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THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE & HOME MAGAZINE

WILLIAM WELD, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

THE LEADING AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL PUBLISHED IN THE DOMINION.

The FARMER'S ADVOCATE is published on or about the 1st of each month. It is impartial and independent of all cliques or parties, handsomely illustrated with original engravings, and furnishes the most profitable, practical and reliable information for farmers, dairymen, gardeners or stockmen, of any publication in Canada.

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THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE,
300 Richmond Street,
LONDON, ONT., CANADA.

Our Monthly Prize Essays.

CONDITIONS OF COMPETITION.

- 1.—No award will be made unless one essay at least comes up to the standard for publication.
- 2.—It is not necessary for essayists to agree with our policy, so long as they give sound reasons for differing from us.
- 3.—The essays will be judged by the ideas, arguments, conciseness and conformity with the subject, and not by the grammar, punctuation or spelling, our object being to encourage farmers who have enjoyed few educational advantages.
- 4.—Should one or more essays, in addition to the one receiving the first prize, present a different view of the question, a second prize will be awarded, the sum being decided by ourselves in each case, and the essay will appear in the same or in a succeeding issue.

Our prize of \$5.00 for the best original essay on *Agricultural Exhibitions as Educational Institutions for the Farmer and his Family*, has been awarded to S. A. Laidman, Binbrook, Ont. The essay appears in this issue.

A prize of \$5.00 will be given for the best original essay on the following subject: *On what Basis can the Middlesex Agricultural Council and Our Farmers most Harmoniously Co-operate for the Best Interests of Agriculture?* Essays to be handed in not later than August 15th.

A prize of \$5.00 will be given for the best original essay on *How to Regulate Fall Work on the Farm most Profitably*. Essays to be handed in not later than Sept. 15th.

Editorial.

Education for the Farmer and his Family.

The significance of this subject at the present time can no longer be questioned. It is therefore very essential that a firm foundation be established; otherwise look out for booms. Agriculture is now in a transition stage, and farmers must move with the times or suffer the consequences. Before dwelling upon this question, the existing systems of agricultural education should be glanced at, and if the principles are sound, there can be little left to be desired.

The agricultural exhibition, supposed to be the chief source of education for adult farmers, is a miserable failure, as we have often pointed out. It costs our farmers heaps of money and does more harm than good. Two or three years ago, the Government commenced to offer annual prizes to students who passed certain examinations in various agricultural branches, which has stimulated a few to read and study agricultural works, but the advantages by no means compensate for the outlay. The Agricultural and Arts Association gives annual prizes for essays on agricultural topics, but the information so obtained is far inferior to that contained in the agricultural press, and does not reach the masses. The people's money so invested does not produce adequate returns. The public money squandered in fat-stock shows would produce far better results if it were dumped into the middle of the Atlantic. The Ontario Agricultural College has proved beneficial in teaching the principles of agriculture, but the number of Canadian farmers benefited is small compared with the expense involved; and the good accomplished by the College has been offset by the mismanagement of the Model Farm, where the managers are utterly incapable of applying the first principles of agriculture to their farm operations. The money squandered in prize farms is unproductive of desirable results, as well as false in principle, and the Government grant should be abolished. As a rule, the public moneys spent in so-called agricultural education have really gone to furnish an asylum for semi-literary hacks and others who were not born to earn their bread by personal exertions.

The only free and independent source of agricultural education is the agricultural press. By its own exertions, it has to compete with Government squanderings on every side. From many quarters there are clamorings for agricultural professors to stump the country for the

purpose of instilling agricultural science into the farmers' minds. The press dare not go extensively into the science of agriculture owing to the prejudice against "book-farming," a majority of farmers believing that all which they cannot comprehend is nothing but theory; a statement must be simple and practical, its truthfulness being a matter of secondary consideration. In reality, the more scientific, the more truthful, and usually also the more technical. The press will furnish science enough when its readers are prepared to accept it as their guide. The politicians are laboring to make the agricultural press subservient tools, and if the public expenditures for so-called agricultural purposes continue in a much greater ratio, they may succeed, but never, never so far as the ADVOCATE is concerned. It will suffer collapse before it submits.

The question to be solved is, How can agricultural expenditures be reduced and the principles of agriculture be more successfully and widely disseminated amongst our farmers and their families? Our agricultural exhibitions would be one of the most practical educational mediums for farmers if they had not been reduced to fat-stock shows and gambling dens on the most improved American style, and if the prizes were awarded for the encouragement of desirable objects, instead of for rings of speculators. The principle has been that the highest prizes be given for objects that will draw the greatest crowds for the benefit of show speculators. So long as farmers entertain no loftier ideas than these concerning agricultural education, there will be no scope for improvement.

With all these facts before our eyes, we have faint hopes for the adult generation. We would educate the budding farmers to a loftier comprehension of the principles of agriculture. In order to accomplish this object, making the truth reach the masses instead of the classes, the science and technicalities of the subject should be introduced into our public schools. This plan would involve no additional expense. Our coming farmers would then be readers and thinkers in matters pertaining to their profession; they could readily unite on a basis of sound principles, and the politician would be compelled to appeal to their judgment instead of inflaming their passions.

Our prize essayist has made a very good exposition of the subject. He may, however, have laid too much stress on winning the respect of our city cousins. Farmers' sons and daughters, as a rule, have more manners than their city cousins, although they may have less etiquette. Farmers should be more prone to adopt a code of etiquette suitable to their