

The Farmer's Advocate and Home Magazine

"Persevere and
Succeed."

Established
1866.

VOL. XLI.

REGISTERED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COPYRIGHT ACT OF 1875.
LONDON, ONT., OCTOBER 25 1906.

No. 735

EDITORIAL.

Milking Machines Not Yet a Practical Success.

One of the most vitally interesting subjects to dairymen nowadays is the possibility of mechanical milking proving a practical success. "The Farmer's Advocate" is as anxious as any herdsman to welcome this consummation, although, on account of some honest and only too-well-founded misgivings, we have been the object of veiled insinuation by one or two of our exchanges, which expressed impatience with incredulity, and would have itself and everyone else believe machine-milking a success until it should be proved a failure. However, editorial comment has very little effect on facts, and the fact stands out as clearly as ever that the milking-machine problem yet awaits a satisfactory solution.

The pivotal point seems to be that mechanical milking soon has a tendency to decrease the flow of milk, particularly with cows well along in lactation. Our readers will remember that last spring we reprinted from the English Agricultural Gazette some correspondence by Primrose McConnell, a noted British agriculturist, who had experimented for two years with several makes, but had to give them all up on account of the heavy decrease in the milk flow. Soon afterwards we wrote to a private dairyman in Ontario who had been trying the latest American-made machine. His confidential reply was confirmation of Mr. McConnell's experience, he having given it up after three months' use. Then came news of another dairyman, near Toronto, who had been trying one, with favorable results up to that time. Meantime, the Dairy Department of the Ontario Agricultural College installed a machine of the same make, and for a time it worked like a charm; so well, in fact, that Prof. Dean became quite sanguine, although reserving judgment till he had tried it for at least a year. Up to the time of the June excursions to the College results were all that could be desired, but it was a different story we heard when visiting the Farm a fortnight since. By inquiry, we learned that after the excursions were over the cows began to fall off seriously in their milk, some of them refusing to let it down well. Prof. Dean thinks the habit of holding up the milk might have been induced, in part, by the excitement of having the excursionists tramping around the stables during milking, but admits that this is not sufficient explanation. Some of the cows finally refused to secrete milk for it at all, while others gave down so little that thirty-two pounds was stripped from three of them one day after the machine had got all it could. At the time of our visit they were using the machine on probably half the cows. These were all Holsteins, which seemed to stand it better than the other dairy breeds. We inspected the milk sheets hanging in the stable and found some significant figures, showing that several cows which had been hand-milked for a time, and were then milked with the machine for a few days, dropped a pound or so a day in each case. When hand-milking was re-commenced on two of them, an increase took place at once. In some few cases increase had followed change from hand-milking to use of the machine, but the rule is convincingly the other way. We were shown a couple of very fine machine-milked heifers that dried off four months before date of calving. In fact, the emphatic experience so far has been a heavy decrease, attributable only to effect of the machine, as the cows are in charge of an excellent herdsman. As a consequence of failure to secure complete strippings after machine-milking, the per-

centage of fat shows a decrease as well. Furthermore, there has been a marked increase in the bacterial content of the milk, although the machines were cared for faithfully according to manufacturers' instruction. Complaints of the flavor of the milk caused investigation, and it was then ascertained conclusively, by bacterial analysis, that the machine should be taken apart once a week and the parts boiled. This is an all-day job, and few dairymen would attempt it. If the bacterial content of machine-drawn milk is higher at Guelph, where they take every possible pains, what would it be under ordinary farm conditions?

There has, of late, been a great deal heard about a new Australian machine which was doing wonders. We are, however, in possession of confidential information that it is not the unqualified success that some of the enthusiastic Australasian papers would lead us to believe.

The unwelcome fact, then, is that the successful milking machine is still in the air, although leading dairymen believe it will become an assured fact. A good many American dairymen are using it, and those who are willing to sacrifice from one to three thousand pounds of milk a year per cow, with the prospect of spoiling many cows, may continue to use it for a time. Others, who keep no milk records, may be slow to detect the shrinkage, but an institution like the Ontario Agricultural College is a good place to determine actual facts about the machine tried under favorable conditions.

Prof. Dean thinks it may be possible to develop a race of cattle which will take kindly to mechanical milk extraction, by commencing with heifers of one generation and using the machine persistently on these and their descendants, though he admits that the formation of such a strain bids fair to prove very expensive. He points out that, in all probability, when hand-milking was first practiced, the cows yielded the lactic fluid reluctantly, and were only reconciled to it by practice of the gentle art of hand-milking on many successive generations, but that perseverance carried the day, and we now have as a result breeds of cattle which produce milk far in excess of normal maternal demands. Similar results may follow the use of mechanical apparatus, but for the present Canadian dairymen will do well not to be in too great a hurry to make haste.

Consonant Publicity for East and West.

Narrowness of mental vision is a common disability that persistently obtrudes itself in one form or another. For many years we saw it illustrated by the pessimistic Little-Canadian attitude of Eastern people towards our magnificent Western domain. There is no doubt the development of that country was retarded thereby for a decade at least. Finally, when the wonderful opportunities in that virgin land forced themselves upon the Eastern mind, an irresistible tide of emigration and Western enthusiasm set out, till press, orators and people became carried off their feet proclaiming the chances it offered the young man. In the rivalry engendered in spreading the Western propaganda, the solid, enduring attractions of Eastern Canada were forgotten for the nonce, and a larger share of the most enterprising young men left us for the lure of the Golden Plains. It is now beginning to dawn upon our publicists, as "The Farmer's Advocate" presaged months ago, that the feverish rush has gone too far, and there is a well-grounded demand that the legitimate advantages of the East be held out to the young man by way of balancing influence.

This is well, but we are amused to note a somersault haste on the part of some papers to

apply the brakes. For instance, the other day a certain county newspaper, which had awakened to the fact that the Western exodus was reducing its business, announced point-blank that it would publish no more articles about the West, and counselled contemporaries to follow its enlightened example. Such an attitude is the concentrated essence of small-mindedness. The time will never come again when Canadians will be content to live in ignorance of the remaining portions of the country. We want to be more thoroughly informed than we were in the old days. It is the duty of our press to keep its readers posted concerning matters, not only in their own country, their own Province, nor yet in their own country, merely, but also abroad.

What the intelligent people of the East desire is not that we cease to post them about the West, but that the booming of that section, to the neglect of the East, be succeeded by a policy of espousing all sections fairly and judiciously, making a little extra compensatory effort, perhaps, to keep before us the strong points of the East, which, in the recent Western scramble, we have been prone to forget. "The Farmer's Advocate" will never lend itself to any effort to decry or disparage Western Canada. We believe in that country thoroughly, but we also believe in the Provinces east of Lake Superior, and never were there better chances in this great region than there are to-day.

Praise for the Laboratory of the Seed Branch, Ottawa.

Prof. E. Brown, Botanist in charge of the Seed Laboratory, Department of Agriculture, Washington, has a high opinion of the facilities at the Laboratory of the Seed Branch, Ottawa. Last month he visited it, intending to stay a few hours, but was so impressed that he spent two days, and, on leaving, expressed unqualified appreciation of the facilities and the simplicity of the system with which the work was carried on. One of the men of the Ottawa Seed Branch has also been in Europe the past summer visiting the seed stations there, and reports that he found none so well equipped as our own, although some allowance should be made for the fact that there are many such seed-testing stations in each of the countries he visited, and only one in Canada. But, taking it all together, Mr. G. H. Clark, the Seed Commissioner, thinks Canada probably has about the best seed-testing station to be found anywhere. He certainly deserves credit for the way he has built it up and championed the good-seeds movement.

Our New Serial.

In many quarters our readers are expressing their delight at the opening chapters of the new continued story, "Bob, Son of Battle," by Alfred Ollivant, in the issues of "The Farmer's Advocate and Home Magazine" for Oct. 11th and 18th. We trust and believe this will be the general verdict as the story develops in the present and succeeding numbers. We hope readers have heeded our admonition to preserve the copies of the paper containing the initial instalments for future reference. Very frequently readers of serial stories wish to refer back to early chapters in which the characters are introduced, and other members of the family suddenly become interested in the tale and want to see how it began. Then they write to the paper for back numbers which cannot be supplied. It is very rarely that Canadians have the opportunity of perusing a serial of the merit and repute of "Bob, Son of Battle," hence the desirability of taking advantage of the suggestion made, so that disappointments will be avoided.