

The Massey-Harris Amalgamation.

Knowing that the amalgamation of the two extensive implement manufactories of A. Harris, Son & Co. (limited), of Brantford, and the Massey Manufacturing Co., of Toronto, had awakened a great deal of interest amongst our readers, we took the trouble to call upon the principals in order to satisfy ourselves as to the reasons for the amalgamation, as well as the probable results as far as the farming community is concerned. The wedlock of two such gigantic interests could hardly fail to raise comment, favorable and unfavorable, and in some quarters much political capital has been sought to be made out of it. The facts are that a new company, composed mainly of the present members of the Massey and Harris firms, has been formed to take over the entire business and equipment of the two factories, not only in Canada, but the world over. This has been brought about for the benefit of all parties concerned, and chiefly for the good of the implement trade generally. The system of selling implements through local agencies on commission seems to have brought upon the trade many evils that could not be remedied while these two great firms were antagonistic to each other. Many attempts had been made, only to fail; and when we consider that each firm has upwards of three hundred local agents in Ontario alone, canvassing every township and every concession, besides about forty general agents, it is easy to understand some of the difficulties that have surrounded the business. In many cases farmers who could ill afford to buy expensive machines, or whose farms were not ready for them, have been overinduced by the agents, and have given orders from which they would afterwards gladly have been released. It is not for the good of the community that this should be so, nor that the purchase of expensive implements should be made too easy by the extended credits that are in vogue.

No trader in the country gets paid so promptly for his wares as the farmer; virtually he sells everything for cash, and except under special circumstances he should not want extended time to pay for anything he has to buy. But we are credibly informed by those engaged in the business that many sales are made on three yearly payments, and sometimes even longer than this. Such a system cannot prove otherwise than pernicious alike to seller and buyer. To the seller, because he cannot afford to sell on such extended credit; to the buyer, because if time were not given he would often not be persuaded to purchase at all.

If this and much more that is now wrong and which they promise to make right through the consolidation of their businesses can be remedied by Messrs. Massey & Harris, the new company will prove a great boon to the entire community. These gentlemen seem very much in earnest in the matter, and disclaim any intention of gobbling up or crowding out other firms. The new company assures us that they intend to ameliorate and lessen some at least of the glaring irregularities in the trade.

The new company expect that they will, no doubt, be able to effect great savings in management, production and distribution of their goods, and it would only be fair that the customers should get some of the benefit of this. There is an apparent need for one strong firm in the manufacture of mowers, reapers,

rakes and self-binders. The new company state that they are starting the concern with abundant capital, not only for the prosecution of a vigorous and widening home trade, but also for an energetic extension of their foreign business, which is already of large proportions. Both firms are engaged extensively in this branch of the business, and by manufacturing both lines of implements, as at present, the new concern expects to make the name of Canada a household word in every grain-growing country in the world.

Cattle Improvement.

[Read by Geo. H. Healey before Virden Farmers' Club, Tuesday, March 24th.]

The work of improving our cattle, and the best means of attaining that end is of great import. The improvement of the land, to a large extent, must go hand in hand with the improvement of the stock. It is only by keeping the very best that we can hope or expect to obtain, financially speaking, satisfactory results. Improvement in the methods of grain-growing and other branches of farming is important indeed, but I think less so than improvement in stock raising, as the former may be brought to a state of great perfection so far as methods are concerned, and yet the final end be the impoverishment of the soil. But improvement in stock keeping will result in a gain to the pocket as well as an increase in the fertility. Who in his senses, can have failed to see the need for improvement in the lean, bony body of the scrub which refuses to take on flesh? We see it in the huge heads of the pigs that plough up the farm yard free of charge, and in almost every flock of poultry. It is the great concern of agricultural writers in Great Britain, where the choicest of the choice are found, that improvement is not more universal. I have, during my short career as a farmer, been told in a sneering way that when I have farmed as long as they I will probably know something about it. True, I have already found out that what they have been all their lives learning was practiced a score or more years ago elsewhere. It is, I think, this repugnance to what they call "book larnin'" that retards a more energetic advance among so many in our live stock industry. Everything they cannot comprehend they set down as "bosh", whereas in reality the more scientific, generally more truthful, are naturally a little more technical. There is no doubt that in the conflict between brains and muscle for supremacy, brains will most assuredly win. Now, with a view to improvement of our stock, it is not for a moment to be supposed that the use of a pure-bred sire will fill the bill. We must make our animal grow from the first to do this. We must understand how to feed intelligently. It is not necessary in this paper to go into the question of feeding, but it must be distinctly understood that this is essential to success. By breeding only good animals we get better returns in every way. It has been demonstrated scores of times that well-bred cattle are able to lay on far more flesh with the same amount of feed than a scrub can. Take the well-bred beast with his sleek skin, fine and yielding to the touch, and the quiet kind eye, all indicating a good, easy feeder; he will lie still when you go up to his stall to speak to him. Contrast him with the razor-backed beast that is continually poking round every minute of its life looking for something to eat, never satisfied, never at rest, coat always rough, skin as tight as a drum; even when well fed it will not weigh at three

years with a well-bred beast at two. How is it such a state of things exists? Some say, "I am too poor to buy a pure-bred bull." If you are poor you have all the more need of improving your herds, and increasing your returns. If you are rich you will add to your wealth by the same methods. Others again are too penurious to pay for the service of a good bull. The writer of this paper was on one occasion told by a farmer (heaven save the mark!) that he was an impostor, because he had the effrontery to fix the price of his pure-bred sires a little above the one usually charged for the average animated scare-crow in general use. It seems strange that those who are loudest in their denunciation of pure-bred sires are the first to try and steal his services. From my own observation I think we can hope but for little improvement from the present generation; so many are quite content to go on in the old line, the desirable qualifications being their ability to live on a meal of wheat straw for breakfast and fresh air for supper. Some men are prone to measure the worth of the breed by its capability to stand this starving process, and because scrubs can better endure a living death than any other class of cattle, then scrubs are just the breed. It is not for a moment to be supposed that I class all under the above head. I have particularly noticed that those farmers who to my knowledge are most anxious to improve their stock are to be found at our farmers' meetings, desirous, like myself, to listen to the advice and benefit by the experience of others, mutually assisting in trying to place the profession of agriculture in Dennis in the front rank.

As to what breed of bulls to use, depends, I think, principally on the predilection of the operator. Volumes have been, and might still be, written on the qualifications of the various breeds of cattle; but much as we might desire to use a particular breed, we may have to stifle those desires through the absence of any specimens of its class. Under such circumstances we must fall back on the breed or breeds, individuals of which are to be found in our respective districts. Durham or Shorthorn bulls, I think, are in use everywhere. They possess wonderful ability to maintain and stamp their characteristics by reproduction. The very fact of Durhams being three different colors, viz., red, white and roan, shows that the color standard has been sacrificed in order to obtain a perfect animal. This was one great aid in breeders' favor in improving this breed. Had they bred solely to a color standard they would likely never have attained the perfection they now have. Roan, however, is the favorite color in England, red in the U. S., while all three are found in Canada.

Another breed I cannot pass without notice is the Aberdeen-Angus; they are simply "beef from the heel." They are a hardy race of cattle, fine to the touch, and grand feeders. To my mind there is no doubt that these two breeds will ultimately become the backbone of the cattle raiser. From repeated trials the cross either way between Durhams and Angus simply "beats creation," from the ease with which they lay on flesh, and their ability to adapt themselves to the production of milk in the hands of judicious managers.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

The farmer who is to day without a garden—a well stocked fruit and vegetable garden—is indeed behind the times, and lacking in appreciation of both his own and his family's best interests.