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The Farmer's Advocate

and Home Magazine.

"PERSEVERE AND SUCCEED."

ESTABLISHED 1866.

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No. 597

EDITORIAL.

War News vs. Agriculture.

A subscriber writes that he is taking a war paper while the war is in progress, and as he cannot afford two, he will have to discontinue the "Farmer's Advocate" for the present. This is certainly lamentable. Under the excitement of the flaring headlines and romances of the war correspondents, giving out for truth one day what is flatly contradicted the next, our friend has temporarily lost sight of the real advantages of having a first-class, practical paper devoted to advancing his own business. Of course, he must be the judge of what lies nearest his heart, war or the pursuit of farming, the most complicated of all avocations in this country, and the one requiring the greatest skill and knowledge, as well as enterprise and industry, to attain success.

Tens of thousands of farmers are telling us every week that the "Advocate" has been and is of the greatest assistance to them in every department of their many-sided work, and are contributing freely of their own experience for the help of others. Men who have demonstrated their success in various branches of farming are telling how it was accomplished, and in every issue we are giving the results of the labors of the most careful and competent investigators and scientists at the agricultural colleges and experimental farms, competent veterinarians and other specialists, who are wrestling with the problems that confront the farmer. At this day and age of enlightened progress surely our friend is joking, or else, happily, he has mastered it all, and dreams of opulence as he sees, by reason of the war, once more in the market reports the magic quotation of "dollar wheat." Incidentally, he has overlooked the fact, too, that the "Farmer's Advocate" every week gives a record of the Events of the World, carefully prepared by a member of our staff, by whom the wheat is sifted from the chaff, and our readers are saved endless worry and waste of time wading through pages of contradictory newspaper reports regarding the Russo-Japanese war, and other important subjects of human interest. Our friend is the exception that proves the rule, and when this temporary aberration induced by the war fever is over he will return to the true fold.

While indulging in this vein of thought we must refer to the communication of another subscriber, who warns us to steer clear of politics in the "Farmer's Advocate." "No politics! must be your motto," we are admonished. As Sam Weller puts it, he would have us "Beware of the vidder!" From another quarter, by a later mail, comes just the opposite appeal: "Why don't you give us a little taste of politics once in a while?" Upon which horn of the dilemma are we to recline?—Politics or no politics! We can draw no other conclusion from these two divergent views than that we are on the right track now, getting out a paper especially for the Farmer and the Home, regardless of partyism—and expense—and entirely independent of all parties and cliques. Strictly speaking, "politics" means the study of civil government and the conduct of public affairs, perfectly proper subjects for consideration, but, unfortunately, mixed up with "party politics" or "partyism," we deem it better for our own peace of mind, and the advantage of our readers, to adhere to a policy which has stood the test of time. We shall thus avoid the folly of the ancient philosopher, who tells us: "I was well, wished to be better, took physic and died."

Forestry in Ontario.

A very interesting and important announcement to Ontario farmers is that made by Hon. John Dryden, Minister of Agriculture, the other day, regarding the purpose of his department to set apart a portion of the Agricultural College farm at Guelph as a nursery for the growing of young forest trees for distribution among farmers, at actual cost, or possibly below cost. The wanton and indiscriminate destruction of our forests is an exceedingly lamentable feature in connection with the development of older Ontario. Much land, in some districts quite unsuitable for cultivation and crop production, might much better have been left to grow wood, and the best thing that can be done with such areas now is to make a commencement in reforestry, which in very few years will add to the beauty of the country, and eventually prove profitable as a source of revenue. Mr. Dryden has also intimated that an educative campaign in tree-planting would be started at the college, and probably in connection with Farmers' Institute work, a step which should meet with general approval and commendation.

Need and Supply of Sires.

If improvement in the quality of Canadian live stock be not effected in the near future, it certainly will not be for lack of available material in the form of improved pure-bred sires to accomplish that end, and if improvement fails to take place it will not be the fault of the breeders of pure-bred stock. They have displayed commendable courage and an enterprising spirit in providing the class of animals needed to raise the standard of the stock of the country, and if improvement has been slow it has been mainly because of the tardiness of so many farmers in availing themselves of the use of the means brought easily within their reach. There is only one way of improving the character of our cattle and other stock, and that by the use of pure-bred sires of proper type and bred along lines of profitable production. Without this, economical feeding is practically impossible, and good food is largely wasted, for an ill-bred and misshapen beast will eat as much as a well-bred and well-formed one, and possibly more, while making miserable returns for what it gets. It pays well to feed well, if judiciously done, and the animal fed be of the right stamp, capable of yielding a good return and making a readily salable product, fit to command top prices in the market, either for breeding or commercial purposes, but the converse is in comparison a wasteful and unprofitable process from first to last.

There are a large number of pure-bred male animals of serviceable age in the hands of Canadian breeders at the present time, as a glance through our advertising columns from week to week shows, and we have reason to believe that the farmer with cash in hand or good credit can get what he wants in this line at a moderate price. If in some sections men of means and enterprise are not found who are disposed to invest in a sire for the good of the district, including their own, the co-operative principle may often with good results be adopted, a company or syndicate being formed to procure the needed sire, or an agricultural society or club may advantageously take up the work, as has frequently been done.

The unusually severe winter and the blocking of the railways and common roads has doubtless to some extent handicapped business in this line, as in many others, but the worst is past, spring is coming, and the plethora of snow we have had may prove a blessing in disguise, if, as is gener-

ally believed, it tends to fertilize the land and gives promise of bountiful crops for the coming season, while the prospects for good prices for all the farmer has to sell have seldom, if ever, been better. As a result of educational effort in the conduct of fairs and Farmers' Institutes, we venture to predict a good demand this spring for good sires in all classes of live stock, and a determination among farmers generally to adopt a forward movement, and improve their stock by grading up to a better standard.

The Sugar-beet Industry.

Some of the newspapers appear to be remarkably industrious in circulating pessimistic stories regarding the condition and future of the Canadian beet-sugar industry. A couple of the Ontario factories will probably not be operated this year, the business not being profitable last year, because a sufficient quantity of beets were not secured, but we are pleased to state that those at Wallaceburg and Berlin will be running, and the prospects are that they will have a far larger supply of beets than they did last year. Now, we have no doubt but what the business of growing beets can be made profitable to the farmer. We have taken the trouble to look over the records of over seventy patrons of the Wallaceburg factory last season, and find that they secured an average return of over \$61 per acre from their beets. Putting the average cost of growing and delivering at the outside figure of \$35 per acre, the usual estimate is from \$25 to \$30, and we have a net return of \$25 per acre. What other ordinary farm crop will make as good a showing as that? At the outset farmers were encouraged by boomsters to sow too large an area before they were posted in the methods of growing, but this will be overcome.

Two years ago the beet crop, and, in fact, all other crops, were greatly injured by the extremely wet weather; continued rains throughout the year prevented the farmer from plowing in the fall, and, as a result, last spring found little fall plowing done, and land in such condition that it was impossible to get a good seed-bed. As a result, many pieces of ground sown had to be plowed up and replanted, or put into other crops. Wherever land was properly prepared the very best results have been obtained, and it is now no longer a question as to whether we can produce beets profitably, or beets containing a sufficient percentage of sugar to make the business profitable. We have succeeded in growing beets as high in sugar per cent. and purity as can be produced in the world, and many farmers have been able to make all the way from \$30 to \$40 per acre clear of all expenses. Many who grew one acre profitably last year are contracting for four or five acres this year, and these are the contracts which are looked upon as being the most desirable.

Then there were other obstacles. We are informed that the railways and the old sugar interests have worked together in a way to depress this new agricultural industry. The railways are said to be charging Canadians for hauling their beets to the factory just double the rates that are charged in Michigan. They are also charging a higher rate on sugar produced from those beets than they are charging for sugar refined in Montreal and made from German beet sugar, and are just as brazen about this as they are about charging double the rates for hauling the commodities produced by the Canadian farmer, as compared with commodities received from the farms in Michigan. This matter of equalization of rates is one that should be early and clearly brought before the Railway Commission, and is a grievance which should engage the earnest attention of that body.