

THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME MAGAZINE.

THE LEADING AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL IN
THE DOMINION.

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Publishers' Announcement.

The FARMER'S ADVOCATE steadily grows in popularity upon its intrinsic merits. The best farmers claim to profit by reading it regularly. It carries with it the gospel of better and more profitable agriculture by bringing in the light that expels the darkness. To canvass new subscribers to the FARMER'S ADVOCATE affords both pleasure and profit—the pleasure of doing good to your neighbor—and the premiums we offer elsewhere in this issue afford very alluring remuneration. Our books are standard works of highest authority; our "Post" pens are all that is claimed for them in the advertisement; and our watches do keep correct time and wear well, having been obtained from one of the largest and most reliable firms in Canada. We confidently recommend each and all of our premiums as possessing superior merit, and we trust our readers will at once set about securing one or more of them by sending us the required number of new subscriptions. See our premium pages in this issue.

The Permanent Site of the Royal Show.

The council of the Royal Agricultural Society of England, some time ago decided to permanently locate their annual show, and recently, by a substantial majority of the council, London was chosen as the city near which the show is to be held after next year. The peripatetic plan had plainly outlived its day of usefulness, as the failing receipts for admission in the last few years had proven, the deficits from year to year proving serious and burdensome. The selection of the Metropolis as the future fixed site for the show is doubtless a wise one, the city being fairly central, while its great population and the facilities which it offers in the way of accommodation and its attraction for visitors, make it peculiarly the place to secure the attendance which gives eclat to an exhibition. We anticipate with every confidence the successful outcome of the new departure made by the Society in selecting for its future home the grand old city on the Thames.

Will it Pay to Hold Wheat?

Periodically, the above question confronts the farmer whose granary bins or elevator space is filled with wheat. We have in mind cases where wheat-growers have made a decided hit by a big rise in prices after holding their grain for a year or so, but they are the exception and not the rule. It is almost if not impossible to forecast with any degree of accuracy future prices. Great wars have their effect, but not so much so now as in years gone by, owing to improvements in the preparation, storage and transportation of food products. Drought and rains influence crops, but these are rarely, if ever, universal, so that the failure of one grain or in one country will be offset elsewhere. By keeping thoroughly posted as to crop conditions, supply and demand, etc., men may conclude when it is best to dispose of their crop, but as a rule the safest plan has been selling soon after threshing. If wheat does not rise, it is decidedly a losing game to hold, because one must reckon the cost of storage, shrinkage (which is considerable unless the grain is very dry), losses from rats and mice, danger from water or snow, and insurance to cover risk of fire, and interest on the cash value of the wheat locked up, all of which would probably require an advance of 10 or 15 cents per year per bushel to make good. It fact, it has been computed by some that if 60 or 70 cents per bushel represented the "bird in the hand," 90 cents or \$1.00 would be a fair representation of the "bird in the bush" one year hence. With these facts in mind, if the farmer can afford to do so and feels disposed to speculate by holding his crop, why all well and good—it will be his own funeral or otherwise, according as prices go down or up.



TWO-SHEAR SOUTHDOWN RAM.
First prize and champion, Royal Show, 1900.

Two Ambitious Agricultural Projects.

Mr. Hanley, of Minnesota, who was the presiding officer at an International Congress of Agricultural Associations held during the Paris Exposition, and who is an officer of the National Cotton Growers' Association and the Grain Growers' Association, has returned to the United States, and gives to the press a report that at the Congress two propositions were thoroughly discussed: first, to reduce the grain acreage of the world by twenty per cent.; second, to secure from the world's rice-eating nations customers for the farm products of civilized lands. The Congress decided unanimously, he reports, that steps must be taken to secure an Oriental market for surplus grain crops. In America, he continues, there will be an effort to make the price of wheat one dollar a bushel at Liverpool. The farmers will be urged to hold or "corner" their supplies, in order that the price may be raised to that point and maintained. The programme of national legislation proposed for the United States, he says, provides for the subsidizing of freight steamships, the appointment of a trade commission which shall devise plans for getting the desired Oriental trade, the abolition of the Interstate Commerce Commission, because it has failed to prevent unjust discrimination in freight rates (interesting to Canadians, in view of the proposal to establish a similar body here); the abolition of the forecast crop reports which are issued by the Department of Agriculture, because they are "of so hopeful a nature" that they lower the value of stored grain and growing crops; the abolition of bucket shops, and the appointment of Government inspectors to take charge of terminal elevators and prevent the mixing of different grades of grain. This programme is said to have been approved by the Grain Growers' Association, the Cotton Growers' Association, the Farmers' Alliance, and the National Farmers' Federation.

Retgression or Progress in Stock Breeding.

An experienced breeder, than whom we have had no more observant or outspoken a critic of the ups and downs of stock breeding in English-speaking lands during the past half century, gives our modern self-satisfaction a rude poke in the ribs. Calling up the FARMER'S ADVOCATE, he inquires are the best of our pure-bred cattle and sheep equal to what they were years ago? Did we not reach a pinnacle of achievement in Great Britain beyond which there has been no advance? Are we not actually slothfully retrogressing? Is it the tyranny of the herdbooks or of fashions in pedigree, or both, that tie men's hands and paralyze efforts at new achievements in breeding? These are questions in which there is food for reflection, and their consideration will probably lead most breeders to the confession that the standard of excellence attained in the case of the best and the average is far from satisfactory. This criticism does not apply equally in the case of all breeds. It surely does not to some of the dairy breeds of cattle, to some of the beef breeds, to most of the breeds of sheep and hogs, or to many of the breeds of horses, in all of which classes distinct improvement has been made in conforming to the utility type most suitable to the requirements of present-day markets; but it certainly does in the case of all those in the breeding of which pedigree fashions have unduly prevailed and line breeding has been too largely followed, the tendency having been to breed exclusively, with too little regard to individual merit, from animals carrying the blood of certain families which for the time being are popular because of the record of one or more ancestors in showyard or test, or because of a whim of fickle fashion, founded, it may be, on even a less enduring basis than either of these.

He would be a bold critic who would openly attack the herdbooks which have gained so strong a hold in the realm of records, and charge them with being a cause of retrogression in the standard of the individual excellence of our stock, since the conviction that herdbooks are contemporary with and essential to permanent improvement is deep-rooted and generally acknowledged by breeders as a confession of faith if not as a creed.

And yet, is it not too true that the fanatical worship of pedigree is the rock which has wrecked many men financially, and been the means of undermining the constitutional structure of once grand and useful tribes of cattle? For this the herdbooks can only be held responsible in so far as they have placed before the eyes of breeders the printed page on which is more readily traced family relationships, which, if wisely and judiciously used and directed, might have produced magnificent results, but which, on the other hand, through a blind following of fads, have wrought ruin and disaster to many a reckless devotee.

And the pity of it is that so few are willing to learn and profit from their observations of the experience of those who have erred, and so many are apparently bound to prove the aphorism that history repeats itself, no matter what the consequences to the breed, so long as there is money in it for them in the meantime.

We have no quarrel with any breed or with any strain within the breed, so long as meritorious individuals are propagated and used for its improvement, but it is when inferior seed stock is used, simply because it is straight bred, in preference to such as have superior individual merit coupled with superior ancestry, that our patience gives out and we are led to protest.

The record of the showing is supposed to set the standard of excellence, and there pedigree is not considered, but each animal stands on its own merit. Does the record of the leading shows in Britain and America demonstrate that the animals straight-bred in popular lines win the highest honors? What of the champion Shorthorns at the Royal in this year of grace, and of the leading winners in Canada last year? Would they conform to the requirements of straight line breeding? We trow not. And what of the lineage of those which brought the highest prices at the recent record sale at Chicago, where men were looking for show animals? Were not the top-priced bulls and the highest-priced females motley mixtures of Booth and Bates and Scotch? But when winners are wanted, pedigree fads have to be dropped, for when seeking that sort men are in their right mind, which is more than can be said when they pay two prices for a pedigree with a scrub at the end of it.