

THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME MAGAZINE.

THE LEADING AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL IN THE
DOMINION.

PUBLISHED WEEKLY BY
THE WILLIAM WELD COMPANY (LIMITED).

JOHN WELD, MANAGER.

AGENTS FOR THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME JOURNAL,
WINNIPEG, MAN.

LONDON (ENGLAND) OFFICE:
W. W. CHAPMAN, Agent, Mowbray House, Norfolk Street,
London, W. C., England.

1. THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME MAGAZINE is published every Thursday (52 issues per year.) It is impartial and independent of all cliques or parties, handsomely illustrated with original engravings, and furnishes the most practical, reliable and profitable information for farmers, dairymen, gardeners, stockmen and home-makers, of any publication in Canada.
2. TERMS OF SUBSCRIPTION.—In Canada, United States, England, Ireland and Scotland, \$1.50 per year, in advance; \$2.00 when not paid in advance. All other countries, 12s.
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A Splendid Offer.

Business men find that there is no better advertisement than a well-satisfied customer; and a well-satisfied reader, is the strongest reliance of a public journal. Right at this point "The Farmer's Advocate and Home Magazine" grips the loyal support of the farmers and home-makers of Canada. Ten, twenty, thirty, and even forty, years is not an uncommon period during which subscribers have regularly taken the paper. They like the paper. It is the best, and it helps them. Now, we confidently ask them to extend its benefits, not only by renewing promptly, but by getting their friends to subscribe for it. Though larger and better than ever, the price (\$1.50 per year) has not been increased. We make this special offer, which is good only till Dec. 31st:

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Changing the name from one member of the family to another is not "a new subscriber." Remember, that the new subscribers will get all the copies for the balance of this year, the beautiful Christmas Number and all of 1907 for the \$1.50. This is a splendid offer. Push it hard. Begin to-day.

Many a road is entering the winter season innocent of attention by leveller or split-log drag.

Our Maritime Letter.

Whilst the word "craze" is certainly to be taken in the sense adverse, generally, there are crazes and crazes—some of them very ardently to be encouraged. Of this latter class may be considered the "Ragwort Agitation" of Maritime Canada, which has distinguished this year. We have had this highly undesirable weed luxuriating under our very nose for ever so long. In Nova Scotia it was very generally associated with a disease in cattle, the most disastrous; and still, although some were on the alert, and doing all possible things to rid the land of its presence, and personally we can turn to the pages of the press of as far back as 1888, in which exhortation was made to uproot it for its economic sins at least, nothing like a general crusade can be said to have antedated this year. Even the most lethargic has had his sleep disturbed recently, however, by weird warnings on every wind that blows. The newspapers—the mere newspapers, without an understanding of what they indite, usually—have "hollered" in loud and discordant notes; and the cheap, peripatetic agricultural lecturers—the class which has certainly sickened more earnest enquirers than any other, and done incalculable injury to the great main interest of the country—have told such really heart-rending things about this old, white-headed Jacobite, as to make youth demand, with every show of reasonableness, "Is there any time-limit to iniquity, anyway?" Of course, the professional periodicals have done their duty, cum pondere et mensura; and the grave and solemn Heads of Departments Agricultural, whatever they might have before been thinking and keeping to themselves so successfully, have broken the awful silence and let the world at last know that their hand, too, was against the common offender. Talk about your literary crazes, your Napoleonic or Lincoln limnings for magazine-makers, the whole country here was one glare of screaming yellow, and the odor of what they call in Nova Scotia—well, not quite attar of roses.

Decorative art has been enlarged to a great extent amongst us, on the Island at least, by the discovery of this addition to our otherwise innocent flora; in the store windows of the Capital, nothing commoner than a flourishing bunch of Baughlan, in full bloom, just to show their farmer patrons the enemy outshining Solomon in all his glory. Personally, if we have had one we have had a hundred enquiries for sample plants.

Now, all this may be in a rather light and airy vein, but it has its purpose, and indicates an awakening to the necessity of grappling with this far too widespread evil here, such as up to the present, no matter the serious effort, could be effected. All this in the wake of the Government's experimentation, too, fixing culpability on the ragwort for the Pictou Cattle Disease, is quite reassuring. "The heather is on fire!" and may it burn and burn until there is nothing left of noxious weeds—a reflection, at best, on the sense of decency in farming communities which cannot too entirely be safeguarded. On principle, it is a good thing to be wary of all strange plants which spread about quickly and appear to grassiate in vacant places, especially in neglected corners of farms. The day will come when a gigantic effort to eradicate has to replace the apathy which forbids the common effort of the day. But it is to be hoped that the next generation of Canadian farmers will be more intimately acquainted with the things about them than this. Education will do much to remove defects, if not all.

Satisfying, too, to us at least, is the assurance of the Live-stock Commissioner, Dr. Rutherford, who, as Veterinary-Director General of the Dominion, is responsible for the experiments at Cloverdale, which has proved that Senecio Jacobina is responsible, directly, or indirectly, for the Pictou Cattle Disease, and that the same is no longer listed among contagious diseases. He, with so many others, has read our simple articles in "The Farmer's Advocate," that of September 27th particularly, and, whilst not personally inclined to the fungus theory, will see that the experimentation in it demanded will be made. "I have read with great interest," he writes us under date of October 15th, "your various articles on the Pictou Cattle Disease and the work of our

Experiment Station at Cloverdale. A considerable amount of work along the lines suggested by you has been done, but without any definite results. For some time back samples of Sen. Jac. have been in the hands of Prof. Shutt for analysis. The point which we desired to clear up, viz., whether or not the disease was contagious, has been fairly well settled. The weed is undoubtedly to blame, but whether the toxic agent is contained in the plant itself or in fungus, as you suggest, has yet to be ascertained. Personally, I am inclined to blame the weed itself, as its record is bad, and one of its oldest names is that of 'Staggerwort,' which is certainly suggestive in view of recent experience."

We may be right, or we may be wrong. It matters little who is right or wrong, as long as we get the truth out, and, therefore, are we glad that an exhaustive test is to be made, and the question removed forever from scientific controversy. It will be one of the few contributions, too, that Canadian science has made to the world.

A. E. BURKE.

HORSES.

Pedigree—Reversion—Prepotency.

A writer on the subject of systematic breeding, in the London Live-stock Journal, says:

The aim of a breeder is to produce not only a good animal, but one better than any hitherto produced. Whether the stock bred is a bullock for the butcher, a Shire for the show-ring, or a hunter for the field, the object is the same—to produce the best of its kind. The word "best" is, perhaps, a little ambiguous in these days, when we have two separate standards—a utility and a fancy one. The object of the utility breeder is to breed an animal which, in his estimation, is best suited for the work it has to perform; the object of the "fancy" or show-ring breeder sometimes seems to be to exaggerate certain already exaggerated characters called "points," which are considered by a body of men to be essential to the breed. The same principles of breeding apply to both, however, and the same laws which govern the production of a Derby-winner must be extended to the Shire or hunter stud.

The reason so much difficulty is experienced in breeding an animal which is an improvement or advance in conformation on any of its predecessors, is the necessity of combining in one individual a greater number of infinitesimal characteristics of a given quality. All breeders will agree that it is easy enough to get one point; the difficulty arises when he tries to combine this particular point with another, and these two with still more of a given character. Whatever harm the prejudiced may consider that show competition does to our stock, it has, at least, this compensation—that every show animal is an object-lesson for those interested in this particular branch of natural science.

In spite of the numbers of persons striving to gain the ideal in a breed, how many are successful? Animals are bred which take premier place for lack of better; the perfect specimen, the ideal, is not, perhaps, attained once in twenty years out of all the numbers bred under, presumably, the most favorable circumstances. A rough computation we once took the trouble to make, of how often a practically perfect specimen was bred in a variety of animal in which I was interested, gave the result as 1 in about 10,000; but, as my object is to help and encourage the novice breeder, I will not dwell on this subject.

The first thing to which attention must be paid, when selecting stock, is pedigree. Now, it is sometimes the fashion of the skeptical to laugh at what they are pleased to designate "pedigree cranks." It is, however, generally realized by practical breeders that, without attention to it, no success can be expected.

Pedigree is simply the record of the past history of an individual. From it we learn what crosses have been made and how much inbreeding has been practiced, and from it we should be able to get a fair idea of how to breed in the future. Pedigree is, in fact, a diary or record of a breed, and it is impossible to hope to go one step forward without making use of the information it affords us. The novice breeder is always handicapped by his want of knowledge of the characteristics of prominent individuals who have taken an important part in the building up of a breed. All these ancestors had faults, and a knowledge of what these faults were would often be of inestimable value. For the sake of future generations who will suffer from the same difficulties, it behooves all breeders to keep careful records, and photographs of every member of their stud. Even the most unpossessing of the breed stock should be subjected to the ordeal of having their pictures taken, and this in a fair manner, so that

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