

Editorial.

Agricultural Prosperity.

It is almost axiomatic to say that the welfare of the whole country depends upon agriculture—on the production of mother earth. Agriculture is the foundation of everything, of national and industrial prosperity. Trade is only the handmaid of agriculture, and hence it should be the wish of everybody for "God speed the plow." It is an old maxim that God helps those who help themselves, and although agricultural prosperity depends to a certain extent upon the climate and propitious seasons, there is a large amount of responsibility placed upon individual exertions, intelligence and thrift. In reviewing the past year the agriculture of the country has been fairly prosperous; undoubtedly the season in Ontario was too humid, and the unpropitious winter and spring had ill effects. Fall wheat was a failure, indeed, but then a great deal of this was owing to poor cultivation, bad drainage, and a lack of rotation of crops. Wheat growing, without any alternate, has been practiced too much, and hence it could not be expected, according to progressive agriculture, that continuous wheat growing would last in the older cultivated lands of this country. For six years the fall wheat crop has been good, but continual wear on one crop, taking the same elements of plant food from year to year from the soil, has exhausted some portions of them. The elements required for wheat are not those required for clover, oats and roots, and hence a poor crop of wheat this year might have brought forth an abundance in some other crop. It is an old saying that "one man's meat is another man's poison," and certainly it has its counterpart in the vegetable kingdom, and it has been strongly argued by a school of botanists that the poisonous exhalations and residues of one plant were food for another. However, prosperity and advanced agriculture go hand in hand. It has always been our aim to impress upon our farmers in Canada the advantages of a mixed husbandry, so that the crops cannot all fail at once. Besides, a husbandry varied enlarges a man's conceptions, and he is able to judge of more than one thing. Of course specialists are required in different lines of agriculture, but in this country the general farmer is the one that prospers. This may be illustrated by the fluctuations that take place in any given line of agriculture: Wheat pays one year, and everybody grows this cereal; the cheese business has prospered, and everybody makes cheese and butter; hogs pay for a year or so, and then the country is flushed with pork, &c. Then a reaction on something sets in, the supply is greater than the demand, and then somebody loses. In a country like this, which is capable of such varied productions, agricultural prosperity will depend upon a mixed husbandry. Where this has been practiced during the present season there has been prosperity. If wheat was a poor crop, oats were enormous, and the barley crop is good. First-class horses are in good demand; cheese and butter high. If crops and prices are compared it will be found that for the past year a mixed husbandry, taking the whole country, has produced average results; and for success for the future and national prosperity the ADVOCATE recommends to its readers to study agricultural economy, a mixed husbandry, and trying to make two blades of grass grow where only one grew before. This will produce prosperity.

Shooting the Small Birds.

Farmers are greatly to blame for permitting the wholesale destruction of insectivorous and other birds which takes place on our public holidays. More especially was this noticeable on the recent Thanksgiving Day, when the country was overrun by youths and men carrying all sorts of firearms, from the latest pattern of breech-loaders down to the antiquated musket. Every description of bird unfortunate enough to cross the paths of these pot-hunters, was blazed away at, not the slightest thought being given as to whether it was useful to the farmer, and of a class protected (save the mark!) by law. It was in the eyes of the shooters something to fire at and help to swell their bags, and, in nine cases out of ten, to be flung away after being exhibited as evidence of the prowess of the sportsman, they being of little or no value for food. Now, the great majority of the birds killed were woodpeckers and other insectivorous birds, and the killing of a single bird means the multiplication of thousands of insects. It is no wonder that insect pests are yearly on the increase and more difficult to combat, when the very means provided by nature to keep them in check are ruthlessly destroyed to provide very questionable amusement. Had these innocent creatures been permitted to live and propagate, it would not be a great length of time ere we should have abundance of feathered friends anxious to do their duty in keeping down our insect enemies. Whereas, if this wholesale depletion is permitted the consequences will be very serious. Yet, in the face of this, many farmers encourage the wanton work, instead of prosecuting the offenders or prohibiting them crossing their lands. We are quite aware that the majority of farmers will hesitate before taking such steps, because they do not wish to be considered mean by their acquaintances. Far better that than be robbed of their true friends, the birds. Let these farmers ponder over the question, how many grubs and insects one of these birds will consume in a day, and then calculate how many in a year; they will be surprised at the quantity? Then think over the number of eggs these insects will lay in a single season, and it will not take him long to arrive at the conclusion that he had better protect the birds.

Both in Canada and the States it has been clearly demonstrated that in orchards and other places where the birds had been encouraged and protected, good crops had resulted. This subject is one that we earnestly recommend for discussion by the "Farmers' Clubs."

On the Wing.

CHICAGO.

We arrived at this city on Thursday morning, the 15th November, being the second day of the Sixth Annual Fat Stock Show, and entered the building about 9 o'clock. The Exposition building was fitted up for the stock show; so large is this building that only half was required for the exhibit of the fat stock, which was well arranged, conveniently situated, and kept in excellent order. A large square was enclosed in the centre of the building in which the cattle to be judged were taken. This was kept clean by having about six inches of sawdust laid over the floor. All droppings were immediately removed. We passed up and down the long tiers of stalls, then through the sheep and hog pens; next to the stalls of the breeding stock of cattle and horses that were offered for sale, most of which were to be sold by public auction on different days. Some hundreds of cattle were to be seen here, the majority being Shorthorns, although there were a large lot of Polled Angus, Galloways and Here-

fords; these last mentioned belonged to H. M. Cochrane, of Compton, P. Q. A few Ayrshires and Polled Norfolk cattle were there for sale, but these two last mentioned lots were inferior looking specimens. The horses offered were principally Percherons and Clydesdales.

We were amply repaid for our journey, for such a grand sight of really pure beef animals we had never before seen gathered together. In our opinion they surpassed the exhibit of last year; although the sheep and hogs shown did not equal the exhibit of last year. The Shorthorn exhibit alone was quite a show, for such numbers of magnificent animals of great weights at such early ages were to be seen; we doubt if ever such another exhibit has taken place. The mind of the public has for a long time been centering on this class, and here they have eclipsed everything. We might be inclined to call this the climax of the Shorthorn exhibitions, because they now stand pre-eminent. We presume that three-fourths of the fat stock exhibited was of this class and by far the majority of the prizes were gained by them. No doubt there are more of this class in America than of any other pure bred class. They are driving out all other classes. The Shorthorn associations, private enterprise, and the Government expenditures have brought them to the front, and there they are likely to remain, and deservedly so, unless we can show reasons why other stock should claim attention. When an admirer of beef has seen the perfection to which Mr. Gillett has brought his car loads of beef animals which he has exhibited for years, and knowing that he has thousands of similar animals raised to such perfection that no pure bred herd in the world can compete with them in lots, ages and individual animals, and still have no pedigree, he will believe that the climax for the Shorthorn has arrived; that they stand the Kings of stock at the present time. Notwithstanding this, they have rivals of no mean order, and the time has arrived when we must consider whether too much attention has not been paid to one class. The lordly qualities of the Polled Angus and their beautifully marbled beef, and the Herefords and their fattening propensities, are rivals not to be despised. In many localities these will be preferred, but comparatively few of them were to be seen at this exhibition, although the few that were there carried off high premiums.

Our great dairy stock are not pre-eminent as beefing animals, their nature being to divert the beef and fat producing properties into the milk pail; thus in the fat stock exhibit there is not to be seen a single Ayrshire, Jersey or Guernsey; perhaps there was a Holstein. There was a small West Highland animal, but so small as only to bring contempt on that class. The old stock from which the celebrated roast beef of old England is reported to have been in great favor, was not to be seen, that is the old English, long-horn Durham. A very useful, profitable and favorite class has not yet been exhibited on this continent, that is the Welsh cattle; they are very hardy, black cattle, having short horns. The Sussex and Devon cattle were not represented. The time may come when these cattle whose names are never heard may be in demand, and higher prices may perhaps be received for them than the Shorthorns, but in this country they are so little thought of as not to be deemed worthy of a place in the prize lists.

The most conspicuous animal was a large, red, grade ox; he was raised in Illinois, and weighed 3,290 lbs; age, 3,133 days. He was not so symmetrical as many of the other animals; his great height and size drew the attention of all.