

The United States authorities at Washington have recently issued some valuable data on this subject. The advantages of the change brought about by free rural mail delivery are set forth in the report as follows:

"So many more letters are written and so many more periodicals taken that this increase alone pays the cost of some of the routes. Farm lands, by a moderate estimate, have increased in value from two to three dollars an acre. There is a movement in favor of good roads in those districts which wish to be included under the free delivery system. Better prices are got for farm products; one farmer tells how he lost a hundred and sixty-three dollars on his produce by not having a daily paper and not knowing that prices had gone up. Farm life becomes more attractive to the young when by the daily mail they are kept in touch with the outer world, and even with their own neighbors. Education gets a marked set forward in districts which are thus penetrated by daily delivery. The demand for other means of enlightenment follows immediately on the invasion of periodical literature. A curious fact that has been brought out of the figures is that the cost of rural delivery is actually less per capita than is the cost of city free delivery in many cases. In small cities the cost runs as high as \$2.80 per capita, while the average cost of rural delivery, so far as carried out, is 84 cents per capita. And the introduction of free delivery into towns brought with it little or none of the improved values or increased postal income which invariably follow it in the country. The Grangers have in many places taken up this movement and done much to forward it."

The free rural delivery does away with many of the corner post offices and costly mail routes that bring in little or no revenue, and are chiefly of benefit to the man who has the job of carrying the mails. The fact that rural delivery costs less per capita than city delivery in many places is worth noting. As the Grangers have done much to forward this movement in the United States, so the Farmers' Institutes could do considerable for it in this country. There can be no question as to the practicability of the scheme, so long as conditions such as good roads are favorable. We confess to a great desire to see this plan tried in some part of Canada. It is something which, if our Postmaster General took up and brought to a successful issue, would bring him more glory and renown, perhaps, than Imperial penny postage or a two-cent letter rate.

Why Breed Unprofitable Live Stock?

In making a short review of this subject, which is so important to the pecuniary success of all farmers who breed live stock, we willingly concede that, after every endeavor has been made, there will be misfits in breeding; but, because that is so, it is none the less a mistake to keep these misfits to propagate other misfits, and so to lower the standard of the animals of the country. The argument is applicable to all descriptions of live stock, but in the present article we confine it principally to Shorthorn cattle. In most farmers' stocks in the northern counties of the United Kingdom you find some half-dozen cows of more than ordinary excellence—good in shape, flesh and milk, and which would do no discredit if brought in contact with the best pedigree herds. But the others, it may be from thirty up to fifty milch cattle on each farm, fall by gradation, and you have the feeling that some of them are not paying for their keep. They have been bred in a happy-go-lucky way, from lack of thought mainly, but with the intention strongly underlying, although not openly confessed, of saving a shilling in the service fees. Unsound horses on the road at low fees are not the only sinners. For some years past a system has grown up amongst northern farmers of using a pedigree bull and rearing all their male calves for sale. These latter are mainly sold in the auction marts as pedi-

gree stock, although they are mostly bred from unregistered dams, and much disappointment frequently results, following the use of such bulls. The trade, too, has been so overdone that it is not unusual to see yearling bulls sold at from 6 to 10 gs., a price that cannot pay the breeder and rearer. These are the mongrels that keep farmers' stocks mongrel and unprofitable. At a sale of pedigree stock the purchaser has the opportunity of seeing both sire and dam of the young bull he decides to buy, and can thus assure himself that they are good alike in both milk and flesh. After taking stock of the best of the dams in his own herd from which he purposes to breed his future produce, he can then satisfy himself if they are lacking in any salient feature, and then select the bull most likely to supply the defect in his dam. It was precisely in thus selecting male animals to supply shortcomings in the females that the Holker and Inglewood herds attained to such excellence. But, even when this has been done, there will in all probability come misfits, and these must be cleared out, the males steered and the females fattened for slaughter. There can be no doubt but that if nine-tenths of the male calves now reared for service in the northern counties (possibly the same will apply to other counties) were sold as fat calves, or steered and sold fat as bullocks, the breeders (tenant farmers) would benefit pecuniarily, and a manifest improvement would result in the general cattle of the country. At present such breeding and rearing for use is a lottery. The yearling may bring 6gs. or 20gs. in the sale, so each take their chance of the higher figures. Such sires are simply a national loss, a deterrent to the improvement of the national breeds of cattle, and a pecuniary loss to each farmer who breeds them or from them. In the United Kingdom at the present time trade is good, wages are good, and the masses would prefer to eat British home meat; but when much of that meat offered to them is no better than the foreign meat sold at 2d. to 3d. per lb. cheaper, need we wonder that the foreign meat comes to us in ever-increasing quantities? And the future offers to intensify the competition, for the foreigners are taking the steps so many British farmers ignore, and are yearly improving their live stocks from British foundations. The lesson is before our eyes, yet British farmers—at all events, too many of them—remain apathetic, passive, looking on with folded hands, whilst their principal trade is slowly but too surely departing from them, and asking Jove to lift the wheel out of the rut—the landowners to reduce their rents. It is certainly a strange picture of "rest and be thankful," and the pity of the situation is that it is true. We remember the case of a farmer, a man of capital, who took what he admitted to be the worst of a dozen rams, because it was 5s. cheaper. Yet he selected that ram for use in his own flock, to the probable deterioration of hundreds of its produce. Where practice such as this prevails, need we wonder that British agriculture remains under a cloud? How can we hope to see the silver lining?—*London Live Stock Journal*.

Opportunities on the Canadian Farm

Canada furnishes more opportunities, perhaps, for home building and making a competence in life than any other agricultural country the world over. How many prosperous farmers there are in Canada to-day who, when they came to this country fifteen, twenty, or thirty years ago, had hardly enough of this world's goods to stock a good wagon, but who by perseverance, energy and skill, have made a fair competence for themselves and their families and have obtained comfortable homes in which to pass their declining years in peace. Sometimes we are apt to forget that a large number of our prosperous farmers, if not all of them, started from very small beginnings and have worked themselves up to their present positions by thrift, sobriety, and push, and by making the very best of their opportunities. But success was not altogether due to the individual