

Notes on the Exhibitions.

SIR,—Stock at the London Show, in most classes, were not so numerous as in some former years, but the quality, in nearly all cases, was very good. The show of horses was said by many not to be as large or good as in former years, though there were many good animals shown. But here we found, as in other places, a large number of grade stallions shown in the agricultural classes. These animals are generally called by their owners "agricultural stallions," and in the spring they travel the country for service, and some of them do a considerable business. Many farmers use them because their services can be procured much cheaper than that of the finer bred horse; and what is the result? Our own experience, as well as that recorded by breeders of note in every land, teaches us that to improve stock, pure bred males must be used; if the system of breeding from miscellaneous grades is followed, our horses will degenerate instead of advance. Many farmers do not seem to realize that to breed horses successfully, very careful selection of sires is required—selection as to pedigree, as well as to animal. But in view of these facts, still our agricultural exhibitions offer prizes to grade stallions; why not to grade bulls? The time is now past when prizes should be given to either; especially is this the case in the older sections of the country.

The sheep shown at London were good, several of the breeders who exhibited in Toronto being present. There was evidence in many cases of very early shearing, and in some cases stouble shearing had been practiced. Animals that are so presented should in all cases be ruled out. An experienced breeder will rarely be deceived on this matter, the appearance of the wool being very different; but farmers are often misled by this dishonest practice, and very frequently judges are not experienced men, and are sometimes badly deceived. The first of April is a convenient time to shear sheep which are intended for the show rings, and in many cases not too soon. In many years' experience I have found it to be the best time, and would suggest that it be accepted by our associations and enforced with unrelenting rigor. When breeders enter, a written statement should be required from each, stating when he sheared his sheep, which should be made as searching as possible. For several years there has been a good deal of dishonesty practiced by some breeders of Leicesters and Lincolns. These breeds are not, or were not at one time, identical; but have become now so near identical, that some breeders show from the same flock of sheep in both classes, where the best opportunity of winning a prize occurs. It is quite evident that the two different breeds have become very similar when such could be practiced successfully, as I have known it to be. Very few pure bred Leicesters can be found now, or if they are pure, they have changed very much since the days of Mr. Bakewell. Another proof that these breeds have become similar to each other is the case of Mr. Whitlaw, of Guelph, who has imported and shown some very fine modern Leicesters, and who says he has never imported any other sheep. When showing at Toronto, before experienced judges, he was successful in the show ring; but when showing the same animal at the Provincial, it was ruled out, as the judges regarded it as a Lincoln. He again showed the same animal in London, the very heart of the Leicester-raising district of Ontario, and was successful.

I see no reason why the Lincolns and Leicesters of to-day should not show in one class, and thereby lessen the expense and trouble to each exhibition association. But I think that each association should offer a sweepstake prize for the best flock numbering not less than ten, for which all the varieties could compete, the prize being given to the flock which, in the eyes of the judges, would be most profitable to the country as wool and mutton producers; the winner of this prize being required to present to the board a clear written statement of his mode of breeding and feeding said stock.

SIR,—What is the comparative weight of live and dressed hogs?

[The comparative weight depends much on the quality of the food on which the animal was fed, and also somewhat on the breed of the hog. A general rule in America is that 20 per cent. from the live weight is supposed to give the average dead weight. Thus, a live hog weighing 250 lbs. is estimated to be 200 lbs. weight when killed.]

Our Public Schools.

SIR,—May I ask for space in your independent journal for a letter in reference to an excellent idea in your sketch, "On the Wing"—the improvement of the grounds around our public schools. I have seen several of our public schools, and in or around them I have not seen the slightest attempt to improve the appearance of the place, which will have such an influence on the young during the following years. A plain building, generally frame, to which a painter's brush was never applied, in a small piece of neglected ground, bounded on three sides by a snake fence to protect not the school ground but the adjoining fields, and at the front unfenced. Such is the picture the country school generally presents to the traveller. The school and school grounds should present a scene that the eye could rest on with pleasure, and the remembrance of which would be an object of interest to those who had been educated in it. But it is not merely for its appearance and the sense of the beautiful that we would most desire the improvements. Were the grounds, as suggested by you, planted with trees and flowers, how easily might the teacher instil the principles of botany into the minds of the pupils. The names of the several parts of flowers, the difference of the several species, the fertilization of the blossoms and the utility of bees among the flowers would there be learned so as never to be forgotten. The growth of different plants, trees and flowers would be noted, and the lessons by this means practically taught would be the greatest benefit, especially in country life. The pupils might bring from the woods native flowers and shrubs prized for their foliage or blossoms, or for their berries, and be the instruments of introducing to our gardens beautiful and profitable native fruits and flowers that are now neglected or unknown.

Entomology might also be taught in connection with botany. The utility of this science is becoming more known and better appreciated every day. Amid the plants and shrubs they might be easily taught to distinguish the insects that are serviceable to the farmer and gardener from those that are injurious.

A slight knowledge of geology might also be added; the rocks in the vicinity, the different varieties of earth, the soil and subsoil might be utilized as elementary text books.

Such an education so acquired would be more beneficial than many of the subjects and some of the studies at present taught in our High Schools. There is too great an expenditure of our hard-earned money in teaching branches that can never be of the least use to the great majority of the scholars. How few of those who study the different languages will ever receive any benefit from them! Let every young person in the Dominion receive a good plain education, such as will be of the greatest benefit to him through life. To very few can these more advanced studies be of any service. Let those few acquire all the needed additional learning, but let not ratepayers be called on to pay for them.

A RATEPAYER, London Tp.

SIR,—Would you inform me if it is in any way injurious to a milch cow to draw her milk from her with the first finger and thumb in a manner generally termed "stripping," instead of using the whole hand as is usually done. W. H., Guelph.

[Yes, the "stripping" method of milking is injurious. Use the whole hand, and milk as rapidly, yet as gently as possible, leaving no milk in the udder.]

SIR,—I have a young cow which has had two calves. After her first she proved herself to be a very superior milker, giving an abundance up to a few weeks of her second calving. She has always been fed well, is now in good condition and excellent health; but now nearly two weeks have elapsed since she gave birth to her second calf, and her flow of milk is very small, not amounting to over a quart of milk per day, and that of poor quality. Her bag is soft and pliable. What is the cause, and cure?

SUBSCRIBER.

[Your cow's system has become exhausted by her former excessive and long-continued flow of milk. The best remedy is generous feeding with nutritious and succulent foods, and as her system improves in vigor, her flow of milk will increase.]

Creamery System.

SIR,—The creamery system of butter making, which consists in collecting either the milk or cream from adjoining farmers by a method similar to that practiced by the cheese factories, is giving good satisfaction. As a rule they produce a better quality of butter than is produced by the majority of the best farmers, which is clearly proven by the fact that creamery butter sells in Liverpool, England, at 15 shillings per hundred higher than choice dairy, and 45 shillings per hundred higher than for the common grades of dairy produce. In the Province of Ontario there are now several creameries in operation, with prospects of others being built. The creamery at Teeswater, of which an illustration was given in the ADVOCATE of 1879, April No., page 81, clearly demonstrates the superiority of creamery butter over dairy produce. For three years the average price realized by this organization has been eight cents per pound in advance of the dairy butter made by the best farmers in the vicinity. Add to this the fact that it deducts greatly from the labor of the farmer's wife and daughters; a class of people who, as a rule, are overworked and are thereby allowed very little or no time for self improvement or recreation. This fact is too well known among the rural classes to need any demonstration. Decreasing the household work alone is worthy the serious consideration of every farmer. The advantages to be derived from it are very great. The time thus gained might be employed in mental training, which is valuable to all, especially to the farmer's wife, who frequently has the training of children. The rural class of Canada are characterized for the great amount of manual work they perform; but to perform this they have neglected a great deal of mental training which should have been taken. This practice may have been necessary when our fathers came first to this country with little or no capital, and had to hew homes out of the forest; but for many years past it has been clearly proved that the reading farmer is the most successful. Another consideration of much importance is that Canadian butter has a very low standard in foreign markets, and we would urge upon the farmers the great necessity of raising the quality to as high a standard as possible. To do this they must give the subject close attention.

PROGRESS.

Bark Lice.

SIR,—I send you a specimen of something that is destroying our apple trees. Can you give any cure, as they are all over the trees and are likely to kill them.

J. R., Laurel P. O., Ont.

[The insect is the bark louse. The full history of bark-lice is not precisely known. It is known that the shell-like coverings are the abiding places of the females which are born and die under them. The males have wings and are free, and impregnate the females through their shelly coverings. The latter produce their eggs, and then die. The eggs are hatched, and the young lice wander over the twigs and leaves, and probably in this manner find their way from tree to tree in the nurseries, where they most abound, and from which they are carried to orchards, or in the orchards to which they are thus introduced. At the approach of winter the lice form the scales, which are their cocoons, of radiated threads massed together, and under this protection pass the winter. There are several broods in a year, and the rate of increase is enormous. In removing them from the trees by means of soap and water, the scales must be rubbed off. Strong potash or concentrated soda lye, made caustic by adding a piece of fresh burned lime to it, destroys the covers and the lice or eggs under them. Kerosene oil has the same effect.]

SIR,—I have noticed in the March No. of THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE a plan for convenient stable, by "Young Farmer," Braemar, Ont. He would greatly oblige me by giving, through the ADVOCATE, his plan of a barn corresponding to his stable. I am about to build a barn next summer, and I would like to build a convenient, substantial and not very expensive building. The size of my barn is to be 45x70 feet, with two floors and stabling below.

C. L. W., Peel, Ont.

[Will "Young Farmer" give his plans? We would be pleased to receive plans of useful buildings from any of our subscribers, and if we consider they will be of benefit to any of our readers, we will have them engraved.]