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EDITORIAL.

This Year and Next.

An interval between the activities of 1904 and the work to be planned and done in 1905 can hardly be said to exist, yet we all should, at this season, pause and think before we bid farewell forever to the year just done and welcome with glad hand the newcomer. The hour of retrospection, that period to think backwards, as well as inwardly, is at hand, crowded fast on us as it is by the coming days, with their work to do; yet we should not let it pass unheeded. Even if we only look back over the twelvemonth, we cannot but feel that, first and foremost, thanks are due the Creator for mercies shown, for health preserved or restored, for the privileges of freedom, education and religion which we enjoy, and, after that, the true man or woman cannot but be possessed with a feeling of sadness because of that terse, expressive saying of the late Cecil Rhodes, "So much to do, so little done," a truism to those who have other interests besides those of self; yet, while that sadness exists for sins of omission, it should be overshadowed by the glad tidings that there is work to do for all. While every person can read and ponder over lessons of the Recessional, none can afford to sit down and dream of what the future may hold.

To have a part in the upbuilding of a great nation, should, at the threshold of the new year, cause us all to become optimists, and fire young and old to do the very best that is in them.

From the young men and women especially, the future calls for earnest work and honest endeavor. Those great fields of life, politics and commerce, need more and more honesty of purpose and backbone to say and to do the right, irrespective of the immediate consequence; and it is from the young people such must come.

At this season, then, more than ever, should high ideals be sought, and vows for their steadfast following be made, so that when to us the end of years come and our earthly work is done, we can utter those beautiful lines of Tennyson's "Crossing the Bar":

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar
When I put out to sea.

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell
When I embark.

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have cross'd the bar.

Think About "Literature."

The question, "What is Literature?" is one that will especially interest some one or more persons in each household or neighborhood. The studious farmer, his well-read "better-half," the local public-school teacher or student, and others in any home where substantial book-reading is done, are referred to the literary competition announced in our Home Magazine of this issue. Read it. Have you ever seriously thought what constitutes "literature" in the sense indicated in that announcement? If not, do so now, and put the result of your thinking on paper. Your definition may be the one that will be entitled to

a choice of one of two sets of excellent cloth-bound volumes of Scott and Kingsley. Even though you were not successful, we are satisfied that the effort itself would more than repay anyone in the clearing up of ideas on the subject, and in enhanced appreciation of writings that deserve the name of "literature." Look up the conditions, and forward your statement or definition as soon as possible to this office.

The Scarcity of Good Cattle.

A visit to the cattle markets of any of our principal cities, even on their best days, cannot but convince the observer that there is a lamentable lack of profitable animals produced and fed upon Canadian farms. The proportion of inferior stock is so large as to be discouraging to those who have long been advocating improvement in our cattle, and endeavoring by reference to the wide difference in the market values of well-bred animals of the right type, as compared with the quotations for those of inferior breeding and quality, to persuade farmers more generally to avail themselves of the means so easily within their reach to grade their stock up to a higher standard. To those of the older generation who can remember the class of cattle seen on our markets twenty or thirty years ago, it seems incredible that so little improvement has been accomplished. It is true that in those days older animals were found on the market, three and four year old steers being common, and in the matter of early maturity, or, at least, the practice of selling at an earlier age, we have advanced, but the evidences of the use of pure-bred sires of the beef breeds were more apparent then than now, thrifty, well-fleshed grade cattle then being far more common in the stock-yards than now. In our review of fat stock shows of the present day, we try to persuade ourselves that we have a creditable display of cattle, but when we reflect that the few really good animals of that class on exhibition represent the best we have, there is little to excite our pride in the show. It is, indeed, practically a libel on the country to assume that these fairly represent the ability of our farmers or our country in that direction. We can grow in abundance all the necessary foods for stock. We have good grazing lands, plenty of good water easily available, good buildings for housing our stock in winter, and a large proportion of our farmers are capable and intelligent feeders, and yet the cattle seen at a show where substantial prizes are offered make but a beggarly display on the whole, a lot of breeding stock in every-day condition being dragged in with which to pick up the prize money that should be given for commercial cattle intended directly for the butcher's block. There were scores of better cattle seen on the streets of Guelph at the Christmas fairs there twenty years ago than the bulk of those shown in these days at the Ontario Winter Fair, and the same may be truthfully said of the carload lots seen in our cattle markets at Toronto and elsewhere, as compared with the former period.

We know it is claimed that the attention given to the dairy business in late years and the more general use of dairy-bred bulls accounts largely for the present condition of things. This is true to a certain extent, but the fact remains that in many large districts dairying, as a specialty, has not been adopted, and the dairy breeds do not prevail, and even in dairy districts many prefer the dual-purpose class of cows, and yet the beef cattle raised are of an inferior class, for no other reason than that the farmers do not avail themselves of the use of pure-bred bulls of the beef breeds. And there is no reasonable excuse for

this. A pure-bred bull can now be bought for little more than he will bring for beef at the close of his term of service, while the increased value of his progeny from grade cows, as compared with that of inferior stuff, will pay for him twice over, if fairly well cared for and sold at any age from six weeks to two years.

There is every prospect that for the next few years good beef cattle will be in active demand at good prices, the filling up of our new country with settlers will furnish an outlet for the ordinary cattle, our growing cities and towns will require ever-increasing quantities of beef, and the export trade will take, and at good prices, all the good cattle we can produce, but unless we furnish beasts of better quality than we have been shipping, we need not expect to receive as high prices as our competitors in the British market, who are sending a superior class of animals there. The first step to be taken in order to attain this position is to improve our cattle by using pure-bred bulls, and the second is to feed liberally, and thus keep the animals constantly thriving.

Notes From the Maritime Winter Fair.

A marked improvement in almost every line characterized the Maritime Winter Fair at Amherst, Nova Scotia. Inquiry how to still further improve was the keynote struck. Evidences like these point to a future for the agriculture of the Eastern Provinces, and give encouragement to those whose time and energy has been devoted to make the Winter Fair a success. It only remains for those, the farmers of the East, for whom the Fair was organized, to profit by the lessons taught, and thus keep pace with the great agricultural growth which is going on in the West.

The Maritime Provinces owe a debt of gratitude to the Dominion Department of Agriculture, to whose effort, in a large measure, is due the success of the show. To the local men, led by President Elderkin, must be ascribed equal praise, for none but those who have actually been in harness know anything of the mass of details to which these gentlemen must give attention.

Men from the Upper Provinces joined hands with those from the East, and, together, conferred as to what was needed to improve the agricultural conditions of the country, and the sentiment, expressed at the opening meeting, of a common interest among the Provinces of the Dominion, made it possible for all to meet on common ground.

And these were some of the lessons impressed on those who were in attendance. They were not new ones to the most of us, but simply efforts to impress the methods of our best agriculturists upon those who yet follow older methods. Deputy Minister of Agriculture James, of Ontario, summed them up in a sentence, in one of his evening addresses: "Your salvation, like that of the people of Ontario, lies in stock." Many were anxious to learn, for the seats about the show-ring were crowded, and so was the dairy-test room, by people who sought to see the best types to meet the demands of exacting markets and conditions. But this was not all, for an even more-needed lesson was taught when those interested found that it was to no mere chance the winners owed their excellence. The close relationship existing between many of the winners of this year and those of previous years, in some cases as close as full brothers, showed that behind this excellence was breeding and pedigree. In one case, a man, whose name had hitherto been but slightly known to the show-ring, won premier honors from seasoned showmen, and when the reason was inquired, it was found that he had sent his ewes to the very best rams owned by a leading sheep-