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EDITORIAL.

Queen Victoria.

BORN MAY 24TH, 1819; ASCENDED THE THRONE
JUNE 20TH, 1837; DIED JANUARY 22ND, 1901.



HE Queen is dead. The Queen is dead. So ran the mournful tidings, with an electric thrill, around the world. Never before in the history of this old earth did such a message awaken so universal a lament in human hearts. Alike in the palaces of wealth and in the humble homes of poverty throughout and beyond the bounds of the greatest empire the world has ever known, the people loved her for her goodness, her kindness, her righteous rule. How Canadians will ever cherish her personal attention to our wounded heroes returning from the South African war, and the people of Ireland her recent self sacrificing visit to the Emerald Isle! Poets, statesmen, literati, irrespective of nationality, have united their panegyrics to her womanly worth and sagacity and the beneficence of her reign, in which has flourished as never before the intelligence and liberty of the common people. But in all the splendid eulogiums of the press, the agriculturist cannot but reflect that one noteworthy aspect of the Victorian Era has not received attention commensurate with its far-reaching significance, and on behalf of the Canadian husbandman the FARMER'S ADVOCATE ventures a few words, however inadequate, in retrospect.

An adapter of Ben Johnson once wrote: "A farmer Queen the world to farming draws," and so it has been. Agriculture, at the coronation of Victoria, through Great Britain and the world was at a low ebb, but in no department of human effort did the 19th century close with more marked evidences of progress than this great industry, particularly in its main department of live-stock breeding. This we may now say without any suspicion of the toadyism with which Anglo-Saxons have been sometimes accused. The love of the Royal Family for the industry was somewhat hereditary. The late Prince Consort (Albert Gotha), though no genius, was a far-seeing, level-headed man, and liked nothing better than his farming operations, in which he was pre-eminently successful, and for which he infused his family with a genuine attachment. We find him an exhibitor at the Smithfield Show as far back as 1843, and probably not a year since passed that the Royal herds were unrepresented in public competitions. The Prince of Wales (born Nov. 9th, 1841)—King Edward VII., we must now call him—is still one of the most extensive and successful farmers and breeders in England, and his son, the Duke of York, is an enthusiastic farmer and breeder, and so with other members of the Royal Family. For over 40 years, the Queen's farms and dairy have been a favorite resort of the family and their visitors. The Princess of Wales has had her dairy at Sandringham, and with her, her daughters have taken great pleasure in dairy work, several of them being adepts as practical buttermakers.

The Royal farms are situated, first of all, at Osborne, on the Isle of Wight, where Clydesdale horses, Jersey and Galloway cattle, Southdown and Dorset Horned sheep have been successfully reared. But it was at the Windsor farms that all the leading breeds and the chief prizewinners have been found. These were: (1) the Home or Dairy

and the Shaw farm, (2) the Flemish farm, (3) the Norfolk farm, and (4) the Bagshot and Rapley farms. The Shaw farm was bought about 235 years ago, from a Frenchman, Mons. de Shaw (hence its name), and here the dairy cattle and great Shorthorn herds were kept. The Windsor Shorthorns acquired great fame at the Royal and Springfield shows, but a few years ago someone raised the cry that the Royal herds were sweeping all before them because William Tait, the manager, had a long purse with which to purchase prize-winners. So this led him to adopt the policy of exhibiting nothing but what was home-bred, but still the Royal cattle were good enough to sweep the boards. As a matter of fact, they simply asked a fair field and no favors, and so it has been all through. In the early days several good Bates cattle were purchased. Then Booth bulls were largely in use, but latterly the Cruickshank type held sway. The Flemish farm has been the home of the celebrated herds of Hereford and Devon cattle, furnishing many distinguished winners. The Queen was always partial to the land "North of the Tweed," and in 1847 the Prince Consort purchased the lease of the Balmoral Estate (some 10,000 acres), and at a later date secured the fee simple, to which was subsequently added the Braemar domains. Aberdeen-Angus cattle have been the chief pure-bred stock at these farms.

We doubt not but that the British Royal House will continue to sustain its active interest in agriculture and stock-rearing. His Majesty, the new king, has a large stud of Shire horses and Hackneys at Wolferton, Sandringham. He is a successful patron of the Thoroughbred horse, and his herd of Shorthorn cattle at the Norfolk farm, as we have seen, has a great reputation; while the Duke of York, with his Red Polled cattle and other stock, has been highly successful alike at summer and fat-stock shows.

In conclusion, we may fairly say, that just as Her Majesty in court and home life set the pace and the ideal for society and the people, so did the Royal Family, by their devotion to agriculture, give a bent to popular tendencies in that direction. Men of wealth, eminence and great intelligence turned their attention in these directions, thus giving an impetus to advancement which the inherent merit and true dignity of the avocation fully sustain everywhere throughout the English-speaking world. The advantages thus accruing to agriculture have been incalculable, and they have come without any patronizing spirit, on the one hand, or dependence, on the other, but rather through the inspiration of intelligent example in thorough accord with the best traditions of the progressive Anglo-Saxon race.

Government Horse Breeding.

The exploitation of a scheme for the establishment of a ranch and remount depot in the Canadian Northwest for the breeding and training of army horses for the service of the Empire has been discussed at considerable length in the daily papers by military men in the last few weeks. The proposition, briefly stated, is that a free grant of land in the Alberta district, sufficient to support 25,000 horses, be offered by the Dominion Government to the British Government for the purpose indicated, and that the two Governments co-operate to bring it about, provision being made for the payment of an adequate staff of officers and men, with the inevitable accompaniment of a pension on the event of superannuation. We have seen or heard no expression of opinion by farmers and stockmen in regard to the proposal to take out of their hands to this extent the market for a class of stock which

they are engaged in producing; but we shall be surprised if they regard it with approval or even with indifference. They have hardly yet forgotten the experience of less than ten years ago, when good horses were sold for less than half the cost of raising them, and we judge it will not be a welcome suggestion that just when prices have reached a figure where it pays to produce them the Government shall employ public money to compete with private enterprise in supplying horses for a purpose for which the animals raised by the farmers of this country have proven themselves superior, in quality and endurance, to any other in active service in the South African war. Visionary theorists can readily map out a scheme on paper which, from their standpoint, looks plausible, and farmers can well understand the penchant of the average military man for a soft place in times of peace; but when it comes to a question of successful breeding of horses or stock of any kind, experience has shown no very brilliant successes in Government establishments or enterprises along this line. The scheme adopted by the Dominion Government some years ago of hiring stallions at a high rental from the Haras National Company, of Montreal, and placing them at the various Experimental Farms, where their services were held at a nominal fee in order that the farmers might avail themselves of what was considered by the politicians a favorable opportunity of improving their stock, proved a miserable failure, the farmers knowing better what they needed than did Government officials, and, as a consequence, the stallions stood in their stalls till they were stocked and worn out with waiting for work, while enterprising men with their own means brought in the class of sires they knew were needed, with the result that high-class horses are now readily available in most districts. Even at the Government Experimental Farms, where high-priced imported animals have from time to time been placed, little that is complimentary can be said of the success scored in keeping up the standard of the stock; indeed, it is perhaps not going too far to say that the opinion prevails that in most instances there has been registered a gradual but sure decline in the quality and character of the stock placed in these establishments, so much so that it has become a question whether money is wisely spent in putting high-priced stock into them to any greater extent than is needed for the instruction of students in the study of breeds where there is a school in connection, but that the work of these institutions should rather be in the direction of experiments in feeding, in order to arrive at conclusions as to the cost of production and the relative value of different feed stuffs.

The science and art of breeding comes not from fine-spun theories, but is largely an intuition which comes to the man who lives with his stock, studying their nature and individual characteristics, watching and directing their feeding and development; and about the only successes in stock-breeding worth naming have been the result of intelligent and well-directed private enterprise.

The question of providing a supply of army horses is also being discussed in the English papers, and a letter on the subject recently appeared in the London Times from the pen of Sir Walter Gilbey, himself a successful breeder of horses and a prolific writer on the subject, in which he states very clearly that he is no advocate for Government supervision or control of horse-breeding in England. He says: "It is not, I think, desirable that the British Government should embark upon costly horse-breeding operations in emulation of foreign Powers. Private enterprise in England has succeeded in producing domestic animals of all kinds