

# FARMER'S ADVOCATE

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## Editorial.

### Methods of Farming Revolutionizing.

The avidity with which farmers seized upon any idea that speakers at the farmers' institute campaign, just closed in Manitoba, advanced that even suggested a method of improvement upon present conditions, augurs well for the future of agriculture. The progress already made in the older-settled parts can hardly be realized unless seen. Higher land values and intimations of decreasing fertility have had the effect of stimulating an interest in newer systems, and, as a result, practices are now common which a few years ago were entirely scouted. For instance, large fields of tame hay are grown, summer-fallowing is being discontinued, the pursuit of the phantom of the general-purpose horse is being abandoned, and the recognized breeds and types are being adhered to. These advanced practices are spreading, and wherever they go their methods mean progress, as evidenced by clean fields, healthy crops, large yields, higher-priced stock, and all the general indications of prosperity about buildings and equipment.

The passing of the summer-fallow, and its substitution with grass crops, is one of the most significant changes. There the change is not general, but is bound to become more so. The advocates of the new system can demonstrate its advantages. It introduces the conditions of virgin fertility by adding vegetable matter to the soil, thus preventing drifting and the effects of excessive drought. It rids the land of weeds. It provides the stock with more and better feed, thus making possible the keeping of more stock on a given area. It insures a heavy crop, but not a too rank growth of straw, and it distributes the farm work more evenly. On the original prairie, it is estimated that from twenty to forty acres are required to keep one head of stock a year. With the use of brome grass, an acre of pasture has been known to sustain two steers during the whole summer.

Agriculture in the West, like every other successful enterprise in a new field, has partaken more of an extensive than of an intensive character, but in the very nature of things, the change which was inevitable is coming, and the fortunate man is the one who changes his methods with changing conditions of climate, fertility, markets, population, and every other condition or circumstance that affects values of farm produce.

The statement that grass cannot be grown in certain localities can no longer be taken seriously. In its natural state nearly every acre of the prairie produced grass, and cultivated varieties of sufficiently different characteristics are available, so that the failure to get a catch must be credited more to lack on the part of the farmer than to any peculiarity of soil or climate.

Probably the best evidence of the future success of agriculture is the interest that has been displayed in the study of animal form. Everywhere one goes there is the same earnest effort to become efficient, in the judging of horses particularly, and, in breeding, a decided discrimination against horses lacking in quality, off in type, under the size required in their class, faulty in action, or possessing any of the serious defects to which horseflesh is heir. Such an awakening has seldom been observed in the history of any country, and with the broadening mental scope which such study engenders, the prospects for raising exceptionally high-class stock are decidedly bright.

Seed selection is another subject that people show a keen interest in. The principles involved in this work and the possibilities arising from

a careful practice of them are so obvious that grain-growers at once make an effort to act upon the suggestions they receive. Tree-planting, dairying, soil cultivation, etc., are all subjects of which there is every evidence that people are anxious to learn, and such learning means greater success.

### The Incoming Tide.

The great tide of immigration which has set in Canadawards of late years must be a source of genuine satisfaction to the majority of us. It promises much for the development of our country, and that there is boundless opportunity for development must be conceded even by those who would fain stem the tide. Millions of acres of rich virgin soil, countless areas of forest to be judiciously utilized, vast measures of coal, mines of gold, silver, copper and iron, as yet undreamed of—these are the assets which Canada holds for the coming legions and the coming race. And it is not a vain dream to look forward to the time when a vast people shall swarm from Labrador to the Pacific, and again north to the extremity of the great wheat belt and the remotest bounds of the timber line. To the romancer, the poet, the lover of stream, and wood and wild flower, the picture, in some aspects, is not a pleasant one. For these Canada must lose immeasurably. But to those who would see her develop into a great nation, the prospect is as satisfactory as it is certain of fulfilment. This is a commercial age, and in Canada, as in other progressive lands, chimneys must rear, whistles must blow, and the broad swards of crocus and flame-flower must give way to the upheaval of brown earth and the yellow glare of the wheat field. After all, to no small extent, commerce rules the world.

In connection with this influx there is an observation that may not be amiss. To a people in bulk it may not mean much; to the individual, immeasurably, and, when all is said, is not this a matter that counts? Is not the beat of a human heart worth more in the light of eternity than the boundless acres of an inanimate world? It concerns the reception which these incoming strangers meet at the hands of the Canadian people. Here they come—Scotch, Irish, English, German, Russian, French, Assyrian, and so on through the whole list—peoples as varied in character as in name, and occasionally as different, from the matter-of-fact, "to the manner born" Canadian, as may well be imagined. We look upon them curiously, and not seldom their little peculiarities strike us. They do not think as we do about a variety of matters; they have their own way of doing things, a way to us often clumsy and roundabout. Perhaps, too often we are inclined to be supercritical. We forget that in a foreign land we, too, should have our "peculiarities," and so we wrap ourselves up in a Pharisaic mantle as unlovable as all Pharisaism cannot but be. We do not give these people the warm heart grasp that our humanity should impel us to give. We are cold and standoffish; we know it and they know it. When they work for us we often get out of patience immediately, and instead of instructing gently and waiting a little, we are too much inclined to send the unintentional offender off about his business. His business? Alas, rather our business, for can we rid ourselves of the responsibility of being, each one of us, "his brother's keeper"?

Would it not be much more neighborly to consider these strangers who have come within our gates? Far from home they have come, and often the homesickness for the old faces and the "old familiar scenes" has its clutch upon the heart when the face tells it not. A strange land,

strange customs, strange faces, strange hearts, and more than likely a dearth of money when money too often means "friends," social recognition, comfort itself. Let us put ourselves in the place of such wanderers; imagine ourselves afar in a foreign land under just such conditions—longing for the old home, the neighbor plowing over the fence, the old beech at the gate, the lilacs up the lane, and the catbird gurgling its heart out among the apple blossoms. Let us see the cold faces, catch the half-hidden smile at our awkwardness, and know that nowhere is there the heart that will take us to itself. Let us realize all this and be kind. Let us not fail in the duty our humanity demands of us. Canada glories in her imperialism. May she also glory in a cosmopolitanism which will understand a whole world, and the human heart of a world which is, after all, in all lands, but one.

### Farmers Retiring.

Throughout the country instances are not wanting of successful farmers who, having made a comfortable competence, either have retired to the neighboring towns, or are making arrangements to do so. Doubtless a respite from exacting work is well deserved by such men and their wives, and at first one and all are prepared to congratulate them on their prospects of comfort for years to come. But does retired life always afford the comfort and contentment expected? Alas, no. Men and women accustomed all their lives to steady work and life's responsibilities soon find a life of comparative indolence more or less of a burden, and, unless some useful work is secured to occupy their hands and minds, find themselves becoming physically weaker. The pity of the situation is that help cannot be secured to carry on the work of the farm so that the owner might continue in pursuit of the work he has all his life been engaged in, and might hand down to his own posterity as a family heritage the land upon which he has exerted his best efforts, and which in turn has sustained him and his through many years. There is something more than mere sentiment in the persistency with which such a practice is followed in older countries, but too great a lack of it in the easy manner in which Canadians part with the old homestead.

Fortunately, not all who leave their farms for the life in town sell out. Some are able to put good men in charge, so that should they desire they may return again to their old homes, and very often they do. Probably the most contented retired farmer, and the one who proves the greatest benefactor to his neighborhood and country is the man who, on retiring to town, applies himself to some branch of farming or gardening in his new surroundings. To a man who sets about the care of a large garden, testing and growing different varieties of fruits and vegetables, who experiments with clovers and grasses, growing seed acclimatized to his neighborhood, who grows small plots of grain from which to select the most prolific strains, or who in any other way leads the public mind to think upon and adopt improved methods, the approbation of the whole country is due. And there is an immense amount of work of this kind that should be done, the results of it to be brought out at the fairs; or, it may bear fruit more directly by the neighbors availing themselves at once of the experience gained by those who have conducted the work. In the new country, of all places under the sun, no man should think of ceasing from his work while strength lasts, and no one should rashly abandon work in which he has become proficient to engage in a business for which he may not prove adapted.