

### FARMERS' INSTITUTES.

During the present week the Farmers' Institutes have been in session both east and west of Toronto, and there can be no doubt that much good has been effected. The value of such meetings as these is not to be estimated altogether by the amount of knowledge gained by the farmers who have attended and listened to the papers read, though this doubtless amounts to considerable, but the great value of these institutes lies in the fact that they set the farmers thinking, reading, and comparing notes. It has been too common among farmers to have no interchange of ideas regarding farm work (other than unfriendly criticism upon some neighbor who does not happen to be present), and this has had the effect of keeping farming at a standstill. Good advice, while it may enrich the receiver does not impoverish the giver, and there is no reason why each farm should not have the advantage of being worked according to the combined wisdom of all the farmers in the neighborhood. Of course this must not be understood as a recommendation to the farmer to attempt to follow the advice of all his neighbors in the management of his farm; that would of course be the wildest folly. On the other hand, however, by meeting often with his brother farmers in these institutes he can profit by their reading and experience as well as his own. He can adopt what he deems valuable suggestions in the speeches or papers of his neighbors and reject those of which his common sense and experience disapprove. Any one glancing over any of the leading agricultural papers of England, Ireland, or Scotland can hardly fail to be impressed with the amount of space they devote to the publication of papers read and discussions held at farmers' clubs and other agricultural gatherings. Were it not that the English farmer is ever on the alert for any fortunate suggestion the carrying out of which will reduce his expenses or increase his product, it is difficult to understand how he could come nearly holding his own during the present season of severe agricultural depression. Methods that enable the old country farmer to hold his own should make the Canadian farmer rich, but unfortunately it would seem as if our agriculturists were waiting to be driven by necessity into adopting rational and thoroughly economical methods in their operations.

On the 5th inst., Prof. Brown, Dr. Hare, and Mr. F. C. Genside opened the Institute at Whitby, which was in session until the evening of the sixth. Much interest was manifested by the farmers of the district, and though from the published reports the papers read appeared to be of a decidedly elementary character, they will doubtless effect much good. In telling the farmers how to buy a horse, for example, it seems that Professor Genside particularly cautioned the Whitby farmers against "weavers," "crib biters," and "wind suckers," and then took some pains to explain what these terms meant. Now, of course, it seems a little strange that farmers should have to be lectured and

warned against buying horses with such easily discovered vices as those mentioned, and still stranger that they should have to be told what such terms meant. The remarks on horse-shoeing by the same gentleman were of rather more practical value. The object of the lecture was to show that according to the usual method pursued by shoers, the hoof was very frequently injured in preparing it for the reception of the shoe. He went on to show that this was a very simple operation. All that was required was to shorten the wall of the hoof up to its proper dimensions by means of the rasp, and this would at the same time form a level surface for the shoe to be applied to, so that every portion of this part received equal pressure from it. He laid much stress upon the error of the common custom of cutting away and mutilating the sole and the frog, which, he held, should be allowed to remain in their natural condition if the hoof was to retain its proper form and remain free from disease. He said that a horse should be re-shod every four weeks, otherwise the position and direction of the foot and limb became altered, thus rendering the ligaments subject to strain from the disadvantages they were under owing to their altered position. The kind of shoe used, he thought, was a secondary consideration, and not of very great importance so long as it left the hoof in a natural and unamputated condition. A shoe was wanted that would prevent wear and tear of the wall and give grip, no protection being required for the frog and sole if they were in a natural condition. For this purpose he recommended a shoe with a smooth upper surface, exactly moulded to the lower border of the wall and affording some surface for pressure for the outer margin of the sole, more particularly at the toe. The usual custom of bevelling the inner part of the upper surface he held to be an erroneous one, for it took away from the pressure that should be borne by a portion of the outer margin of the sole, and afforded a favorable space or cavity for the reception and storing up of such foreign bodies as gravel, clay, etc., as well as increasing very materially the suction. He pointed out that the lower surface of the horseshoe as ordinarily made was a smooth, broad surface, which facilitated slipping on pavements and wet ground, and afforded no grip, as was the case with one that was bevelled in the lower part to the nails.

On the 8th Professor Brown and his party were at Kingston, and on the 9th they were at Oshawa, interesting and instructive sessions being held in both places. In the meantime, Professor Mills and his party attended institutes in Smithville (Lincoln County) and Kingsville (Essex), and so the work goes on.

### LIVE STOCK AND MANURE.

At the farmers' institutes during the past few days one important fact has been emphasized again and again, both by the readers of papers and the speakers. One and all have told their hearers that the great need of the average Ontario farmer was more live stock. Farms

in all the older sections of the province are becoming less productive year by year, but it seems that it is only within the past few months that there has been a general waking up to the fact and a disposition to apply the only effective remedy, the farmers having been selling everything off the farm that would bring money, no matter whether it ought to be sold or not. It is no uncommon thing to see a Canadian farmer hauling his straw to the nearest village and selling it to the parson, the doctor, the lawyer, the merchant, or the hotel keeper at whatever it would fetch, to be used as litter under their cows and horses. Very often the cash realized for the straw would not be enough to pay for the loading and hauling in any but the slackest of times, but then the farmer is short of money and has nothing to do, and he must do something to raise a little ready money. Such farmers are very apt to be short of money, in fact being hard up is chronic with them. They have not far to look for the reason of their impecuniosity. They are skinning the land, not farming it. They take off the whole product and return nothing to it, and of course it must become unproductive. The very men who pay cash for the straw have manure about their stables the removal of which costs them something every spring. They would be glad if some one would haul it away, but no one thinks of doing so, that is in a community where the farmer sells his straw. There are other farmers, however, who haul their straw to the nearest village and realize on it in a very different way. They furnish the villagers with straw free of charge, all they want of it, but in return they get all the manure on the place, thus securing for their farms not merely the manure resulting from the rotting of the straw they haul off the farm, but the manure product of all the grain, hay, roots, &c., fed to the villagers' live stock. Such an exchange will never impoverish a farm, but on the other hand cause it to grow richer every year. But the great secret of preserving the quality of the land independent of one's surroundings lies in keeping cattle and sheep enough to manufacture all the raw material which the farm produces into milk, beef, mutton, wool, store cattle, or marketable horses. Butter, cheese, beef, mutton, and wool must be the standard products of the farmer who expects his farm to improve instead of deteriorate, and should the institutes do nothing more than impress this fact strongly upon the minds of our farmers they will not have existed in vain.

### ENSILAGE.

With the introduction of the silo it was expected that stock-raising, dairying, and farming generally, would be speedily revolutionized. Of course such extravagant expectations have not been realized, but it is not too much to say that the discovery of ensilage has been one of vital importance to the farming interest generally. Of course in a community as essentially conservative in their habits as farmers