

THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE

AND HOME MAGAZINE.

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Interview with a Faker.

While returning home by train from one of the fairs, a "Farmer's Advocate" representative, without disclosing his identity, enjoyed the rare privilege of an interview with a real professional faker, from whom was extracted the most improved methods of wringing the hard-earned dollar from innocents who are continually expecting something for nothing.

This glib-tongued individual had been visiting a number of the leading towns in Ontario during show-time, either fleecing the unwary within the confines of the exhibition park or doing business on a smaller scale beyond its limits, according to the intelligence and wit of directors to scorn the presence of such bloodsuckers. At night he busied himself with the "smart set" in the seclusion of some hotel lobby, where, over the card table, as the hours rolled by, scores of dollars changed hands, a fair percentage of which usually went his way. While the sun shone he was present with the country people, whom he declared were his easy victims in the purchase of watches, chains, charms, rings, etc., which he carried for a so-called firm in Chicago, the city of his home. "To make money in this country," said this crook, "there is not the slightest difficulty. People everywhere are looking for something big. Let a man undertake to present anything at its value and a certain class will at once turn away, but when offered a seventy-five dollar diamond ring for five bills they invariably bite, although the imitation really cost thirty-five cents."

As an attractive-looking watch was drawn from his pocket, he continued: "All classes have to be dealt with. Some, you know, are suspicious: they will not buy a timepiece from the box," pointing out a fancy leather valise near by. "but are ready to pay a good thing for the one that I am carrying." It was from every appearance made to sell. The case was of nickel, but stamped "coin silver," with an open face, and the movement made to appear dust-proof by being incased in glass. Around the dial, with its colors of red and blue, circled a beautiful pair of imitation gold hands, and within was stamped that old reliable name "Elgin," one of the many inscriptions, the writer was told, it was easy to have put on when ordering in quantity. Wholesale, these imitations, he declared, cost exactly one dollar each, but from those who were prepared to do business with a stranger, eight or

ten was easily taken. "Why, people," he went on, "love to be humbugged. I could go down into that country from Toronto to Hamilton and across to London, and lift from six to eight hundred dollars before Xmas. I know whereof I speak, because I have been in this business for years and have handled a good-sized pile."

"At the small shows," he said, "the wheel-of-fortune was a fair money-maker, but just a little slow compared with the bean in the nutshell. The latter suited those better who had money to burn and wanted something swift; it also gave the operator something worth while." Upon enquiry as to how it was managed, he stated that it was first necessary to get up a little enthusiasm. This was done by the aid of a good voice, and a few pals who assisted by hauling in the "give-aways" and otherwise making their presence felt when the business showed a tendency to lag. Over at Chicago International Show, each December, the faker said a rich harvest was regularly gathered in. He explained that the game which worked best in the big city was selling jewellery, accompanied in each case by a money prize. All that was necessary was a fine outfit, including a dashing team and costly phaeton. With these, a fine suit of clothes, silk hat and strong voice, a fair-sized audience is assured. "First, perhaps," he continued, "a gold watch is offered at \$10.00; if a bid is not made at once, a \$5.00 bill is added, and very soon the seedy fellows from away back in Cornstalk Valley walk forward with their coin "in paying quantities." This schemer went on to relate plans which were now under consideration for getting away with the cash at the St. Louis Exposition in 1904, but these as well as others in which Canadians would be more particularly interested, we cannot at this time publish for want of space.

In parting company with this inimical character we could not but ask ourselves the question, "How long will people continue to be humbugged?" The statement made several years ago by a noted circus manager, that "you can fool all the people some of the time, and some of the people all the time," seems to be as true to-day as ever. The explanation of the schemes adopted by this faker in doing business, we believe to be substantially correct. They are going on every day in this land. One had only to visit some of our leading fairs this fall to see them in operation. Throughout the country hundreds who never read an article such as this are the victims; they are too ready to deal with unknown persons who offer large bargains. These men are gone when the empty box is opened, and so is the hard-earned cash which was given them. The only possible remedy for this condition seems to be with intelligent citizens. Everything possible should be done to give these characters a wide berth. We have no room in Canada for such.

The Charm of Distance.

Policy prevails in almost every line of business, and men in the race for fame or fortune are frequently found following courses and adopting methods which their better judgment, apart from the exigencies of fashion or custom or the trend of the times, tells them are not calculated to conserve their own best interests in the long run, nor those of the special line of business in which they are engaged. This thought has been suggested by a consideration of the course of many, if not most, of the breeders of pure-bred stock in depending too much on the judgment, methods and advice of others, and too little upon their own good sense or intuitions and the teachings of their own experience and observation. The enchantment which distance lends, or the desire for possession of something outside our own, while, if followed wisely and with discretion, sometimes and under some circumstances proves to be for the best, is frequently found to be a mistake. For instance, a breeder is fortunate in possessing a good family or strain of stock that has proved its potency in reproducing, with a fair degree of uniformity, the good qualities that have made it satisfactory, but he hears or reads of a family made famous for the time being by the payment of a fancy price for one or more of its scions, it may be by men who have more money than knowledge of what constitutes a good beast, having perhaps made their pile in some other business and having taken up stock raising or dealing as an investment or a pastime. Straightway our formerly staid and satisfied breeder becomes uneasy in his mind, under the impression that he has not the fashionable and moneymaking strain, and rests not till he has disposed as best he can of his well-tested and well-favored families and has put his money into fewer of the fashionable sort, and as the best of these are likely held at too high a price for the

size of his purse, he invests in such as his means will afford, which may be but the culls of a class the best of which it may be are no better than the average of those he parted with, if indeed they are as good, but he congratulates himself that he has been fortunate in getting into the swim, and although his practiced eye, not less than the scales, may convince him that the newcomers put on less flesh or yield less milk than those he used to feed, he pats the pocket containing the pedigrees of his purchase and recalls the records of their grandparents, their cousins, or their aunts, and soothes his doubts and fears with thoughts of the prospect of selling their produce for fancy prices to other deluded seekers after scions of the same strain. Of course, it is not fair nor just to assume that the average of fashionable families are inferior in individual merit or performance to those not in the "society" class, but it is the tendency to buy and breed from inferior members of the family when one cannot afford the price of the better ones that so often leads to degradation and disaster in the herd. The same fascination attaches to and the same consequences not infrequently follow the desire to place an imported sire at the head of the herd, a worthy ambition when discretion and good judgment are exercised in making choice of a suitable one, for it must be acknowledged that American stock breeders owe an incalculable debt to the influence of the blood of imported animals, but we have to admit the fact that not all that are imported are imperial in the sense of superior excellence; that, indeed, of not a few that have been brought over the sea the best that can be said of them is that they left their country for their country's good. Yet, who has not seen such here displace home-bred sires superior to them in individuality and just as soundly bred, and from as good or better ancestry? All things being equal as to individual merit and breeding, one can appreciate the ambition and the wisdom of selecting a sire of differing blood lines, raised on other soil and in other surroundings, for the conservation of constitutional vigor or for conformity to a desired type; but if the change be made only or mainly for the mere name of his being imported, the result may be, as we have known it to be in many instances, not only disappointing, but disastrous. It is surely wiser to breed from an animal of one's own breeding that he knows is a good one and from worthy parentage and a line of good breeders than to take on trust one that is below par in his personal make-up and of whose ancestry, individually, little or nothing is known. Yet, we have known the opposite course to be taken in many a case, the breeder having seen his own production, in the hands of others, go to the top in the show-ring, and as a sire, his purchase to replace proving a failure in both these respects. This, too, has often been the result of following the fascination of fashion or fads—it having been found that fashion in the field of fine stock changes as it does in the cut of men's clothes or the headgear of women—and when one who follows the fashion finds that it has changed, and realizes that he is "out of it," he is of all men the most miserable.

The lesson in all this is that men should do their own thinking, and while watching the tendency of the times and the legitimate requirements of their markets, use discretion in the use of means to attain the desired end, keeping a vigilant eye on fanciful theories and the vagaries of faddists, and working out their own salvation by the use of their own best judgment, founded on their reading, experience and observation. While advising caution in the adoption of changes of doubtful expediency, we would also remind our readers of the fate of some who have split upon the rock of stubbornness, for it does not follow that a stamp of stock that is standard for one time will be suitable for all times, and it is better to join the procession when one is convinced it is heading the right way than to stand still or to wait till it is out of sight, or to follow when one is too late for the fair.

The letters of Hon. A. J. Lovejoy, of Illinois, and Prof. W. J. Kennedy, of Iowa, on methods of dealing with hog cholera, published in the "Farmer's Advocate" for October 15th, put the subject in a new light, and have started some serious thinking on the part of a good many Canadian swine raisers and others.