

FARM.

Counsel to Parents.

To the Editor "Farmer's Advocate":

The question raised in your issue of Aug. 17th is very important to many young men. The very things referred to in that article are, I believe, the great cause of so many of our ambitious young men going to the city or to the newer countries where they can have the freedom of action so longed for in the old home. In this way the farm-labor question becomes every year more difficult to solve.

One of the reasons why the farmer's son does not marry is that he is kept at home so much when young. When but a boy I think he should be taken along when going on a business trip to the city, or wherever it may be. Or in little matters of business that are not of very great importance the father should send the boy alone, let him do it to the best of his ability, and do not wound him by harsh words and scolding if he does not do it just as the parent might have done. This gives the boy the confidence in his own ability that, I believe, nothing else can, and is so much needed in after years when thoughts of marriage and homemaking come to him. This lack of confidence is, I believe, one of the greatest drawbacks in the way of many young men desirous of starting for themselves.

Then, when the boy has grown to young manhood and has chosen the one with whom he would like to keep company, he is so often hindered by the father. He is not allowed the horse and rig, even occasionally. I have in mind a case—fortunately it is the exception and not the rule—where the father compelled the son to always take the hired girl—of whom he, the father, was very fond—or stay at home. This is wrong; and the father, if he is not altogether blind to his own interests, should be able to see that, by so doing, he is fast losing the love and even respect of his son.

Another thing that hinders the young man very much is the parents' indifference. The young man would gladly make known to the father his hopes and ambitions and seek his advice and counsel, and be profited by it, were it not for the utter indifference manifested by the father. I believe the father should strive in every way to win and retain his son's confidence. I think he should talk to the boy in a candid, businesslike way, warning and advising him, strengthening his hopes if need be, and in a hundred and one ways, by gentleness and patience, pilot him through this most dangerous period of his life. There is no one in the world can have the influence over that young life that the father can, provided he has not in earlier years, by harshness in many ways, forfeited all the love and devotion of the son. What can be more galling to an ambitious young man than to be compelled to stay at home and see others enjoy that society that he longs for? What would send a young man from home and destroy the good that home influences have wrought sooner than this? And yet it is too often the case. If he did stay at home, what ambition would he have, what hope of harmony or happiness would there be in the home where this is the case?

The question of a home for the young man is one of great importance. This has been mentioned in the article referred to on the subject. Perhaps the father is in debt and thinks he is not able to buy a small farm for the son, or to build a small house on the farm. Perhaps it is only indifference on the part of the father. Perhaps the one young woman he has chosen from among the others does not just suit the father or mother. And perhaps a great many more obstacles may be pushed in the young man's pathway and made mountains of. I do not attempt to solve any of them. I only ask the father this: Which is it better to do—to oppose the son at every turn, crush his hopes and ambitions, forfeit the love and devotion that should be yours to enjoy in your later years, perhaps break the engagement that has existed between the son and the one he loves, and keep your son at home with you while you live, a loveless, ambitionless man, who might have been married and happy, a blessing to his country and a comfort to you in your declining years, or to do all that a loving father could to advance his son's interests, win his confidence and affections, to encourage him in his hopes, to help clear away the obstacles that are sure to come in his pathway, to treat him like a man in a businesslike way, tell him your plans, and help him all you can to get a start, be it ever so little? Supposing you are a few years longer getting out of debt, what difference? Is the money that we make the sole aim and ambition of life? Is there nothing higher to be thought of? Should it not be the father with of the father's or mother's heart to see their sons and daughters in homes of their own, happy in the love and society of the ones they have chosen for companions through life? I think it should. And I think that if it were the case in our homes the obstacles we have mentioned would no longer be mountains, but mere

system. As any breeder of experience knows, with insufficient feeding and poor care a flock will very soon lose their vigor and degenerate. So that the more rapid growth means not only about one-third less cost in the production of our animals, but animals produced in this way are produced at less cost for feed, and are generally worth more, pound for pound, on the market. This is a decided encouragement for good feeding and early maturity to make a profitable sheep. The even, healthy, rapid development of the young animals is the great thing to be sought for in profitable sheep, as in every other class of live-stock feeding which is to fit animals for the consumer of the meat foods of the present day. It is the tender, juicy, high-flavored mutton that tempts the appetite and fills our desires for that class of food, so that the matter of early maturity is of the utmost importance in the production of high-class meat to make the profitable sheep. These are some of the things we must bear in mind in the production of high-class animals for consumption as meat.

The question will now arise, "Will it pay the average farmer and breeder of this class of stock?" It has been my experience in breeding high-class, pure-bred sheep, also in growing sheep in a commercial way, that the best I could produce was always the most profitable sheep. The market is always good for meritorious animals, either in breeding flocks or in case of lamb and mutton to supply hotels and restaurants in our large cities where the demand is far in excess of the supply. There is no animal on the farm today that will give us more clear meat for the amount of food consumed and the work required to take care of it than the sheep.

The World's Flocks and Herds.

In the old days the British stockowner had comparatively little interest in the farm stock of other lands. Our national poet has truly said:

"Our auld gudeman delights to view
His sheep and kye thrive bonny, O."

But since foreign competition on such a large scale has to be reckoned with he has good reason to look further afield and get information regarding the flocks and herds of other lands, especially of those whose surplus supply of meat is sent to the British market. A live-stock census is nowadays taken in almost all countries at more or less frequent intervals, and therefore the means of estimating the meat production of the world are available.

The recent substantial rise in the market value of wool has led people, especially the owners of sheep, to ask what has been the cause of an increase which has been none the less acceptable to them that they had almost ceased to hope for such an experience. A shortness in the quantity of any article produced is a common explanation of a rise in its market value, and it is probably the most influential factor in bringing about the enhanced price of wool. At all events, there is reason to believe that the flocks of the most important nations have, with few exceptions, been materially reduced in numbers. This has been the case in a marked degree in the United Kingdom. In 1875 there were about 33½ million sheep and lambs in Great Britain and Ireland, and last year they had fallen to 29,105,109, a decrease of no less than 4.1-3 millions, or 13 per cent. There is a saying, to a large extent true, to the effect that sheep follow the plow, winter food especially for that class of stock being produced on a large scale by arable cultivation. And inasmuch as, since the agricultural depression set in in 1879, there has been a substantial decrease in the area under the plow, the falling off in the sheep stocks was to be expected.

The decrease in sheep has taken place to a varying and yet to a large extent on the Continent of Europe, in our colonies and in our foreign countries, the principal exception being the Argentine Republic, which has made rapid strides in advance alike in the number and quality of sheep bred and fed. Although continental countries are not formidable competitors with our home farmers in supply of mutton, their wool production has to be taken into account, and therefore we may give an idea of the downward trend in that quarter. In Germany in 1873 there were nearly 25 million head of sheep, which had fallen in 1900 to 9.2-3 millions. In France, so recently as 1900, there were 20 million sheep, and, according to the latest live-stock census, they had decreased by 2 millions, or 10 per cent., which is also the percentage of reduction in Russia. Dairying has been extended so much in Denmark that a falling off was to be expected, but the decrease in twenty years has been 50 per cent., and in Austria-Hungary there has been the same degree of reduction since the seventies. These, in the aggregate represent an immense falling off in the number of sheep on the Continent of Europe.

To take next our great sheep-producing colon-

ies: In New South Wales the number has been reduced from 37 millions in 1885 to 28 millions in 1903, a shrinkage of one-fourth. Ten years ago Queensland had not much short of twenty millions, whereas in 1903 they had fallen to 8.1-3 millions. In South Australia in 1890-1 the number of sheep and lambs returned was 7 millions; in 1903-4 they had been reduced to about 5½ millions. In Western Australia, where the sheep stocks are few, at the most, there has been a slight increase. In Victoria the number has fallen off to the extent of 2 millions in ten years. Then, the decrease in our great Australasian colonies has been very great indeed, including New Zealand, which in four years showed a falling off of 1 million.

To cross the Atlantic, there were 64 million sheep in the United States so recently as 1903, whereas this year the returns show only 45 millions. The decrease in Canada has been slight. As already pointed out, the Argentine is almost the only exception to this general falling off of the sheep stock of the world. In the great South American Republic there were 66.2-3 million head in 1888, whereas half a dozen years later they had risen to 74.1-3 millions, and by this time the numbers must have been immensely increased. Our readers may feel these figures to be rather dry reading, but we have given them in detail, because we feel that their perusal will produce a deeper impression than the mere general statement that a very substantial decrease had taken place over the world.

Our readers will realize what a shrinkage has taken place in the production of wool, and that the rise in its price is the result of the economic law that the falling off in the supply to a substantial extent leads to a rise in market value, all the more so that, owing to the increase in the population of the countries which use woollen goods, the consumption must be greater. The wonder, rather, is that the rise did not come sooner, its delay being probably due to an accumulation of stocks, caused by the low prices prevailing. It is proverbially unsafe to prophesy unless you know, but surely the figures we have quoted should encourage sheep breeders to carry on their business with spirit and enterprise, even on an extended scale, where practicable, as both mutton and wool must maintain a good value in the market.

Coming to cattle, in the United Kingdom the decrease in sheep has been counterbalanced by an equivalent increase in bovine stock, but that is an exception to the general rule. In other words, there has been comparatively little change elsewhere, if we except a decrease in the United States and a substantial increase in the Argentine Republic, although, owing to the absence of a recent reliable live-stock census, even an approximate statement of the increase of the latter country cannot be given. In the United Kingdom, the number of cattle of all ages twenty years ago was 10,868,760, as compared with 11,575,551 last year, an increase of about 1½ millions. On the Continent of Europe the numbers are, on the whole, steady. There has been an increase of 43 per cent. in New Zealand, and of 25 per cent. in Victoria, but a decrease of 38 per cent. in Queensland and of 12 per cent. in New South Wales. In Canada the increase in ten years has been 35 per cent., but there has been a decrease of 6½ millions—that is, of 10 per cent.—in the United States. But as the number of cattle in the latter country is ten times what it is in the United Kingdom, and as the population in the former country is increasing steadily, if not rapidly, this decrease is significant. In 1895, when the latest returns were made, there were 21,701,526 cattle in the Argentine Republic, but double the number in this country—but these numbers must have been greatly added to in the interval. On the whole, taking a world-wide view of the source of the supply of beef and mutton, British farmers should find encouragement to continue that business with enterprise and hope. (Scottish Farmer.)

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In the prize list of the Toronto Exhibition, September 14th, 1903, a geographical error credited Miss Anna St. Onge of Galt, Ont., with but 11 points in the home-making competition, professional dress, when she should have been 91.