

improvement of his farm. During the first three years the returns barely paid for the labour. In the fourth and fifth years manure and judicious cultivation began to tell. From that time he put by money yearly, and in the ninth year from the time of his first investment he sold the farm for \$70 per acre. Sift your acreage to your purse, and be sure in buying and stocking to leave a large margin upon which to fall back, if crops should at any time force you to wait.

C. E. W.

Notes and Comments.

To the Editor.

SIR.—It is much to be regretted that your valuable journal does not find its way into every farmer's house in Canada. It is not, however, the trifling amount of the annual subscription which excludes your journal from many homes in which it is urgently needed, so much as a contemptible prejudice entertained by short-sighted and crochety farmers, who affect to scorn all information which has not been acquired by themselves or their ancestors in the dear school of experience. When men are above being indebted to printer's ink, or their neighbours for new ideas, it is not surprising that so many should go to the wall. It is astonishing that such a spirit should prevail, and that the improvements and progress which men of broader views are making do not arouse others to enquire and investigate—to go and do likewise.

I was much interested in some of the contents of your January number. It is certainly very encouraging to learn, as we are told in the first article, that Mr. Johnson's "half-rotted soil" produced eight hundred bushels per acre! Most of us, I opine, would be thankful for such a return after a liberal dose of barn-yard manure, supplemented without stint by the usual "artificial."

I was on the point of writing to you for information as to the expediency of winter fattening sheep, instead of oxen, when I noticed the letter of J. M. Do you not think, however, that well saved straw and a few roots would be cheaper than, and yet as good food as clover hay alone, and that access to razultied snow is a sufficient substitute for water? In this neighbourhood few sheep get anything else in winter wherewith to quench their thirst. In deciding upon the relative advantages of feeding sheep and oxen, it should be remembered that sheep require much less attendance and much less expensive shelter than horned cattle. As none of my neighbours have had any experience in the matter, I shall feel obliged if some one who has will inform me through your columns, which class of stock he considers the more profitable to winter feed, all things taken into account.

"X. Y. Z." has furnished you with a communication extolling the "dignity of agriculture." I do not intend to call it in question. When the circumstances of the farmer do not impose on him (as, unfortunately, they too

often do) the necessity for such a large amount of physical labour as to render him unfit for much systematic thinking, his occupation calls, or should call, into play more of the powers of the mind than any other under the sun. Besides which, he needs, and often exercises, more manual skill than any artisan. The pleasures and advantages which the farmer enjoys are numerous, real, and lasting. They are often dilated upon, and I need not refer to them now. But in fairness it should be remarked that the calling is not without its disadvantages, especially in a new country and in a climate such as ours. It certainly should not be chosen by a person whose gregarious instincts are very strong. Detained at home by press of work in summer, and blocked in by snow drifts in winter, he becomes shy and taciturn; and when, once in a while, he does go into "society," he is, however well informed he may be, totally eclipsed by the "dry goods clerk," who occasionally condescends to display his material wealth (which is all upon his back), and his brain power (which find its way to his tongue with wonderful facility) at a party in the country.

These drawbacks are, however, small, in comparison with the solid advantages of the farmer's calling.

F. HARMER, J. Esq.,
Depean.

Selection of Judges and Officers of Agricultural Societies.

To the Editor.

SIR.—The letter of your correspondent on the "Judgments at Poultry Shows," will bring to the minds of your readers many similar instances of their own personal experience, showing the total want of capacity in many of the judges appointed by our Agricultural Societies, in every class. This arises mainly from the negligence of the Directors of the Societies in not appointing men practically conversant with the duties pertaining to the responsible position of judges at our shows. Much, we know, may be said as to the difficulty of obtaining suitable and capable persons to officiate as judges, who do not themselves compete in the different classes; and also of the lack, in some sections, of men who are properly qualified to act as judges in some particular classes, men, especially, having a knowledge of the points of improved animals. But this difficulty can be overcome, to a great extent, by the arrangement now practised in some counties, of exchanging judges with other societies, thus giving a wider range for selecting men properly qualified.

But to commence at the beginning of things, our Agricultural Societies, to come up to any fair standard, must give more attention to the selection of their officers. What would be thought of a medical society composed of farmers in general, small lawyers, and grocers? Yet such is the very

system worked upon by some "Agricultural" Societies. I know of a Society, whose list of officers, for years, was made up on this principle. Every broken-down merchant and political hack, in a wide extent of country, seemed to be represented in the list of officers of that Society. The result was that the Society's funds were frittered away in ridiculously small premiums, and nobody knew where. Nobody took pains to bring into the county any of the improved breeds of stock, and, as a consequence, the agriculture of that section is an age behind the time. The Society had done nothing towards the creation of a taste for better breeds of stock, and little for the improvement of husbandry in general.

But a change has come over the spirit of their dreams, and the Society has this year at its head an energetic, thorough farmer, with a practical understanding of the requirements of our agriculture, and it is the intention of the officers to agitate the question of devoting the funds of the Society for the importation of a horse for the use of the members; and we may yet see an improvement in the agriculture of the district as rapid in progress as it was slow and backward before.

When members of Agricultural Societies see to electing efficient and capable officers to preside over their affairs, we shall find little cause to complain of the selection of judges to determine and award the prizes, and less in the management of the Societies in general. There is certainly great room for improvement in many Societies in these respects.

W. Y. Z.

Ontario, Canada, February, 1869.

Keeping Ice.

To the Editor.

SIR, In your issue of 15th February, page 76, I find an article entitled "Preserving Ice," by J. M., in which the writer details the *modus operandi* of preserving ice and building ice-houses. It is not my purpose in this note to enter into any details about buildings fitted to keep ice, but simply to state a few facts, which can be fully substantiated, showing that ice may be kept for several years in any sort of house or shed, provided the ice is well packed around with sawdust. There is to be seen at this date (February 22nd) ice three years old, being the crop of 1866-7, at the residence of Hon. D. L. Macpherson, Chestnut Park, which ice is as sound and good as when first put in; not that age in ice is any advantage, but this goes to show what can be done towards its preservation.

I will briefly describe the whole secret, trusting it may be of some service to dairy-men and others, to whom a good supply of ice in summer is important. The house, or rather shed, is of wood, 12 by 14 feet inside measure. It was excavated about 14 inches below the surrounding surface, this space being filled up, or nearly so, with pine saw-