

Experience on a 150-Acre Farm.

I began farming here at Norwich, Oxford County, Ont., in March, 1899. I had everything to get in the shape of stock, implements, grain, and whatever else was necessary to carry on the work of the farm. In looking over the farm before beginning operations, the outlook was quite discouraging. The land especially was in a bad condition. No effort had been made, apparently, to take off the water, which was covering many places where the land was low. There were neither under-drains nor open drains.

The task undertaken did not seem an easy one. Many of the things were out of order about the buildings; in fact, some of them could not be utilized without first remodelling them. There were fences to repair; weeds, including such noxious ones as Canada thistles, grew in many places. The orchard had been badly neglected, as it had evidently not been pruned or fed for many years; hence the evidences of discouragement met one at every turn.

To show the advance that has been made, I may compare the crop of the first year with that of succeeding years. The first year forty acres were sown with grain. The yield was about 600 bushels. Every succeeding year the yield increased, until last year I had 2,000 bushels from the same amount of ground. The first year's crop was so overrun with thistles that it could not be shocked in the ordinary way, but was gathered together in bunches with pitchforks. Last year's crop was almost entirely free from thistles. In 1899 all the pasture then afforded was enough to maintain but seven cows, four horses, and a few additional horses taken in for transient pasturing. In 1903, thirty-four head of cattle were grazed, nine horses, and a flock of thirty sheep, besides a large number of hogs.

The experience in hay was something similar to that relating to the pasture. The first year we had 24 loads, the second 40, the third 60, the fourth 100, and the fifth 125. In one of the fields cut the first year we did not average more than one load from two acres, and part of that was so filled with weeds and thistles, after being cut it was raked, put in piles and burned. Last year the same field produced not less than four tons per acre, which consisted of two cuttings of clover. The comparison may be continued by giving the results obtained from one of the fields of grain. Part of the field was sown with barley the first year, and produced about 14 bushels per acre. Many of the neighboring farmers said it would produce nothing until it was summer-fallowed. This, I think, is a waste of time and labor, and also a waste of fertility. The next year it was put in with corn, having been plowed twice before planting, which gave the thistles a good setback; it was also given an additional and thorough cultivation. The corn crop was 100 bushels of corn per acre, in the ear. The following season it was sown with oats, which gave 40 bushels per acre. Last year wheat succeeding oats threshed 40 bushels of wheat per acre, and it is now seeded with an abundant catch of vigorous clover. These things have all been brought about by thorough cultivation, and a liberal application of manure.

Since coming to this farm four crops of fall wheat have been grown. Two of these yielded 40 bushels per acre. Last season 586 bushels were threshed from 12 acres; previously the land yielded not more than 18 bushels per acre. Notwithstanding the satisfactory returns on growing wheat, I have decided in the future to give more attention to stock-raising, especially dairying, and will feed all the produce grown on the farm to the stock.

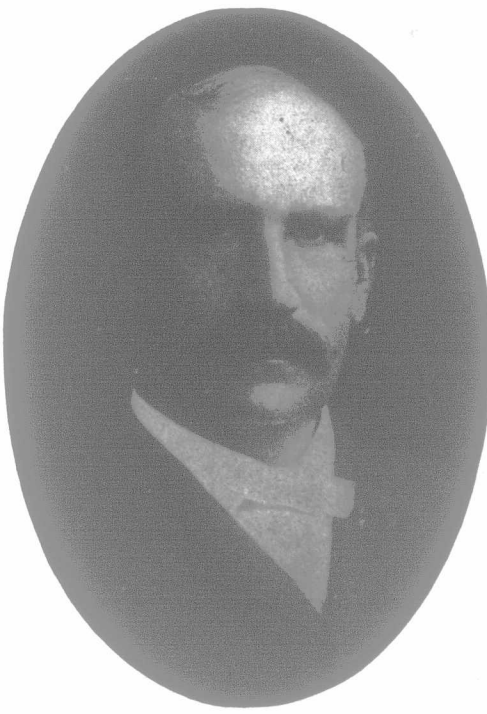
The returns from the produce of the soil alone have summed up \$3,500 in three years, after paying for hired help, both in the house and on the farm. If this can be done on a farm in such an unimproved condition, what could one not do beginning on a farm in a thorough state of cultivation? Thousands of farms in Ontario are producing not more than one-half what they could and should produce. Where, I ask, does the fault lie? Is it not in the imperfect way in which they are cultivated? As farmers, we should aim at

making the best that we can out of our calling. I look upon a properly-cultivated farm as one of the most satisfactory investments that can be found, to say nothing of the comfort which such a home brings to those who are seeking for the same.

The above has been written, not for the purpose of exploiting my own work in connection with this farm, for that, doubtless, could easily be improved upon. I have written this letter in the hope that it may furnish some encouragement to those who are content with present imperfect methods to try and improve upon the same.

JOHN C. SHAW.

Oxford Co., Ont.



Mr. E. B. Elderkin.

Canadian Live-stock Commissioner at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, St. Louis.

Argentine Wheat Growing.

The Journal of the British Board of Agriculture states that the Argentine Republic may now be regarded as competing for the second place as a contributor to the wheat supply of Great Britain. The quantity received annually, on the average of the past five years, has been 574,000 tons, compared with 2,960,000 tons from the United States, 520,000 tons from Canada, and 335,000 tons from Russia. In the first seven months of the present year, moreover, the total import of Argentine wheat has exceeded that from any other country, outstripping, probably for the first time, the combined receipts from the North American continent. Fifteen years ago, the Republic had hardly become a competitor in this trade. The average yield per acre varies from ten to twenty bushels, and the cost per acre runs up to thirty shillings, not including rental of land or interest.

Gets the Premiums.

Enclosed you will find \$1.50 for one new subscriber to the "Farmer's Advocate." I received the knife for sending in one new subscriber, and would not take a dollar for it. Please send me the compass and microscope for sending in this new name, and I will send in another in a few days.

ROBT. BURLEY.

Durham Co., Sept. 20th, 1904.

A Consolidated School Experiment.

Ever since the idea of consolidated schools was first launched upon a somewhat incredulous and, at first, rather indifferent public, the "Farmer's Advocate" has kept its readers informed regarding this, the most progressive educational step, so far as the farming communities are concerned, that has been taken in years. We have not been blind to the fact that, under the circumstances, much good work has been done in rural schools, nor that, almost invariably, High School and Collegiate teachers point to their pupils from the country as their most satisfactory students. As a rule, only the brightest of the country pupils find their way to Collegiate and College corridors. A boy goes into the city to school rugged of constitution and filled with the fresh, healthy vigor of the country; he is under quite heavy expense, and knows it. Moreover, he has not the inducement of many acquaintances and scores of "invitations out" to take him away from his work. Why should he not prove a good student? Still more, perhaps, is his standing due to the fact that in his country school he has been thrown upon his own resources, and has learned to depend upon himself. He has not been "spoon-fed." Still, we take it, this is not an irrefutable argument in favor of the small country school. This pupil is the bright, industrious boy who has got along and stuck to his work in spite of the inattention of an overworked teacher. What of the ninety and nine mediocre and dull children who need the constant spur of the teacher's attention and direction to keep their flagging energies alive, and burnish their more sluggish brains into brightness? These, not the brilliant ones, are they who lose by the inefficient system of the crowded, ungraded rural school.

The very best system that can be obtained is none too good for our rural communities, and, provided that the consolidated school be in charge of first-class teachers, forewarned and forearmed against mechanical routine and all tendency to spoon-feed, the bane of the highly-graded city school, it most certainly promises exceptional facilities for the better training of the children as a whole, and so for the ultimate elevation of the whole farming population. The man who thinks as well as acts is the one who is going to make a success of farming, and who is least likely to work to disadvantage, and education along the right lines is pre-eminently a training to think, to know, and to do. A weakness of the consolidated school, pointed out in a recent issue of the "Farmer's Advocate," is that it removes the influential teacher from direct contact with the home, where he or she had great possibilities in moulding and inspiring the life of the smaller school section.

A good education opens to the happy possessor of it many doors of interest which are closed to those less fortunate. Equip a young man with a mind keen and observant, with a love of books, and an interest in nature, and he is not likely to get restless in the farm home and to long much for those amusements and "shows" of the city, which certainly do not add much to the riches either of mind or of pocket. To equip the rural pupil with just these attributes is the aim of the consolidated rural school, and in working so hard to promote them, Sir William MacDonald and Professor Robertson have been looking far beneath the surface, to the very ground work of the contentment and prosperity of the country. This, probably, has been the reason why they have so persistently specified the introduction of the school garden and of nature study and manual training into the plan for the consolidated school. By studying nature one learns to love nature; by loving nature, one loves the farm. As Mr. John



Threshing on the Farm of John C. Shaw, Norwich, Ont.