

FARMER'S ADVOCATE

AND HOME MAGAZINE

* AGRICULTURE, STOCK, DAIRY, POULTRY, HORTICULTURE, VETERINARY, HOME CIRCLE.*

VOL. XXXIII.

LONDON, ONT., AND WINNIPEG, MAN., SEPTEMBER 1, 1898.

No. 461.

EDITORIAL.

Statistics from the Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., show that the number of swine in the United States have declined from 52,398,019 in 1892 to 39,759,903 in 1898, or some 16 per cent. in seven years.

The prominent part played by agriculture in the export trade of Canada is shown by the fact that during the fiscal year ending June, 1898, farm produce and animals aggregating nearly \$90,000,000 were sent abroad (chiefly to Britain), of which \$46,136,000 were animals and \$43,727,000 agricultural products. Our exports to Great Britain, all told, amounted to \$104,000,000, and total exports to all countries less than \$160,000,000. So that agricultural exports greatly exceeded all others combined.

Mr. J. H. MacLeod, Secretary of the Canadian House of Commons Committee on Agriculture, has sent out circulars to cheese and butter factory proprietors, dairy association officers, exporters, etc., asking their views on the Bill introduced by Mr. Parmelee, M. P., designed to stop improper speculation in dairy products,—“dealing in futures” as it is called. The Bill stands in abeyance till next session of Parliament, pending these enquiries.

A farmer's resources, so far as his farm is concerned, are confined to the fertility that is in his soil, and his returns therefrom depend upon his acquisition of the same through crops. It therefore devolves upon him to first render the fertility available, and, second, to secure it in the form containing the greatest money value. This is done in large measure by preventing the growth of weeds, which are usually ravenous consumers of plant food, and give little but trouble in return. A knowledge of how best to accomplish these desirable ends is not so easily acquired, but is the result of much study and effort. In working out these problems for ourselves a few hints from successful men recognized as authorities are well worth the heeding, and in this connection we refer our readers to the timely contributions in the Farm Department of this issue by Messrs. Rennie, Fowler, and Mountain, who set forth in general principles their methods of autumn cultivation of the land for the crops of 1899.

Agricultural Schools in Scandinavia.

A considerable number of people, who have not given the subject proper consideration in the light of actual conditions, appear to entertain the notion that agricultural education is receiving an undue and unnecessary amount of attention in Canada and the United States, though they cannot but be struck with the marvellous accomplishments of such little European countries as Denmark. Prof. Woll, writing on this topic lately, stated that it was found that following the old beaten paths, regardless of modern changes and requirements, was leading to the poorhouse; hence, the Scandinavian countries founded a system of agricultural education in which theoretical knowledge with practical work in the field and stable were combined. Norway has 19 agricultural schools, Sweden 38, and Denmark 18,—in all 75, and this number does not include agricultural high schools and colleges, special dairy, horticultural, forestry and farriery schools. In all, these countries have an agricultural school for every 58,000 of the rural population. In order to reach a similar ratio, the United States should have 870 agricultural schools, or the State of Pennsylvania alone, with a rural population of 50 per cent., about 54 agricultural schools; while Can-

ada should have over 40, instead of less than a dozen, all told.

It may be contended that the Scandinavian peasant farmer stands in greater need of agricultural education than the intelligent Canadian or American farmer, and the question will be asked, Has Denmark, for example, profited by the liberal policy they have pursued? While it is not so easy to get at the actual condition of the individual farmer there, we do find that their trade has been making great strides, 1897 showing an increase of exports amounting to some \$10,000,000, compared with 1896. The total amount of trade per head amounts to nearly \$80; very little behind Great Britain, which averages about \$84, and about double that of France or Germany. Of butter exports, the increase in 1897 over 1896 was over 12,000,000 lbs., and a correspondingly great increase in eggs, but bacon shows a decrease of 17 per cent., partly owing to an enormous increase in 1896 over 1895, and partly to the increasing competition from the fancy bacon of Canada. These facts would go to show that Denmark has made remarkable progress, for which their educational system must be fairly entitled to a share of credit.

Breeding for Type.

The stock breeder and feeder is deeply interested in the requirements of the markets with reference to the quality and condition of the meat product of his herds and flocks, and his interests naturally lead him to study and consult the demands of his market and his customers. As a rule, he will conduct his breeding operations primarily with a view to meeting the requirement of his market, but in the effort to do this he will find it the part of wisdom to keep constantly in view as the first principle in successful breeding the maintenance of stamina and constitutional vigor in his stock. Without this there can be no true and lasting success. Without this he builds his house upon the sand, his castle in the air.

Uniformity of type is a desirable feature in a herd or flock of any breed and should be constantly kept in view, but it is of the first importance that the type shall be a good one and that the individuals in the herd or flock shall measure well up to the standard of the best specimens of the type. *Yes*, there's the rub—type is good if a good type is the standard, and uniformity of type is good if it is a uniformity of excellence; but if the type is weak and faulty, or if a large proportion of the individual members of the herd or flock are inferior or indifferent representatives of an approved type, the elements of lasting success are lacking.

Then let the standard be that of uniformity of excellence, founded on the bedrock of stamina and quality, and let us work up to that standard, keeping always in view those cardinal points which should be acknowledged and accepted by all breeders. But in order to do this successfully breeders must use their own brains and depend upon their own judgment and observation. It is all right that the butchers and the pork packers inform the farmers and breeders of the character, quality and condition of product required to meet the demands of the best markets, but when they undertake to advise how to breed and how to feed they step outside their proper sphere, and from ignorance of the science and principles of breeding and feeding are liable to prove themselves in many cases blind leaders, and in others the laughing-stock of men who have studied these principles in the school of experience and practice. If farmers and breeders were to follow every advice that is given them they would very likely find themselves in the predicament of the old man in the fable, who tried to please everybody, but pleased nobody, and lost a very useful animal into the bargain.

It is certain that in nearly every breed there are

some good qualities, and some individuals which conform more nearly to the type required by the markets than do others, and the intelligent breeder knows that by the selection and mating of the fittest the offspring may, and can, in each generation be brought nearer to the standard required, and also that this can be aided and hastened by intelligent feeding and handling of the young animals, as well as in finishing them for the market, to produce the desired result as to quality of meat.

Looking at the question from the standpoint of the breeder, then, it would be rank folly to throw up the work of a lifetime in building up a herd of a given breed simply because impractical faddists propound theories of mixing the blood of different breeds by the terms of a set formula, and by the blending of extremes propose to evolve a pattern which breeders are expected to produce to order, irrespective of the cost of production or of such trifling considerations as profit and loss to the producer.

To be more specific, we may instance the tendency of the times in the breeding of the beef breeds of cattle, which has been for some years, and is now, in the direction of producing the blocky, pony-built, early-maturing type, which the market has during most of the time called for, and to some extent paid a premium on, and which have proved of great value in beef production under the conditions which exist in many sections of this country. This applies especially in the older sections, where the calves are nursed by their dams and fed rich foods from their birth, never losing their calf flesh, and going off as “baby beef” at 18 to 24 months old. But the general farmer who prefers a general purpose cow, which will take her place in the dairy herd, her calf being raised upon her skim milk, and subjected to the roughing process which the majority of young stock have to put up with, requires a frame of greater scale in order to produce a finished export steer at two and a half to three years of age.

While freely admitting the great usefulness of the Scotch type of Shorthorns in moulding and modifying the breed to meet the demands of the times and the conditions of many sections of the country, and while confessing our great admiration for the best specimens of the type, we are bound to say that there are too many weedy specimens claiming close relationship to reigning tribes in the aristocracy of the breed, and having little more than their pedigree to commend them to public favor. They are lacking in scale, in fleshiness, and in the indications of constitution, being small, narrow, and paunchy. To quote the opinion of these expressed by one of the best judges we have ever had in Canada, “When the guts are taken out of them there is little left.” Cattle of this class, though orthodox in breeding, are a caricature on the approved “export steer,” as we paint him in our mind, of which we are wont to boast, and which is all too rare in these days in the size and shape which we all admire. The lesson to be learned from this reflection is obvious. It is the possibility of running a good thing into the ground by a too slavish following of fashion. The remark is frequently and with too much truth made, we do not see the large, useful, general purpose cows, and the big, beefy grade steers that used to be found in goodly numbers in this country. While we do not want the coarse and slow-feeding sort, we do miss the thrifty, big cattle, showing scale and having good feeding qualities—cows that brought heifer calves fit to follow them as workers in the dairy, and produced steers fit to show or ship to any market with satisfactory results. While we do not wish to underrate the modern type, and freely concede to it many virtues, we do not hesitate to say that we apprehend a possibility of following it too far without good judgment in breeding, with the result that we may find that we have