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EDITORIAL.

Use of Good Sires.

Never was the need for nor the encouragement to improvement of the beef and dairy cattle of the country and of our live stock generally greater than at present. The only available means of securing the best prices in the markets that are open to us is by producing the best quality, and this in live stock can only be done by means of the use of pure-bred males in grading up the general stock of the country to a higher standard and by liberal and judicious feeding, combined with good breeding to secure early maturity, which means quick returns. The produce of a good pure-bred bull will readily sell for two to five dollars a head more as calves or yearling stockers with ordinary treatment than the offspring of a scrub or grade bull at the same age and with similar care, while with better treatment of both, the difference in value will be greater, and the better-bred cattle will bring from \$15 to \$20 a head more as finished heaves and be ready for market a year earlier than the ill-bred class.

The reports of sales of fancy cattle at high prices are perhaps liable to discourage the average farmer from thinking of securing a pure-bred bull, but a little enquiry will satisfy him that one that will suit his purpose well may, even in these good times for the breeders, be had for a very reasonable price; in many cases, indeed, for less than it has cost to raise him, when it is considered that he has probably consumed the whole milk of a cow for one season, and been liberally fed otherwise. We do not advise buying the lowest-priced bull, even a pure-bred, for use in a herd of grade cows, believing that it pays well in the long run to use the best one can afford, but good, useful bulls can be bought for one hundred dollars, and even less, that will greatly improve the character of a grade herd and rapidly increase the value of the young stock. We know for a fact that there are hundreds of excellent young bulls in the hands of breeders, both of beef and dairy breeds, throughout the country that can be bought well worth the money to the average farmer, and we are quite sure that many farmers are standing in their own light by using inferior sires and squandering money by feeding good food to ill-bred beasts, which give but a poor return for what they consume. Those who have not the means or the accommodation for keeping a bull have little excuse for breeding to scrub sires, since in nearly every district the services of pure-bred bulls may be had for a moderate fee, and it will pay well to drive one's cows a few miles rather than to put up with inferior stuff. In some districts the stock of cattle has been greatly improved by the use of pure-bred sires brought in by the agricultural societies, using a part of their funds for this purpose, the members having the benefit of their services for a moderate fee. In other cases, neighbors have agreed to patronize bulls brought in by one of themselves, each pledging a certain number of cows at a stated fee. The syndicate system has in some cases worked quite satisfactorily, a number of farmers joining in the purchase of a sire to be kept by one of themselves, and standing the animal at a price for service that with good management may readily repay his cost while improving the stock of the district. This system is perhaps better adapted to the handling of stallions, but could

also very well be used for the introduction of good bulls. Private ownership is, however, more satisfactory as a rule, and with the use of good judgment in making selections, satisfactory sires can be secured on reasonable terms, and since it is largely a waste of time and money to feed inferior stock, the sooner a start is made in the line of improvement the better. It takes time to grow a horse or a steer to maturity, and the sooner advantage is taken of the use of good blood the sooner will the best returns be secured.

Building Permanent Silos.

On thousands of Canadian and American farms the silo is now recognized as an essential part of an outfit of buildings for the storage of fodder crops. The word silo is said to be derived from siros, a Greek term, descriptive of a pit for holding grain. Its purpose is the preservation of food for stock in a green and succulent form, the advantage of this being that it brings into winter feeding the summer condition of food calculated to promote digestion and healthfulness when animals are closely housed, and also large production of milk in case of dairy cows, and rapid gains in flesh when fed in conjunction with grain rations. In general practice it is also held that there is less waste than in the field-curing of corn, now conceded to be par excellence the crop for making ensilage. Extravagant claims have doubtless been made for the silo and ensilage, but the steady growth of the system and the extremely isolated cases in which silos have been discarded, go to show that the plan has substantial merit, because practical men, who have a keen eye to the cost of production, are not liable to persist in following a delusion.

This season is likely to see as many, if not more, new silos constructed and more corn grown in Canada than in any previous year. "What manner of silo shall I build?" is, therefore, a practical question with the farmer. In the first place, the walls must be sufficiently strong to resist (without spreading or cracking) the great pressure caused by the settling and heating of the contents when first put in; they must be smooth inside, to allow the mass to settle freely; and air-tight. When the green cut corn is put in, a degree of fermentation begins and the temperature rises, which expels the air within the mass, which settles and becomes firm. Further chemical changes practically cease. Providing air is not allowed to penetrate, the product—ensilage—may be preserved almost indefinitely. How can these conditions be secured, at a reasonable outlay?

The earlier silos, of stone or brick, plastered, were ponderous and costly. In the quest for a more economical structure, the square-shaped wooden silo came in vogue, but, as a rule, proved too short-lived, and was succeeded by a much simpler, more quickly constructed and less expensive form, the round stave silo, which is still, generally speaking, the most popular. Though not permanent and liable to collapse when empty in summer, without a roof, it has proved a great advance on previous styles. A medium-sized silo of that kind can be erected for about \$50.

With the advent of cement concrete as a building material on the farm, men have for a couple of years past been turning their attention in that direction. Many farmers felt that by the use of cement a permanent silo could be secured at a fair outlay that would fill the conditions necessary for making good ensilage. Learning that in the counties of Huron and Perth, cement silos had

been erected in large numbers, the "Farmer's Advocate" decided to begin an enquiry as to what the results had been in that district, in the hope that the investigation would bring to light facts that might prove generally advantageous. Last year reports from one or two quarters elsewhere had proved rather unfavorable, the porous character of the walls causing the ensilage apparently to dry out around the walls, and we also heard of silo walls cracking on account of defective foundations and being filled too soon after they were completed, so that the cement concrete had not time to "set" properly. Elsewhere in this issue we submit the results of our latest enquiry, which, we are bound to confess, are even more favorable than we had anticipated. We are greatly obliged, on behalf of our readers generally, to those who have so frankly stated their experience, which shows very clearly the conditions to be observed in cement-silo building, in order to secure thoroughly satisfactory structures, and what they will cost. In the minds of these men there appears to be no manner of doubt as to the utility of cement in constructing silos. Their statements will repay careful study, and will, we apprehend, have the effect of leading many others in the same direction. In this, and in a host of other ways, the use of cements, of which so many excellent brands are now produced in Canada, is only in its infancy. It is hardly necessary to add, in regard to cement silos, what the most casual reader can see, viz., that they must be constructed with very much greater care than the round wooden variety, and that they should not be filled so soon after completion.

A Call for Help in a Worthy Work.

To the Editor "Farmer's Advocate":

Sir,—For more than ten years the Ontario W. C. T. U. has had a Missionary Department, first called "Work Among Lumber Camps," later "Frontier Missionary Work." An expansion in the field of operations changed the name; for lumber camps led to the mining and railway construction camps also, and these to the scattered settlements away back in the bush of New Ontario, round the mouth of the mines, etc.

At first "comfort bags" and bales of literature were sent into camps on the freighting wagons, and committed to the foreman for distribution. The marked Testaments, leaflets and personal letters from the women were relied on to preach the gospel that prompted these gifts.

In time the call to send a missionary grew so loud that, notwithstanding the slim condition of the Provincial Union Treasury, a man was secured to go with the supplies and add the spoken to the written word.

Now there are two laborers engaged by the year, Mr. Leckie, of Huntsville, for Muskoka and Thunder Bay District, and Miss Agnes Sproule, of Fort William, for the 43,000 square miles of Algoma.

Miss Sproule has found in some parts of the Rainy River portion of her parish a great deal of destitution. Settlers coming in there with little funds, some of them in debt, and with a home to build, implements and seed to buy, and a family to support, have suffered greatly. Two years ago she visited a series of small settlements. The winter was coming on, the houses were mere huts and the floors of many of them would have been considered by "Advocate" readers too poor for a stable. The women and children were without flannel or warm clothing of any kind. Miss Sproule made the need known to the Ontario W. C. T. U., chose a faithful woman living near one of the settlements as the custodian and distributor of any gifts that might be sent, and went her way. By Christmas time, boxes and bales of clothing began to arrive. There were toys and