

Our Prize Essays.

To our great surprise, and contrary to all precedent, none of our prize essays this month have come up to the standard for publication. We never have such keen competition in the summer as in the winter months, which arises from the fact that our essayists are an industrious class of farmers, and their time during the busy season is fully occupied. The subject for September was an easy one, viz.:—*Fall Work on the Farm*, and we regret that our high expectations have been so badly frustrated, although for the first time.

There is one consolation, however. In nearly every competition it pains us to be under the necessity of rejecting so many brilliant essays which are deserving of prizes, and now we have the pleasure of revising the manuscripts and finding a number of meritorious essays which, although above the standard, had to be rejected for want of space to be then devoted to the subjects in question. The fortunate winner is Mr. S. A. Laidman, who competed for the prize on *Improving the Soil by Green Manuring*, published in our June issue. His essay appears in this issue.

As will be seen by our conditions on the first page, the second prize is given in books, as we are desirous of disseminating useful agricultural literature amongst our farmers, which will prove more profitable to them than their value in money. We hope our readers will continue the good work, and compete for as many prizes as possible.

Dominion Farmers' Council.

This COUNCIL, which was adjourned until October, will soon resume its winter session. We are asked to state that the subject of Commercial Union, which was on the program for discussion for the October meeting, has been postponed, as the attention of the first meeting will be fully occupied in discussing plans and laying out work for the winter campaign, no paper being discussed.

For the benefit of new subscribers who have not had the opportunity of reading the interesting reports of the meetings held last winter, published in the *ADVOCATE*, we may be permitted to state that the DOMINION FARMERS' COUNCIL is a body of intelligent, practical farmers who meet monthly in the City of London for the purpose of discussing questions pertaining to agriculture. The session extends from October till June. The influence and usefulness of the COUNCIL are, however, not confined to the county of Middlesex; it has some twelve or fifteen branch organizations in different parts of the province, which were amalgamated with the COUNCIL last winter, and the number is rapidly increasing.

Any farmer who is desirous of organizing a farmers' club in his locality, has only to write to the Secretary of the COUNCIL, W. A. Macdonald, London, Ont., who will furnish the applicant with the necessary instructions for organizing clubs, and, when the club is formed, each member is entitled, free of charge, to a printed pamphlet containing the constitution and by-laws of the club. Last winter the COUNCIL also presented each amalgamated club with an instrument for testing milk, which enabled the farmers, by a very simple process, to test the quality of the milk from each of his cows, thereby enabling him to breed from the best and weed out the worst. When the reports from these clubs come

in, we are informed that the COUNCIL will discuss the propriety of continuing these presents to newly formed clubs, or the employment of the funds for other purposes; in all cases, the money is to be employed for advancing what the COUNCIL considers to be the best interests of agriculture.

Stock-Raising and Grain-Growing in Relation to Soil Fertility and Exhaustion.

No. II.

The assertion of the theorists that the manure is the main factor in stock-raising, beef and dairy products being secondary, leads to the following considerations: First of all, let us locate the "general purpose" animal. A breed fitted for general purposes must produce beef and milk with relative equality of profit; for if one of these merits predominates, there can be no use in retaining the other. It is nonsense to speak of a general purpose animal whose milk is more profitable than its beef, or *vice versa*; but as all milkers must give some beef, and all beefers some milk, the minor characteristics cannot be entirely ignored. The food is converted into beef when beef is the more profitable, and into milk when milk is the more profitable.

But, according to the new theory, another factor is dragged into the issue, viz., the manure, which, in the minds of the theorists, is of greater significance than the other two factors, the manure being absolutely necessary for the purpose of maintaining or increasing the fertility of the land; in other words, the food must be converted into manure, the beef and milk being forced to work out their own salvation. Now it is evident that, under the new theory, there can be no general purpose animal or breed—that is, one equally profitable in beef, milk and manure—for the manure predominates in point of profit, and the beef and milk must therefore be reduced to the lowest minimum.

We now therefore arraign the theorists in the following counts: Professors Shaw and Brown have never advocated the establishment of a herd-book based upon the manurial value of the animals registered; but, on the contrary, the basis has been on the supposed beefing or milking characteristics of the ancestors. Even in the tests for individual merit conducted at the Model Farm and our leading exhibitions, manurial points have been totally ignored, and the other factors have been pushed to the front. The theorists, moreover, have persistently maintained that the common stock of our country consume as abundantly as their aristocratic rivals of recorded fame, without a corresponding increase of beef or dairy products, which means that the "scrub" produces the largest quantity of the richest dung, and yet these brazen-faced theorists have never come forward to espouse the cause of the "scrub" in its miraculous ability to maintain the virginity of our native soil.

These are the conclusions derived from logic: let us now hear the voice of history, practice, science, and book-keeping.

We are forced to combine history with practice for the reason that all practical farmers cannot, within the limited range of their own experience, determine the amount of exhaustion taking place in their soils; for, under a wise system of husbandry upon a deep, fertile soil, the productive capacity may be maintained for more than a generation without extrinsic aid, and we are indebted to science for our knowledge of the extent of the

loss of fertility. Some farmers know to their cost that the productiveness of their soils is gradually but surely diminishing, while others maintain and even increase the crop-bearing efficiency. The fact that farmers in a young country like Canada use very little manure from outside sources, either in the shape of purchased foods or commercial fertilizers, is no evidence in support of the theorists; for we find that older countries, originally just as fertile as ours, have to depend not only upon fertility drawn from Canadian and other farms, but the mineral wealth of the fertilizer mines all over the world is rapidly becoming exhausted to maintain fertility even in dairy and stock-raising countries. Britain requires annually between five and six thousand tons of fertilizers from these mines, the Eastern States absorb a similar amount, and Germany strews annually over her soil 550,000 tons of imported fertility in the form of mineral fertilizers, valued at \$25,000,000. Now the vast sums expended for these amounts of fertility are voluntarily paid by practical farmers, a large majority of whom have no scientific knowledge as to the use of these fertilizers, and cannot therefore apply them to the best advantage. Are these sums spent without necessity? Just as sure as the existing generation of Canadian farmers will pass away, the fertility of their farms will follow them, if they depend entirely upon the resources of their farms for the perpetuation of fertility. This is a fate common to all countries and to all ages of the world, and if Canada is to prove an exception, the burden of proof falls upon the professional theorists. The farmer with the merest practical knowledge of his profession, the theorist excepted, will admit that all farm produce sold off is a part of soil fertility, and the larger the sales the greater the exhaustion. The relation between the quantity and quality of the produce will be treated in the scientific phase of the question. (To be continued.)

"An Editor's Idea of Fairness."

For those of our readers who have taken an interest in the discussion on "Robbing the Land," we give the following letter which we sent to Mr. Shaw for publication, and which he refused to insert in his journal:

SIR.—In your August issue (p. 562) you made a false accusation against me, which you should promptly retract, if you are the man of honor which you claim to be. You assert that the article published in my columns signed "Subscriber," was written in my office by a member of my staff, and in face of this base charge you attempt to win the sympathy of your readers by assertions and insinuations that I have treated you unjustly. Permit me to inform you that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, I have never seen our correspondent "Subscriber" and I am certain that I am not personally acquainted with him. He is only known to me through his communications published in the *ADVOCATE* in reply to your article on "Robbing the Land." This statement I can prove, but the onus falls upon you to prove the truth of a falsehood.

Apparently you are unduly excited because I refused to freely advertise your papers or lectures, which I maintain contain erroneous agricultural doctrines, and yet I have generously offered to do so if you prove the truth of your theories. If I did you wrong in striking this advertisement out of your letter, what must you say against yourself for publishing merely such extracts of our letters and those of "Subscriber" as you deemed to be suitable for fanning the flame of prejudice in your readers. Instead of quoting from my June editorial (p. 162), or honestly expressing my meaning in your own words, you unjustly refer to it as "a whole column pouring out