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EDITORIAL.

What Farmers were Thinking About 100 Years Ago.

An old volume of a year's numbers of "The Farmers' Journal," published in England 100 years ago, which was kindly sent us by a subscriber, has proved one of the most interesting of the many publications of the past which have been brought before the notice of the "Farmer's Advocate." Curious indeed is it, and impressive of the mutability of earthly things, to turn the old yellow pages upon which appear references to Murat, Soult, Ney, Wellington, Earl Grey, and a score of others, now names, then powers; and to read here of Napoleon's departure from Elba, there of his triumphal entry into Paris, where the French army, "charmed by this man, the disturber of the peace of the world," when he stepped before it, burst forth in one roar of "Vive Napoleon!"—and, finally, of the wild jubilee which filled England at the news of the great conqueror's final overthrow on the field of Waterloo. It is somewhat pathetic, too, to read such little notices as, "We regret to hear that the Duke of Wellington is indisposed," or "Lord Castlereagh has again returned from the Continent." One thing that strikes one somewhat forcibly is the parallel of events at the beginning of the 19th century with those of the 20th: The close of the Boer war, the completion of the American Revolution; the struggle in the Far East, that with Napoleon; the fiscal campaign, the corn-law agitation; the Tribunal at the Hague, the Congress at Vienna; and so it goes on.

Turning to the agricultural portion, we find much to be amused at, and a little to wonder at. We find that thorough tillage was then being advocated, as now; that plowing matches were common; that the use of ashes as a fertilizer was recommended; and that such subjects as under-draining, rotation of crops, the keeping of farm accounts, and summer-fallowing, drilling grain, soiling, rotation, blight and mildew were then deemed worthy of editorials. On the other hand, we find the astounding query raised as to whether mildew and smut on wheat were not both due to the work of insects, it having been suggested by one correspondent that the eggs of the insects might be desecrated among the masses of smut. One man, however, volunteered the opinion that mildew is most certainly due to defective seed, thus coming in a roundabout way to the 20th century conclusion—the better the seed the better the crop. . . . Were there actually Farmers' Institutes in those days? We should judge so from the fact that it is asserted that at a certain meeting a "member of the Board of Agriculture" declared with all gravity that "some people turned their land too much; in fact, had poisoned it with them, as they made it too rank, so that barley grown after them grew so luxuriant that the whole field fell down flat, a dead, unprofitable mass of straw" without heads. After such a statement, it is not surprising to find that the "baneful effects" of turnips on land is a matter of some discussion. . . . Most amusing, perhaps, is a controversy raised in consequence of a herd of cattle belonging to one Lord Crewes having eaten an overdose of mangels. One writer asserts, with due solemnity, that "mangel-wurzels, if fed to cows, produce within a few days a paralysis in the hinder quarters, dry up the milk, and if persisted in, kill the cows." We are somewhat reassured, however, on finding in a later issue that

mangels, having been "examined for arsenic and other mineral poisons," and found lacking in them, are not poisonous, "unless grown in wet soils or in a wet season," and that they may be given to cows if they may be fed along with them. . . . An entire column is devoted to the description of a plow provided with sails, which it was intended should be operated by the wind. As cyclones, however, could neither be manufactured to order nor controlled in the right direction, it is reasonable to suppose that the inventor of the aeroplow deemed discretion the better part of valor, and gave up the attempt to boom his invention.

Two axioms laid down by a writer of unquestionable talent are interesting: (1) "The prosperity of agriculture is essentially dependent on and interwoven with the general prosperity." (2) Any measure which shall operate unfavorably on the general prosperity will eventually be injurious to agriculture." We choose to read these differently now, saying rather: (1) The general prosperity is essentially dependent on and interwoven with the prosperity of agriculture. (2) Any measure which shall operate unfavorably on agriculture will eventually be injurious to the general prosperity.

In regard to the agricultural fairs of 100 years ago, we find a few things which we might do well to copy, e.g., premiums were given for the best-managed farms; also for the best kept cottages and gardens. This, however, strikes one as quaint: A premium was given to the man of the district who, "by personal labor and industry, without receiving parochial assistance, had supported the largest family of legitimate children under 12 years of age."

We may laugh at the things recorded in this old Farmers' Journal; yet possibly it may become us to reflect that in 2000 A.D. someone may be laughing in like manner at the things discussed in the "Farmer's Advocate" of to-day. So be it; the "Farmer's Advocate" of 1904 is a link in the chain of progression, and only stagnation is dangerous.

Seeding Operations.

The indications are that in most districts the land will not be dry enough for cultivation and the sowing of grain this spring as early as in the average of years, very little being done in any section at this date. This late commencement shortens the season and makes it the more necessary to push the work vigorously when all things are favorable for doing so. While as a rule the early-sown crops are the most successful, if the land is in suitable condition for cultivation, it is not wise to commence before it is in that state, as, especially in the case of clay land, the soil worked while wet is liable to bake and harden afterwards, retarding the growth of the plants. In the case of rolling land, the higher parts, which first become dry, might profitably be harrowed and lightly cultivated some days before the lower parts are dried, which would tend to keep the high ground from hardening, and to retain moisture in the soil to quickly germinate the seed when sown. It is sometimes well, when the land is not just as dry as one would like, to cultivate lightly a day or two ahead of the sowing, letting the sun and wind dry the moved surface soil, when it will more readily crumble under the action of the harrow and drill. Deep cultivation is not wise under these conditions, as the wet bottom soil brought to the surface is liable to bake and harden when dried, and soil moisture is not so well conserved. It is generally well, when continued dry weather is uncertain, to cultivate not more than one-half

of a field at a time, and to finish that part before going on with the remainder. It often happens that one-half can be finished between rains, and the water furrows run, while if the whole field were undertaken the work may be arrested by rain in an unfinished state, and the water courses being filled up several days may be lost before the land is again in fit condition to be worked. Another advantage arising from this plan is that the portion first sown will be first ripened, and may be harvested before the second is ready, while if all were worked together the whole field must wait till the latest sown is fully ripe before any is harvested. The same advantage may follow in storing the crop, the portion first cut being first ready to haul in, time being thus economized, and the crop secured in the best possible condition.

How to Reach the People.

No department of the "Farmer's Advocate and Home Magazine" is read more closely than its advertising pages. They are like a great departmental store or exposition. The reader is reminded where to procure everything needed for the farm and for the home, from musical instruments and a college education to live stock and threshing machines. Just turn over the pages of this issue carefully, and note the endless variety and opportunity for securing what will assist in the profitable operations of the farm, or add to the comforts and pleasures of life.

It costs money to advertise in the "Farmer's Advocate and Home Magazine." Of course it does—in the London, Ontario, Eastern edition alone, \$144 for a single full page one time, or \$842.40 for a quarter-page contract for one year. But consider the standing and quality of the paper, which it takes a good-sized fortune annually to produce, and the immense number and superior class of its readers.

It pays to talk business to good people. Do they not respond to advertising? Referring to the results of his advertisement of British Columbia lands in the "Farmer's Advocate," Mr. Chas. E. Hope, of the Settlers' Association, Vancouver, writes, in a letter under date of April 18th, 1904, to this office: "You will be pleased to know that we have had over 1,000 letters referring to these lands."

Sometimes people imagine a circular by mail will reach the people as well as an advertisement. Will it? In the first place, no reliance can be placed on names taken from directories and similar lists, by means of which circulars are sent. In the next place, a circular does not carry weight like the public page of the paper; and last of all, though ineffective as a means of reaching buyers, consider the cost. Even though Mr. Hope in the same territory could have reached intelligent, live people, like the subscribers of the "Farmer's Advocate," count up the outlay! A simple circular letter, note-paper size, in an unsealed envelope and bearing a one-cent stamp, would actually amount to about \$500, and if looked at by the reader at all, it would only be once, and then forgotten, but the well-worded and properly displayed and illustrated advertisement run regularly stares men and women in the face in every one of the fifty-two issues of the year, and talks business to them all the time. To get to these people weekly throughout the year by circulars containing what could be put in a quarter-page advertisement, that can be changed every issue, would cost some \$26,000, and it would not compare in results with the prudent investment of the \$842.40 in a quarter-page advertisement. Advertising costs money, but it's cheap after all.