

The Farmer's Advocate and Home Magazine.

"PERSEVERE AND SUCCEED."

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EDITORIAL.

Declare War on Weeds.

With good growing weather and a scarcity of farm laborers, we are having presented to us a horrible spectacle of the manner in which weeds may disfigure and pollute the earth. The condition of our farming at present is such as to admirably favor the growth of weeds. Land is so valuable we cannot afford to summer-fallow, even if we believed in it, and labor so scarce and high priced, that weeds cannot be properly managed to prevent their spreading. Of course, we cannot expect land to become cheaper, but it is to be hoped that as the population becomes denser, the land will repay extra labor expended upon it to keep it clean of weeds.

Within the past two or three years, the spectacle presented along roadsides and railways is most harassing to those who are aware of the injuries caused by the unhindered growth of weeds on these highways. Municipal authorities and railroad managers seem to be entirely oblivious to the injury weeds are doing the country, for no other avenue is utilized by weeds for dissemination purposes as is the railway. Last week, a thoroughly practical farmer, and one who is endeavoring to keep his own farm clear, and also the roadsides adjoining, brought into our office two large bunches of weeds that had been introduced into his property by the agency of a new railroad. In the lot were included black mustard, hedge mustard, tall mustard, wild mustard, bindweed, black bindweed, high mallow, tansy, annual sow thistle, peppergrass, ox-eye daisy, blue-weed, shepherd's-purse, burdock, pigweed, toad flax, several varieties of dock, fleabane, and a few others. All these were found growing in the richest profusion along the railway embankment. Such neglect might be excused the railway companies were it not for the fact that this spring a policy of retrenchment was instituted, and men were discharged in hundreds. Should the railway companies not be compelled to prevent weeds on their roadways spreading, and is it not in their own interests to do so? We would not take a pessimistic view of the situation, and anticipate the day when the reclaiming of the abandoned farms in Ontario will be an engrossing subject, but certain it is if there is not a more thorough warfare made upon weeds by the legislatures, corporations and individual farmers, the work of clearing farms will have to be done over again, and it is questionable if the clearing of weeds will be less arduous than the clearing of forests.

One of our readers, the other day, estimated that on a 100-acre farm the absolute waste from weeds would amount to the produce of no less than five acres of fertile land. Do farmers generally realize this? And cannot the careless man who allows his farm to become a weed nursery for the locality, or the careless seedsman who stocks a customer's farm with some dangerous weed pest, be made to feel that the injury they are inflicting upon others is in reality tantamount to robbery, just as truly as watering or skimming milk or some other forms of wrong-doing or carelessness which are made amenable to law. With such frightful object lessons as that above cited before them, railway and municipal authorities all over Canada should wake up to the magnitude of the evil, and Farmers' Institutes and the Seed Division of the Dominion Department of Agriculture should renew and continue their efforts to abate what is to-day probably the most alarming menace confronting agriculture in this country.

Conduct of Auction Sales.

While freely admitting that there are times and circumstances in which auction sales of pure-bred stock are desirable as a ready means of meeting an emergency, such as the necessity of dispersing a herd or closing a business, we believe the general opinion of experienced breeders is, that taken on the whole, in this country more satisfactory sales and purchases are effected by private contract than at public auctions. The breeder who raises really good stock, keeps it in good condition, and lets the world know he has it for sale, seldom fails to find purchasers for all he can spare, at prices that compare favorably with those obtained at auction, when the expenses connected with the making of the sale are taken into consideration. There is no other place where animals look so well as in their own stables or pastures; no other place where the buyer can secure so much information as to the breeding or record of the animal, and the character of its family connections; and no other place where all the conditions for calm consideration and a full understanding between seller and buyer are so favorable. The catch phrase, "buying at your own price," is really no more applicable at an auction than in a private deal, for in the latter case one need not pay the price asked unless he is suited, and satisfied that the animal is worth the money to him. On the other hand, it is true that as a rule, except in the case of the dispersion of a herd, breeders do not risk their best or most desirable animals in a public offering.

When, a few years ago, a scheme devised by Government officials for holding pure-bred stock sales under their auspices was being exploited, the "Farmer's Advocate" took a stand in opposition to it, believing that advantage would be taken of such an opportunity to get rid of inferior stock, that the prices obtained at these sales would be regarded by the public as the standard of values for pure-bred stock, and that this would militate against the interests of breeders without corresponding advantage to the general buyer. In this position we were supported by most of the advanced breeders, and the history of these sales has clearly borne out our predictions. Evidences of devious and deceitful practices to raise the reported average have been exposed, these sales have dwindled to offerings practically of but one breed, and the character of the bulk of the offerings has been quite below par. The principle of combination sales on a limited scale has also been given a fair trial in this country in the last few years, and while the demand for a certain breed was buoyant, while something like a boom was in progress and first-class animals were offered, the contributors treating the public fairly and squarely, the results were satisfactory; but when such sales are made a dumping ground for stock bought up for speculation and doubtful methods resorted to for the protection of the better class from depreciation in value, public confidence is forfeited and the whole industry injured.

To our mind, there is no valid reason for objection to the seller claiming the right to a reserve price on his stock in case the bids received do not reach his view of their value, but this right should be claimed in the announcement of the sale. Even in the absence of such announcement, the public rarely object to the withdrawal of an animal in case the bids are considered by the owner too low to justify the sale, but to descend

to the practice of employing decoy bidders to protect the offerings, without any consideration for those who have gone to the expense of attending the sale, is indefensible, a violation of business ethics and of the confidence of bona-fide buyers, and is a practice which no self-respecting salesman can afford to permit. We have known instances of such conduct being promptly and publicly exposed and reproved by the officiating auctioneer, with credit to himself and with the most salutary effect upon the sale.

The Basis of the Egg Business.

Notwithstanding the increased attention paid to the development of the poultry industry, in Canada during recent years, the continued high price of eggs, as well as dressed birds, in most parts of the country, has been a matter of surprise to a great many people. In most cases, this has been attributed to improvements in transportation facilities and the growth of exports, but, as a matter of fact, the exports have been falling off, both in poultry and eggs. The export of eggs last year (1903) amounted to \$1,436,130, showing a decrease compared with any one of the previous years. In the agricultural press, poultry-rearing and egg-production have deservedly occupied a great deal of space, and have been made a conspicuous feature of experimental farm work, and the Dominion Illustration Stations have made poultry fattening and export a specialty. Undoubtedly, poultry-raising is being more generally, systematically and intelligently carried on. Notwithstanding all this, how, then, is the decrease of exports to be accounted for? The explanation, doubtless, arises from the growth of home consumption and the good prices obtainable for eggs and dressed birds in Canadian cities and towns. The population of the country is rapidly increasing, particularly through immigration, trade is buoyant, industries are running at high pressure, and prices are naturally good for nearly all sorts of food products under such conditions. The "Farmer's Advocate" was, the other day, assured by one of the largest and oldest egg dealers in Canada that the home consumption of eggs had practically tripled within a very few years, and this was to be attributed in large measure to the attitude of the medical profession in the prevention and treatment of a wide range of diseases of a wasting character, relying upon nutrition by the use of eggs and milk, rather than of dependence upon medicines. For convalescents, too, and in a great variety of forms, the use of eggs has marvelously increased, and this bids fair to continue for many years to come. With the British market, which absorbs, in addition to what is produced at home, some \$26,000,000 worth of eggs annually, as a safety valve, Canadians can with every prospect of continued profit cultivate the poultry business. It does not involve large investments, it is safe, less laborious than some other lines of farm work, and if the flock should ever cease to be profitable it can readily be reduced. In England, Canadian eggs, on account of their large size and appearance, are growing in popularity, and if proper attention is paid to their selection, packing and transport, that market may be relied upon with a great deal of confidence.

Verdict of a Business Firm.

You will see by your books that Brooks & Langmaid each take the "Farmer's Advocate," as J. W. Brooks and T. A. Langmaid. We are very much pleased with it as a weekly.
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