

The Farming Faith of Norfolk.

To appreciate afresh the powerful influence of demonstrated ideas, one cannot do better than take a jaunt over the country roads and some of the railway lines that net the County of Norfolk, Ont. Simcoe town is a county seat to be proud of, and it is backed by a go-ahead farming country that has faith in itself. For a neighborhood, a township, or a county, it is a fine thing when it begins to realize the possession of certain resources, to be made more of by judicious labor and enthusiasm. Such inspiration makes opportunity. Incidentally, it lifts communities out of the narrowing effect of small talk and gossip by engaging their attention with larger interests and the cultivation of those co-operative and friendly relations that make life worth living, and farming a real success.

Though a county of but moderate size, Norfolk makes a good showing in such staples as winter wheat, oats, corn, which in husked product has passed the million-bushel line, with larger possibilities ahead; in horses, for which it is justly famed; and in canning crops for the great factories at Simcoe, Delhi and Waterford. Hamilton and Toronto draw upon Norfolk farms for cream; South Middleton and Tillsonburg condensaries absorb the product of the cows, in addition to what goes into cheese and butter making, and local town supplies.

But it is in apple-orcharding that the county has found itself particularly famous, and with a climate approximating the adjacent Niagara peninsula, and tempered by Lake Erie, it is not surprising to find peach, plum and pear culture on the increase, with magnificent strawberry patches spreading out, one on the J. E. Johnson farm, just north-east of Simcoe town, covering some 20 acres. This farm is devoted to peaches, pears, plums, fancy apples, as well as small fruits, together with corn and some field crops for feeding. A silo is used, and a bunch of cattle fed in winter. In his Kieffer pear plantation, he is trying the plan of spreading out with common apple-barrel hoops and cord the limbs of young trees that have a tendency to head too close together.

When readers of "The Farmer's Advocate" stop to think that 300 or 400 farmers in a given district have taken up apple-growing in earnest, according to modern methods, it means something. Old orchards are being regenerated, and new plantations established, some of them 50 acres in area, possibly on lands, in some cases, that will need a good deal of feeding. In the main, the people are holding to the winter varieties. On this point, however, their ideas do not quite run parallel with those of the head of the Fruit Division, in the Department of Agriculture, at Ottawa. Time will tell.

In Norfolk we have the idea again exemplified that a crop of apples will not come out of nothing, any more than a crop of corn or wheat. So the soil is tilled and fertilized with manure and clover, etc.; the trees are pruned and sprayed on about the same plan as "The Farmer's Advocate" demonstration orchard at Lambeth, in Middlesex County.

It is a revelation to go into a 40-acre block of apple trees, mostly Spies, Baldwins and Greenings, like the orchard recently acquired by Mr. Johnson, a couple of miles south-west of Simcoe, and see not a stray sucker nor useless limb nor canker spot that had not been scraped out with the knife and treated with corrosive sublimate; the ground, under the extension disk harrow and other tools, as clean and mellow as a garden, and the trees themselves a perfect paradise of bloom, awaiting the third scything, when, like a spring snowstorm, the blossoms had fallen. It will be a wonder if such a proposition does not turn in this

season about \$5,000 over all expenses. Orchard-ing is going ahead as with "seven-league boots." "We have Jas. Johnson here, and the Norfolk Co-operative Fruit-growers' Association," remarked an alert local journalist, "and things are going some."

In many ways the Local Representative of the Provincial Department of Agriculture, and teacher of the High-school Agricultural Class, P. E. Angle, B. S. A., and his assistant, Wade Toole, a third-year O. A. C. man, have faithfully, and with discretion, put themselves at the service of the county farm interests. Mr. Angle came in June of last year, and Mr. Toole in April, 1910, succeeding A. G. Turney, B. S. A., who was called to New Brunswick, after being only a few months in this office. "So many apparently promising lines of work press us for attention that it is difficult sometimes to discriminate in favor of what will prove in the end most useful," observed Mr. Angle.

This spring Mr. Toole spent several weeks going from orchard to orchard, giving assistance with spraying outfits, which, to beginners, give trouble sometimes with the preparation of lime-sulphur, Bordeaux mixture, and other mixtures, and explaining the exact nature of the particular pests for which the treatment is intended. Specific information re the production of dairy herds and poultry flocks is being collected, with a view to increasing the production of these two important classes of farm stock.

The sandy-loam soils of Norfolk make a natural home for poultry, which fits in admirably with fruit-growing, and, by improving the farm poultry-yard and marketing methods, there is assuredly a large future for the industry.

Some useful drainage-survey work has been done, cow-testing encouraged, samples of milk tested for dairymen and others, and quantities of corn and potatoes distributed, with typewritten directions, for trial plots, with the object of establishing improved varieties of seed and systematic seed selection. Young men are naturally becoming interested in this work, as they were, along with the agricultural public generally, in the three-days' stock-judging course in February, attended by from 100 to 250 per session, under the auspices of the Simcoe Farmers' Institute Club, the Agricultural Society, and the North and South Norfolk Farmers' Institutes. It proved one of the most instructive events ever held in the county.

Simcoe has one of the model autumn county exhibitions of Canada, and Mr. Angle has this year been elected superintendent. He has grass, clover and some other special plots growing on the grounds. He started an agricultural class of five in the High School last September, a couple of whom contemplate going to the O. A. C. at Guelph subsequently. It has been fairly well sustained, and additions are expected next term. In addition to this, a six-weeks' course in agriculture, covering a study of seeds, farm chemistry and bacteriology, soil fertility, cultivation and drainage, farm botany and entomology, and stock-judging, was conducted in January and February last, and was taken by 25 young men.

While not exactly a branch of Southern Ontario agriculture, the Provincial forestry plantation in Walsingham Township is destined to be a far-reaching benefit, by recovering with pine and other forest trees the "blow-sand" area in this corner of Norfolk, and in supplying seedlings for schools and waste places all over Ontario. This work is directed from the Agricultural College, at Guelph. To the horticulturist interested in flowers, Norfolk County is notable as the home of H. H. Groff, whose marvellous work in gladioli improvement at his place near Simcoe has given him world-wide fame.

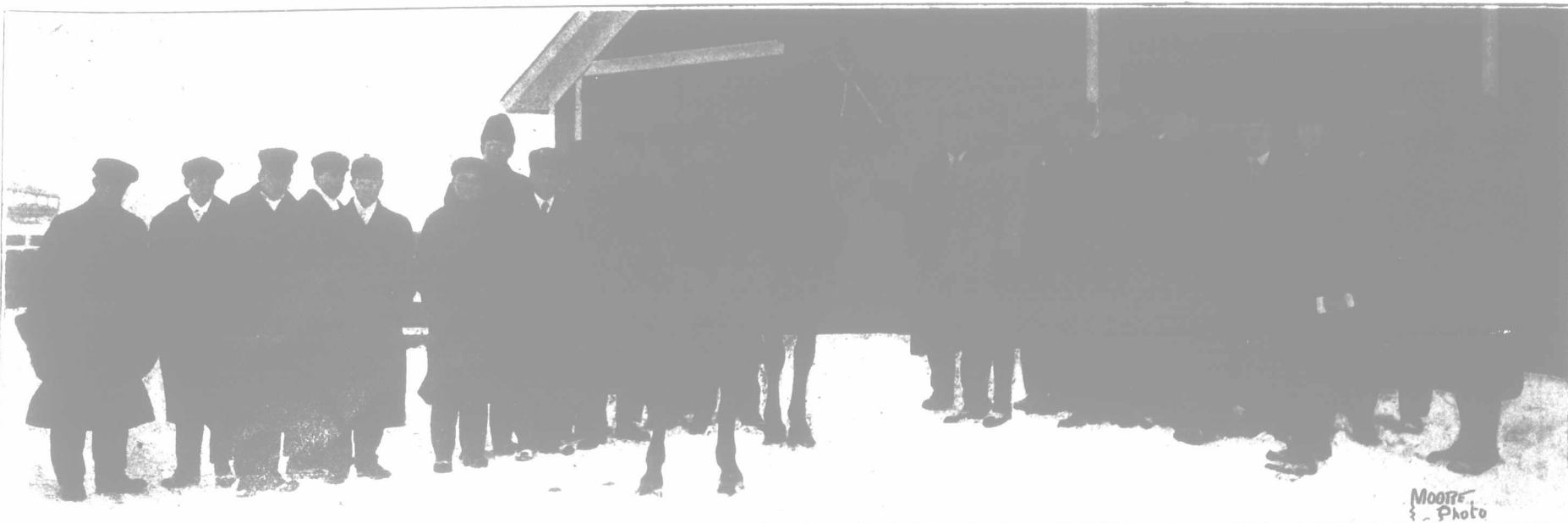
South Perth Notes.

The early spring is not so early, after all. Growth is little, if any, ahead of an average year, and, what is worse, the cool, comparatively dry weather has enabled the wire and cutworms to overtake the growth, so that spring crops and grass on high, light land are, in many places, badly thinned out. Wheat has also suffered. So great has been the damage that some are plowing up and resowing; others are broadcasting millet and harrowing, hoping thereby to get a mixed crop. However, these practices are by no means general, and the advent of settled warm weather would yet bring a fair crop. Low, rich land has generally escaped injury, and perhaps high, rich land would, also, but all the high spots are poor in this locality, having been cropped more, because drier, and also because of fertility washing to lower levels. First and second crops on old pastures, of course, are the worst. It looks as though we will have to break up sod at least every second year, or cease destroying the robins and blackbirds. It would pay every farmer to have a good-sized orchard, with a thick wind-break of evergreens on two or three sides, to encourage the birds to nest. The cherries can be protected, but if they did run away with a bushel or so, it would be only small pay for their services. The larger birds, such as crows, hawks and owls, can easily be dispensed with. Field mice never become real pests, and any dog will clean them out in harvest time, so that we need not preserve our wood-lots for this purpose; besides, these birds of prey scare away the smaller and more beneficial ones. Blackbirds and robins are great for getting outside of cutworms when the plow is going. I happen to be living where there are many trees growing near the house—soft maple, evergreen, apple, etc., and it is very interesting to watch the antics of the various kinds of birds which are nesting. A pair of orioles wove their nest to a swaying limb in full view from the veranda; a pair of bluebirds chased an inquisitive red squirrel from their nest in a post of the fence. Robins, swallows, kingbirds, blackbirds, woodpeckers, graybirds, canaries, humming-birds, and some others which I can't name, are frequent visitors, and probably have nests nearby. If for no other reason, I would want trees near the house, instead of half a mile away, where our wood-lots are now standing.

Near-by is a small patch of alfalfa. It was sowed on level, but well-drained, fairly-rich clay loam a year ago, on barley, following roots. It keeps well ahead of the red clover and timothy beside it, and is a real good stand. Twenty pounds to the acre, and three bushels of barley, were sown. The way the hens go for it is a revelation, at least to the writer. It makes eggs, too, although they are fed grain, also. Unlike larger stock, they don't wander all over the field, destroying as much as they eat, but keep it cleaned off close, as they require. Whether they will seriously injure its growth, remains to be seen, but it is surely a cheap way of feeding hens.

Wheat is doing fairly well now, but spring grains and pastures are backward. New seedlings are poor, averaging, maybe, forty per cent. of a good crop. Prospects for fruit-setting are rather poor, because of cold, wet weather, which hinders the bees and other insects from fertilizing them. Sheltered orchards, and those having hives of bees in them should do best, other conditions being equal. It is hard on the bees, too. They are building up but slowly, getting scarcely enough nectar to keep them going.

J. H. BURNS.
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Norfolk County, Ont., Judging Class, with A. E. Yeager's "Sensation" Under Review.