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# EDITORIAL.

Sometimes people become so concerned for the perpetuation of an institution or an organization as to lose sight of the objects for which it exists.

It is not safe to assume that a new plant growing in the field is as harmless as it looks. Have the intruder identified.

Raise the fall calves. Winter affords the necessary time to observe and attend to youngsters, babying them along till well started on the road to thrifty development.

Raising crops in the summer and feeding them in winter, is a policy that will aid in keeping efficient labor steadily on the farm. If the right crops are raised, and skilfully fed to the right class of stock, the financial results will be satisfactory.

A proper arena for the judging of carriage and other horses of that type, an enlarged main building so arranged that exhibits of manufactures may be seen to advantage by the throngs, and a suitable separate room where paintings and curios may be observed in comfort, are three outstanding needs of the Western Fair that would go far to increase its popularity and usefulness.

Prof. Jacques Loeb, in an address before a scientific congress at Geneva, Switzerland, elaborated the theory that the well-known phenomenon of plants such as the sunflower turning to the light or source of light is due to chemical influences in the cells, and that what is called "will" in some of the lower animals is a similar product.

Broadly speaking, about eighty per cent. of the elements of fertility in the feeds fed on our farms is voided in animal excreta. With fattening cattle, the proportion is larger, with growing and milch cattle less. Eighty per cent. is perhaps an average. In buying feeds like bran and oil cake, not only are the cattle made to yield larger increase, but the land is fattened through enrichment of the manure pile—assuming that manure is well cared for and applied without excessive waste. There is a hidden profit of surprising proportions in the liberal feeding of good stock.

## LONDON, ONTARIO, SEPTEMBER 28, 1911

### **Electric Power Possibilities.**

The announcement, in last week's "Farmer's Advocate" of the successful application of hydroelectric power from Niagara River to do heavy farm work, such as silo-filling, in Oxford County, was read with keen interest in all parts of the country that may in the future be served with electrical energy. What was a few years ago not even a dream, is now a reality.

It was only in 1870 that a Russian officer named Paul Jablochkov, passing through Paris, invented an electric candle, consisting of two rods of carbon placed side by side, and separated by insulating material. This, with the alternating current dynamo, provided electric arc lighting in simple form. The genius of practical inventors in Britain and America developed marvellous improvements in rapid succession, until we now have in use such perfect systems of illumination. The reversable action of the dynamo and its use as a motor was discovered about 1873, whereupon efforts began to be made to solve the problem of transmitting power. Electrical traction made rapid strides in America between 1890 and 1900, but early in the new century the distribution in bulk began to assume important proportions in Great Britain. The use of giant streams like that of Niagara River for the development of electrical energy, and the impetus given by power and lighting companies springing into existence soon invested the subject with tremendous importance to the people. The conservation and regulation of these natural sources of supply in the public interest soon became vital questions, and one outcome in the Province of Ontario was the creation of the Hydro-Electric Power Commission, under the enthusiastic and untiring chairmanship of Hon. Adam Beck, of London, whereby electricity for power and lighting purposes was brought within reach of cities and towns upon favorable terms, and also affording a competitor under public control with private corporations, including those controlling the supplies of coal for generating steam power. Its use in the urban municipalities soon set farmers and legislators Knowledge has been acquired of what thinking. countries like Germany and Switzerland are doing with electric power applied to farm, as well as industrial operations, and this will assuredly pave the way for further advances in this country. In the case of the particular demonstration recorded in last week's "Farmer's Advocate," the installation was due to the persistent private enterprise of several Oxford County farmers near Ingersoll, which had had a local electric plant in operation. Farmers in the vicinity had availed themselves of its nearness to secure light for their homes and outbuildings, and the success attending the more recently established Niagara Power in the town naturally focussed the attention of others, and these men effected an arrangement with the council whereby they have been enabled to tap the new town supply of energy. The old oil lamps are now relegated to the back shelf, and the smoky lantern hangs on the wall; while. as we have seen, the cutting-boxes to fill the big silos are driven by the invisible current that flows through a wire from Niagara.

the greatest advance ever yet made in the system and conditions under which Western Ontario farming is conducted.

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#### Farming, Past and Present.

The outstanding even of recent date in the book world was the appearance of the Encyclopædia Britannica, which, after an itinerant history of over 140 years, has found a worthy home at Cambridge University, England, which it brings in immediate contact with all English-speaking peoples. This monumental eleventh edition of twenty-nine volumes is dedicated to His Majesty King George V., and President Wm. H. Taft, of the United States. In Volume I. some thirtyfour pages are devoted to the general subject of agriculture, covering ancient systems and British and American agriculture. There are also a score of special articles, including one on Canadian agriculture, and another of twenty-four pages on dairying, showing that in their survey of human knowledge the editors have given adequate recognition to the science, art and industry of the farmer who uses the soil, with live-stock rearing as an agency, to produce the means of subsistence for men.

In its most primitive and permanent aspects, the history of agriculture is described as the history of man. In its simplest form, crops were raised on one patch of ground till exhausted, when it was allowed to run wild and abandoned to the weeds for another. After all the teachings of the centuries, men are found pursuing the same fatuous practice. The desire for speedy wealthgetting has depleted many Western States areas, and too many grain-growers in the Canadian West are prone to repeat the short-sighted practice. Fortunately, waning yields, the increase of weeds, and corrective visitations of summer frosts and hail, teach the needed lessons of going more slowly by a rational system of mixed husbandry, with crop rotation.

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The monuments of Egypt contain the earliest

Variation is infinite in both nature and art. Careful examination of the trees on a lawn will reveal many gradations of individuality in habit of growth, in bark, foliage and fruit. Mechanics assert that no two rods of steel are just the same, nor will they behave exactly the same under similar treatment. Of all occupations, agriculture can be perhaps the least safely or surely prosecuted according to cut-and-dried instructions. Differences of seasons, soils and other conditions introduce endless complexities with which the farmer's judgment, initiative and resourcefulness must cope. Probably this explains in part the old time disposition to be impatient of rules and principles. However, in these latter days we are coming to appreciate that a sane, broad knowledge of science can be utilized to great advantage when applied with judgment. But, without individual capacity, agricultural science availeth hitle, often leading to ludicrous mistakes.

In the territories served by transmission lines, large numbers of farmers will, no doubt, ere long, in the advent of a scasible and economical plan, be using electric power. In other districts it will assuredly have the effect of stimulating the use of other cheap and efficient forms of power. The next twenty five years will undoubtedly witness

information on farming. There it was done on great estates by tenants or slave labor. The Nile annually distributed fertility over the river bottoms, which were subsequently stirred by clumsy wooden plows. By hand the clods were levelled with wooden hoes, and the seed scattered by hand was pressed into the earth by the feet of flocks of sheep driven over the fields. Oxen tramped out the grain which was winnowed by the winds, modifications of which practice not a few readers of "The Farmer's Advocate" have seen practiced.

Irrigation is no new scheme, for it was used ages ago in the countries of Babylon and Assyria. People who now sagaciously commend sheep-raising for larger holdings, involving less close supervision and labor, are only following the example of what was done ages ago in Italy. Virgil, judging from his advice to husbandmen, would feel rather at home in the class-rooms of Canadian Agricultural Colleges. He warned his readers that the repetition of one crop would exhaust the ground; that rotation would lighten the strain; if the land were not fallowed every other year, spelt should follow-pulse, vetches or lupin: the exhausted soil must be dressed copiously with manure or ashes; stubble-burning sometimes does good; work the land thoroughly; harrow down the clods; level the ridge by cross-plowing; irri-