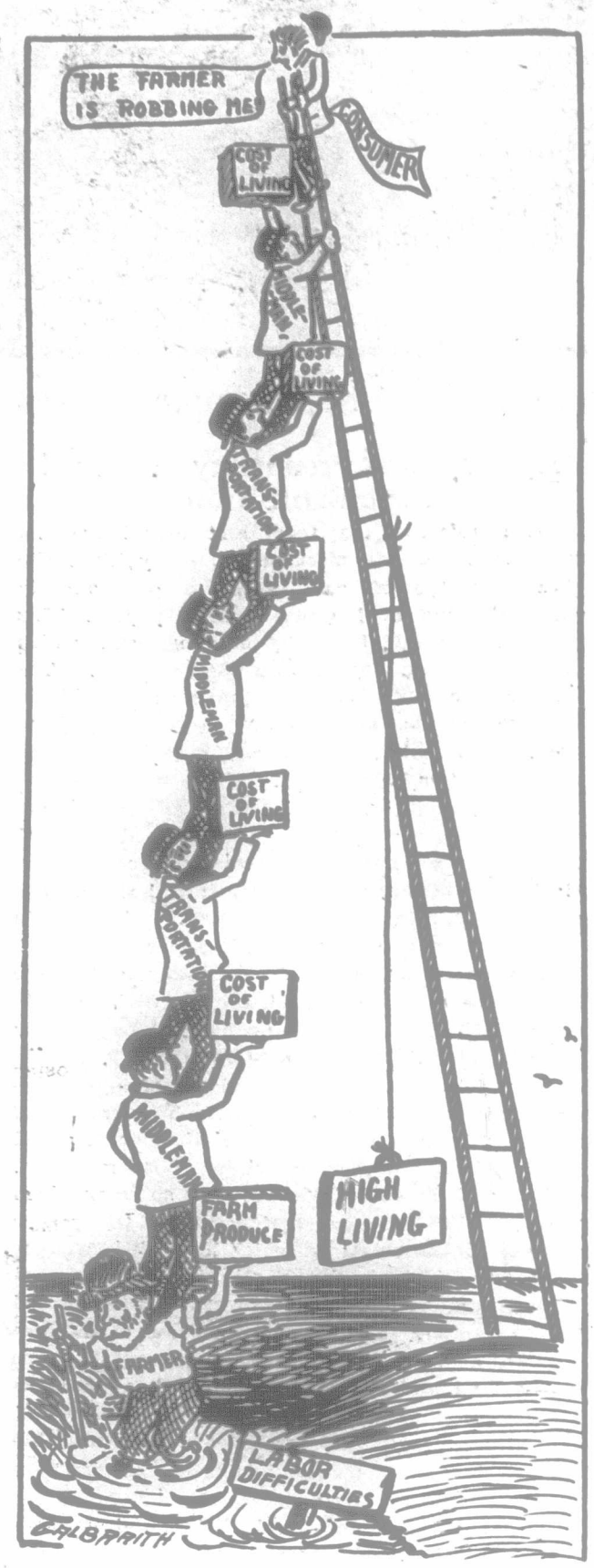
Your paper has proved its worth to me in the past year, and I advise anyone who wants to improve his methods of farming to read it, as they cannot help but find some useful hints as well as the latest news in the agricultural world.

Grey Co., Ont. R. MURDOCK.

A Necessity.

More power to your elbows in providing what I consider one of the necessaries of the farmer's life.

Middlesex Co., Ont. W. J. MILL.



The High Cost of Living.

Sure enough, the farmer is at the bottom of it.

Nature's Diary.

By A. B. Klugh, M.A.

In our last article we pointed out that the chief check upon the undue increase in the numbers of field mice consisted in guarding against too great a decrease in their natural enemies, particularly the hawks and owls. The farmer and horticulturist may also help in their destruction in three ways—thorough cultivation, trapping and poisoning.

Thorough cultivation of a field or orchard destroys all cover for mice and consequently drives them out, and thus a system which regularly brings all the land of a district under the plow and permits little of it to lie unused will secure the greatest immunity from these pests.

Trapping has special advantages for small areas, such as lawns, gardens, orchards, etc., and wherever, for any reason, there are objections to the laying out of poison. The best traps to use are the ordinary mouse traps of the ordinary guillotine pattern, such as the "Wizard" and "Gee-Whizz." Traps without bait may be set in the runways of the mice, or they may be baited with oatmeal or cornmeal. Fortunately, these traps are now cheap, as they can be purchased at the rate of two for five cents.

Poison is by far the most effective means of destruction, but it must always be remembered that extreme care should be exercised in its use, and that in many localities the laying out of poisoned bait is prohibited by law.

Strychnine is the most satisfactory poison for field mice. Although a very deadly substance, it is less dangerous to handle than either potassium cyanide, which is almost tasteless and has no known antidote, or phosphorus, which is liable to cause severe burns and serious conflagrations. The best way in which to prepare the poisoned bait is to dissolve an ounce of strychnia sulphate in a pint of boiling water, to add a pint of thick sugar syrup and stir thoroughly. This mixture should be poured over half a bushel of wheat or corn, or smaller proportional quantities of grain and syrup may be prepared as needed. The mixture of grain and syrup should be allowed to stand over night.

In using this poisoned bait great care should be taken that it is placed in such situations that native birds and poultry cannot readily get at it. An excellent way to arrange it so that the mice will easily find it but birds be excluded is to place it under wide boards supported on thin pieces of wood. Another plan is to place it in old cans, the mouths of which have been flattened down so as to leave only a narrow entrance.

In orchards and nurseries it is a good plan to cut small twigs from apple branches, dip them in strychnine syrup and scatter them over the ground, as in this way there is no danger of poisoning anything except mice or hares.

Young fruit trees may be protected by wrapping their trunks with wood veneer or wire cloth. Tar paper may be used on trees several years old, but not on very young trees since it appears to injure them. Mr. Lantz, of the U. S. Bureau of Biological Survey, reports that lime-sulphur wash applied to the lower part of the trunk protects them from the attacks of mice. This wash is made up of twenty pounds of unslaked lime, fifteen pounds of flowers of sulphur and water to make forty-five gallons. It should be boiled in an iron kettle for an hour and applied while warm.

When trees are girdled portions of the inner bark (cambium) are often left. If the sun and wind have access to the injury the cambium thus exposed dries up and the tree dies. Therefore, if the injury is near the ground, earth should be heaped up so as to cover it. If the injury is too high for this treatment, it should be covered over with grafting wax and strips of cloth wrapped over this.

If the cambium is eaten through over a considerable surface bridge-grafting should be resorted to. This consists in bridging over the injury by means of scions of the same kind of tree. The injured bark at the top and bottom of the wound should be cut back to live, healthy tissue, and small notches made in it. The ends of the scions should then be cut to fit the notches, the scion being left slightly longer than the span of the wound, so that they may be sprung into place and held firmly. The cambium layer of the tree and of the scion should meet over as large an area as possible. The injury and bridges should then be covered with grafting wax and then bound over with strips of cloth.

THE HORSE.

Buying a Horse.

In a recent issue of this paper an article appeared dealing with the fitting of horses for sale. It is well that the buyer should understand the fitter's practices in order that he may more intelligently look for defects. The doubter will always consider a horse unsound until he proves him sound, and it is not a bad practice to follow. There are "tricks in all trades" but the horse business, and they might eventually work into that honest profession as well.

In buying a horse it is well to see the animal in the stall first, before he is at all fitted to show to the prospective purchaser. If the animal has been heavily fitted there are still means by which a buyer can distinguish between fat and flesh. The body of the horse might be nicely covered with fat in a short time by a liberal feeding of buckwheat flour and other highly nutritious foods, but it is not substantial and would partially disappear after a few miles of strenuous exercise. However, the forearm of that same animal would indicate from its lack of muscling that the covering of the horse's body was fat and not flesh. In a thickly-fleshed animal look to the limbs for a corresponding amount of muscling.

In the stall also watch the flanks for abdominal breathing, indicating the character of the wind. A surer test, however, for heaves would be to water the horse and trot him briskly up a grade, then stop him and observe his breathing. In the stall see that the horse does not wear a tight strap about his throat which indicates a wind sucker, also observe the manger and see that he is not a cribber. If suspicions are aroused examine his teeth, and while doing so assure yourself that his teeth are good and that he is not parrot-mouthed or under-shot. Back the horse up or stand him over in the stall, and if he has been there for some little time and has any weakness about the limbs he will give evidence of it in his action.

After this casual examination in the stall, stand the horse on a level floor and observe him