

What has Become of the Sheep?

SIR,—Between the 19th and 22nd of May I travelled nearly a hundred miles over the N. R.R., and made some short excursions on foot, and during the whole trip and return I saw less than fifty sheep. I do not say that there were no more sheep in the locality, but from the car windows and platform all I saw were about forty, in three or four small lots. Now sheep are all in pasture at this season, and should be visible to the traveller in something like proportion to the numbers kept; and allowing only twenty-five to each farm, should show many hundreds of sheep in a trip of say 100 miles. The fact is, the sheep are not in the country—at least not in this section of it, and this at a time when wool is 30c. and upwards per lb. Depend on it, there is something wrong; the sheep have been drained out of the country during the hard times, and those who have them have good property, for they must go up in price. Farmers who have sheep, take the hint in time.

The weather is unusually wet here at present, and is keeping the tail end of the seeding back very much. Nearly every one has more or less to put in yet, besides roots and corn. The fall wheat is very partial; on clay lands the ground is more than half bare, as a rule; on light lands, with an open subsoil, the fields are well covered. Clover the same as wheat—much damaged on heavy or wet lands; clover seed will be high next year, and hay will likely be higher, although the present weather is favorable for a good growth to start with.

T. H., Meaford, Ont.

[We can tell you why there are so few sheep in your locality—simply because there has not been one FARMER'S ADVOCATE circulated in your county to twenty circulated in some sections where the farmers now have sheep and wool to keep and to sell. This journal has for a long time advised its readers to keep all the sheep they can, and to purchase from non-subscribers. An intelligent traveller informed us a short time ago that in travelling through the country he could tell pretty correctly where the ADVOCATE was taken and where it was not. The farms of subscribers evinced a greater approach to neatness, comfort and prosperity, while those of non-subscribers could be detected by the lack of trees, by dilapidated-looking fences and untidy, slovenly, slipshod farming. Just take a note of this. This is what we wish to aim at, that is, to enrich our readers both in information and in pocket. We cannot always be right in our instructions about the future, but we know of many who have profited to a very large extent by hints thrown out in season.]

SIR,—What is the best and quickest mode of replacing the loss sustained by the failure of grass seed which was sown in the spring of 1879, and winter killed last winter? 2. What is the value of fall rye as hay? 3. The advisability of transplanting an old asparagus bed which we desire to remove.

J. B. W., Beaverton.

[At this season of the year Hungarian grass, millet or corn may be sown after the ground is prepared, and if cut while green enough will make a good substitute for hay. If you desire to sow grass seed as soon as possible, prepare your land and sow in August or September. The fall rains will generally give the young seeds sufficient growth to withstand the effects of the succeeding winter, but grass, as a general rule, does best sowed in the early spring. 2. Rye makes a good hay, but should be cut when in blossom, or just when the grain is forming. 3. Old asparagus plants may be removed, but they should be transplanted in the early spring in a rich, deep, mellow soil, and care should be taken not to allow the roots to become at all dried.]

SIR,—I often see inquiries about saw dust as manure. All our public omnibus companies use saw dust for bedding horses, and many farmers use it for cows. It absorbs all moisture, and makes capital manure. Nothing beats it for pigs. It cleans their skins and keeps them in a very healthy state, same as if groomed daily. After using in the stable mix it in the manure heap, and it will make good manure. Our farmers are glad to get it. Another manure I have found very good for onions and celery, viz.: spent hops from a brewery. They absorb moisture, and in very dry weather retain it like a sponge. In drawing onions the roots are sometimes found clinging to the lumps, and those fortunate enough to strike a lump are very vigorous.

The ADVOCATE is much liked here by those who have seen it.

F.C.E., Manchester, Eng.

The Agricultural Commission.

SIR,—Having been a subscriber to the ADVOCATE since its first appearance before the agriculturists of Canada, I will take the liberty of writing a short letter, hoping that you will not take it amiss should I speak just as I think. I have always felt anxious to receive the ADVOCATE and desirous for its welfare, seeing that it claimed to look fairly and squarely into all matters pertaining to agricultural interests, regardless or not caring for either side of politics, but standing out boldly and fearlessly for right; in short, daring to be a Daniel—daring to do what is right! But what has happened to you? In your last issue you speak of the Agricultural Commission—that they will do good. What good? Have you gone so far astray as to say a Commission appointed for the purpose, no doubt, of reporting in such a way as will be favorable to one side or the other in a political way? For, in fact, sir, it is my candid opinion this Commission was appointed by the Ontario Government at Toronto for the purpose of getting the farmers of Ontario to say that they don't believe in the N. P.; and any man with half an eye can read that Commission and their report before the Commission starts on their tour for information. But it should not be put this way; it should be a Commission to talk the agriculturist into what the Commission wishes. Now, I am perfectly satisfied if a farmer should say that a duty on corn, oats, or any other article, was needed, that will never be embodied in the report. For this reason: There are some on that Commission that know nothing about farming, and they are that rabid in politics that they would raise a "breeze" or leave the Commission before they would make a report in favor of the N. P. Now, what necessity was there for this Commission or bill of expense to Ontario? Could this information not be received from the members from the ridings that contain more farmers than others? I say it could. If not, what is the use of sending men to Parliament if they don't understand the wants of their constituents? It looks to me as though our Parliament must be composed of very poor material, if a Commission has got to go through the country and get information, and the M.P.P.'s getting \$600 for voting, having a good time through the winter, &c. Now, Mr. Editor, in conclusion: If you have got to toady to this Commission, that, no doubt, is to make a favorable report of the Model Farm (I should, and feel like calling it a "model humbug!") it is high time the farmers knew it. We want a paper to criticize, but not to side in with all this "high-falutin" red-tapeism. No doubt, it is hard for you to throw all aside, being an Englishman and the son of an Old Country clergyman, but it must be done.

BRANT CO. FARMER.

From Manitoba.

SIR,—Your correspondent, D.G.S., of Ronson, Ont., sends you a letter which is likely to do Manitoba an ill turn, published as it is in a paper which reaches the greater part of the farming population of Canada, especially when partly backed by your own, to my idea, rather hastily formed opinions of last year. D.G.S. and I think you also took the very worst piece of road in the Northwest, and last year it was exceptionally bad, and the said road seems to me to be the tough morsel that choked off that would-be settler. I don't blame him for being disgusted with the mud, but no man is surely insane enough to expect macadamized roads in a country that has only been opened up for a very few years. The country he passed through contains timber enough for any settler's use, though it is small, and as far as its being poplar is concerned, we mostly prefer it for fencing, if it is split, only using oak for pickets. The toll bridges are being done away with, taken over by the Government, and bridges put up where the ferries were. As far as the charge goes, he must remember that the means of crossing were the result of private enterprise, and the time lost by the proprietor very considerable. Had he been here a year or two ago he would have had to raft or swim, and would then have blessed the bridge proprietor if he had to pay twice the fee. That Manitoba is a good country the number of satisfied settlers prove, and those not only the fair weather settlers of the last few years, but the pioneers who struggled through the grasshopper plague of 1872-5. The hard scratching for a living pulled through by many of them could only be imagined by those who were here and saw it, but the only reminder of it you ever hear is, "I'm getting on well enough, but I'd be better off if it

hadn't been for the hoppers." I never saw men who wanted work want it for long, but wages, of course, are not what they were—\$20 a month on a farm, and others according to the work is what you can get now. I am writing about what I know from experience, having been both employer and employe, and having been twice cleaned out by grasshoppers. I landed here eight years ago with \$30. I am now getting on well, having a pretty good farm on Pembina Mountains, and a clear balance sheet, stock, land and implements all to the good, and I labored under one disadvantage—I earned my first wages after landing here. I only mention these little things to show that men who are not to be frightened by a lift on a muddy cart wheel can succeed here, notwithstanding all that is said and written to the contrary. At the same time I don't advise any man to come here with less than \$500, and even with that he must be one not easily frightened by hard times and hard work, and determined to look past the first few years, taking them as a disagreeable necessity and making the best of them.

Your prize essay by Mr. Ireland was very good, I thought, and perhaps my plan of stretching wire fence may be of use to him. I drive my posts as he does, but two rods apart, and between them I staple to the wires four false posts from 2½ inches in diameter, the butt resting on the ground and the top sawn off level with the real posts. The saving of labor is enormous, also of timber. The wires are kept tight to their place, and the posts are so close that cattle can always see the fence. Anything charging the fence is not so likely to be cut, and the amount of spring allowed the wire will save both it and the posts from breakage. I have tried this on 1½ miles of fence and found it to answer.

A. C. W.,

St. Norbert, Manitoba.

Budding Fruit Trees.

SIR,—Will you inform me how to bud fruit trees and which is the proper time of the year?

S. E., Aurora, Ont.

[In our July number of 1878 we gave full particulars, but for the benefit of recent subscribers we will again give a short description. For budding a sharp, thin-bladed, round pointed knife is used, with a handle terminating in a thin wedge-like piece of ivory or bone, which is useful in raising the bark of the stalk. The buds are taken from the shoots of the present year's growth, when they have become perfected; this may be known by the formation of the terminal bud. Should the shoots be backward in growth, they may be more rapidly perfected by pinching off the upper end, checking their growth and ripening the parts. The buds to be removed are developed where the leaf joins the stem. The buds should be well formed before being removed, or they will be of no value; when of the proper age the young shoots from which the buds are to be taken are severed from the tree with a sharp knife, and the leaves are removed from it, while their foot-stalks are left attached to the buds as handles. The operator selects a smooth place on the stalk he wishes to bud, and makes an incision across it through the bark, and another at right angles to and below it, so as to form a T. The bark is raised on each side of the perpendicular cut by the ivory handle of the knife. The stalk is then ready. Taking the stalk of buds in his left hand, the operator inserts his knife above the bud, bringing it out below so as to cut away the bud, also a portion of the bark and a part of the wood. When budding the cherry and other trees of spongy growth and slow adhesion, it has been found better to cut away a thick portion of the wood, and in no case should the piece of wood cut away with the bark be removed. Having thus prepared the bud insert it as quickly as possible in the incision in the stalk, and commencing at the bottom of the incision, wrap the bud and stalk with something that neither air nor water can penetrate, only leaving the vital part of the bud uncovered. The bud will soon swell, when the tie should be loosened, and finally removed. This will take place in 10 to 20 days. Should any length of time elapse from the removal of the bud to its insertion in the incision it must be kept moist. The time for budding is from June 15th to September 15th. The only rule that can be given is to secure the perfect development of the bud, and to ascertain that the bark of the stalk separates freely from the wood.]

Experience gained in the past season goes to show that liberal manuring is the most economical. We can see in the past harvest where five dollars worth more fertilizing per acre would have given twice that value of grain.