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EDITORIAL.

Who wouldn't be a farm boy nutting in the October woods?

October sunshine has been doubly welcome after three months of rain.

Glutted markets and unprofitable returns to producers give fresh and wholesome stimulus to co-operation.

It is predicted, says an Ohio bulletin, that eggs will retail at five cents apiece in the United States before spring. If so there are liable to be many eggless breakfasts this winter.

Peaches may rot in the orchards of the fruit belts, but consumers a hundred miles away pay fifty cents to a dollar a basket all the same. Middlemen and transportation companies take their uniform toll and the grower receives what's left.

Tons of good apples are now rotting on the ground. Yet next winter there will be poor people in the cities hesitating whether to buy enough for a pie. The gulf between the farm producer in September and the city consumer in mid-winter seems a costly one to bridge.

Winter approaches and perhaps the new barn is not built. That is no reason why the old stable may not be made comfortable. A little tar paper and lumber applied to the walls of the present shell will make it as warm as and considerably drier than the ordinary stone or cement-floored basement.

Stock-judging classes for young men, conducted by the District representatives of the Provincial Department of Agriculture, are proving an excellent feature of many Ontario fall fairs. Besides providing an edifying and interesting form of entertainment for fair visitors, these contests are an excellent education for the young men who take part.

Notwithstanding all that has been said and written, many new silo owners are still afraid of having their corn frozen before filling time. While none of us like to see the leaves shrivelled and lost, experience indicates that a light frost on immature sappy corn is rather an advantage, getting rid of some of the surplus juice, and tending to make a sweeter quality of silage. Compare notes next winter and see.

Irish cattlemen have been fretting under the foot and mouth embargo, which requires their cattle to be landed at the foreign-animals wharf, and slaughtered within forty-eight hours after landing. At a representative meeting of protest held in Dublin last month, one speaker declared every practical man knew that the killing of cattle within forty-eight hours after arrival was tantamount to compelling men to sell their beasts for from £5 to £6 less than they ought to receive.

If a number of cattle are being put in the stables for winter feeding, the buyer should seriously consider having them dehorned. Cattle fed loose in box stalls do slightly better than tied cattle, and it is necessary to remove the horns to prevent trouble.

Where is the winter's manure to be stored? Manure has vastly more value than farmers give it, and should be cared for as its real worth merits. A covered shed is preferable, but where this is not available and the manure is not applied in the green state, at least heap it in a neat pile away from the eaves' drainage.

Six hundred and twenty-six dollars as the four-years average annual return from a flock of 60 or 70 ewes, constituting one quarter of the revenue from a hundred-and-fifty-acre Michigan farm, is the feature of the leading article in a recent number of the Breeder's Gazette. What pays better, even in Canada, with wool prices lower as they are?

To city sportsmen the "no shooting" signs displayed by an increasing number of farm woodlots are naturally a not very welcome sight, but for our part we like to see them. In many instances they denote laudable regard for the interesting wild life of the woods, and a desire to preserve it. If the game is to be shot at all let the farmer have it himself. City men have no more right to it than to the farmer's fruit and crops. It is bad enough for the cities to levy toll upon our industry without poaching our game.

Provincial authorities have been working their wits overtime to expend judiciously the half million dollars voted to agriculture by the Dominion Government at its last session. Overlapping of new and old services has not been wholly avoided. Example: the organization of livestock associations in New Ontario to serve a purpose which belongs to the purview of the already-existing system of agricultural societies. Of the outlay generally, it is to be feared that the superfluity of new-found funds will encourage prodigality and inconsiderate waste. We believe the best results in promoting agriculture will be obtained by considering specific needs as they arise, and then going after the money needed to supply them.

For all the talk about hydro-electric service for farm use, it is exceedingly difficult to draw from the officials of the Ontario Hydro-Electric Commission any definite, comprehensive, reliable figures indicating the relative economy of hydro-electric energy as compared with the gasoline engine. So far as "The Farmer's Advocate" can learn, it resolves itself into a question of how many hours per day a farmer can contrive to utilize the amount of current he contracts for, whether it will pay to utilize electricity for heavy work at the varying rates hitherto quoted. There is, however, one great advantage i. e., adaptability. Electricity can be used for many household and other purposes, each making but a slight draft on the current but saving much perspiration, elbow grease, inconvenience and discomfort. Here, we expect, is where electricity will win out. Durability of motors and reduction of fire risk are other noteworthy points.

Field Crop Competition in Canada.

Right living and good farming ensure their own reward. Theoretically, men ought not to need the stimuli of competition and special prizes, but in practice they do, or at all events such incentives are a spur to material achievement. In the old days of the Provincial Agricultural and Arts Association of Ontario the plan of awarding medals for the best-equipped and conducted farms had for several years a beneficial vogue which still lingers in tradition and to some extent in that worthy pride of homestead and well-ordered farming to be found more or less in most sections. Last year we had the old idea inaugurated afresh in a most public-spirited and admirable way in a Peel Co., Ont., home-flower-garden competition.

In relation to the cultural side of farm practice, field-crop competitions have clearly established themselves in public favor throughout Canada, largely by means of the liberal aid of the Federal and Provincial Departments of Agriculture and the energetic co-operation of their officers, supplemented by the efforts of local organizations and the enterprising generosity of individual citizens. These competitions have been a growth—an evolution. One might trace their genesis back to the Macdonald seed-grain competition for boys and girls during the three years, 1900, 1901 and 1902, initiated at the suggestion of Dr. Jas. W. Robertson, now chairman of the Royal Commission on Industrial Training and Technical Education. In that contest each competitor, of whom 1,500 started and 450 completed the work, grew quarter-acre plots of wheat or oats, selecting the seed by hand for the next sowing. With a view to increasing interest in the production and use of better seed, annual seed fairs began to be organized by the Dominion Seed Branch, in co-operation with Provincial and local agricultural societies, the Eastern Provinces having the honor to lead the way at Charlottetown, P. E. I.; Truro, N. S.; Woodstock, N. B.; Sussex, N. B., and Sherbrooke, P. Q. By 1904 twelve of these fairs were held. Out of these developed Provincial seed exhibitions, and as a natural corollary field-crop competitions made their appearance in Western Canada, where grain-growing is supreme. These appear to have been the outcome of arrangements made by Geo. H. Clark, Seed Commissioner at Ottawa, with Hon. W. R. Motherwell, Minister of Agriculture for Saskatchewan, and the officers of the Alberta Provincial Department of Agriculture during a seed-selection-special railway-train campaign inaugurated in the winter of 1905-6 to mitigate in some degree the evils arising from a disastrous outbreak of smut in the Prairie Provinces. Competitions in standing fields of grain of not less than ten acres were conducted in 1906 by a few agricultural societies in Manitoba, 31 in Saskatchewan and 7 in Alberta, 298 fields in all being inspected by the judges, supplied under the direction and at the expense of the Seed Branch, the Provincial Departments assisting in providing the prize-money. These competitions have extended to all the Provinces, and embrace other crops, such as vegetables. Forty agricultural societies conducted such competitions in 1906 and 110 in 1910. Indicative of the growth of these competitions: Alberta had in 1906 a total of 55 fields scored and in 1911 no fewer than 289.