

Miscellaneous.

Farmers Who Don't Read.

To the Editor of THE CANADA FARMER.

SIR,—There is no class of people in our thriving country who hold such a vast amount of wealth in their hands as the farmers. Yet in my opinion no class make such poor use of it. You may go to many a farmer and ask him to subscribe to a first-class agricultural paper, and he will tell you he "does not believe in book-farming; it may do for rich men, but it will not do for me; your costly manures and tools don't pay; your Durhams and other highly-bred animals are a poor speculation—the best stock we can get are the natives, they can fodder on straw, do not need housing in the winter, and can live anywhere." Is it any wonder that such farmers should fail in raising fine stock and good crops, that they find farming a poor business, and combine to run it down? Their fields are like that of the sluggard, their barn-yards are scenes of misery and poverty, their houses cannot be called homes, and things are at loose ends generally. Such a farmer gets into debt, is obliged to mortgage his farm, and in the end perhaps loses it altogether. His children grow up without education, resort to other pursuits for a livelihood, and many of them grow up idle and dissipated. I know farmers who neglect their business at the season when diligence is required, and who, when winter comes, are obliged to go into the bush and get out a few cords of wood or a few sticks of timber to sell, to enable them to exist until the spring. When spring comes, their team is worn out, their seed grain all fed up, the colts are miserably poor, the cows are on the list, there is some distemper among the sheep, and one-half the pigs are dead. Now, how is all this to be remedied? Farmers must read and think, and apply the knowledge they get to practice. "But," says one, "we have no time to read." Now this is not the case. No class of working people have so much time to read and think as farmers have. Three hours of each night, through the long winter evenings, may be thus employed. It is astonishing how little many farmers read. I had occasion lately to travel through a township, and my business required me to call at every house. I took pains to examine whether there was a library where I called, and was surprised to find so few books of any description, and in many cases no books at all, except perhaps an almanac. Now how can such farmers get on? It is as essential for the farmer to be well informed as any one else, if he would be successful. Let me say, in conclusion, that many farmers are too miserably to take a good agricultural paper. They think it doesn't pay. I know two farmers worth \$15,000 each, mostly in real estate, who thought they could not afford to take a weekly newspaper alone, so they joined together and took it between them. This was their whole store of knowledge about the world around them!

A FARMER.

County of Lincoln, Jan. 30, 1864.

Westward Bound!

To the Editor of THE CANADA FARMER.

SIR,—Doubtless there are many attractions in farming life at the "Far West." The fertility of the virgin soil, the abundance and cheapness of land, and the comparative ease of cultivating it (especially prairie land), the satisfaction of gathering large crops, and the prospects of rapidly acquiring wealth,—these and the like things make many young farmers in Canada discontented with their lot, and lead some annually to sell their homes and push towards the setting sun. A few succeed according to their expectations, but very many do not. Land purchased proves inferior to what it was represented, the improvements needed upon it absorb all the profits for many years, contemplated railroad or other facilities for getting crops to market are not constructed, sickness in new form invades the household, long separation from old friends and kindred begets sadness and discontent, and finally nearly all the members of the family mourn the day when first they set out to seek their fortunes at the West. We would by no means advise all young farmers to remain as they are. Change is sometimes desirable. But let every man think well before he makes the final resolve. It is no light thing for one already comfortably situated to sell out house and home, and start life again amid new scenes and among strangers. Even if ordinarily successful in acquiring wealth, he is compelled to sacrifice many things of great value. This is espe-

cially the case if the homestead he sells is one which has descended to him from his parents, and he is surrounded by kindred and friends whom he has known and loved from childhood. He who sells such a home parts with something which money cannot buy, but whose value he does not fully appreciate until he has lost it. As a general rule, the same industry and energy which would secure competency and wealth at the West would, if judiciously applied at home, be productive of a like result.

Orinstown, Chateauguay Co.

[NOTE BY ED CANADA FARMER.—We commend the above letter to all who are dissatisfied with their present lot, and tempted to try change. In reference to the "Far West," though there are great advantages, yet, as our correspondent very justly urges, there are corresponding disadvantages. Beside those named, scarcity of wood and water, distance from market and the consequent low price of grain, higher cost of articles of merchandize, and other drawbacks, go far to equalize East and West. The *Genesee Farmer* for the present month, advertizing to this subject, says: "Those who have sold their farms find, when they come to buy another, that it is not so easy to suit themselves. Land at the West is rapidly advancing, and one or two farmers from this section, who have sold their farms and gone West, would be glad if they were back in their old homes." There are restless, uneasy spirits everywhere who are always dreaming of some fairy land where people can get rich without much effort. It is often the case that such learn wisdom only in the school of experience, and at the cost of bitter disappointment. We believe the majority of Canadians rejoice, as they well may, in the good land God has given them, and most assuredly discontented ones will travel many a weary league before they find a better.]

Knowing too Much.

I FIND no man so disagreeable to meet with, as one who knows everything. Of course we expect it in newspaper editors, and allow for it. But, to meet a man engaged in innocent occupations,—over your fence, who is armed cap-a-pie against all new ideas,—who "knew it afore," or "has heard so," or doubts it, or replies to your most truthful sally "tain't so, nuther," is aggravating in the extreme.

There is many a small farmer, scattered up and down in New England, whose chief difficulty is—that he knows too much. I do not think a single charge against him could cover more ground, or cover it better. It is hard to make intelligible to a third party, his apparent inaccessibility to new ideas, his satisfied quietude, his invincible *inertium*, his stolid and yet shrewd capacity to resist novelties, his self-assurance, his scrutinizing contempt for outsiders of whatever sort,—his supreme and ineradicable faith in his own peculiar doctrine, whether politics, religion, ethnology, ham-curing, manuring, or farming generally.

It is not alone that men of this class cling by a particular method of culture, because their neighbourhood has followed the same for years, and the results are fair; but it is their pure contempt for being taught; their undervaluation of what they do not know as not worth knowing; their conviction that their schooling, their faith, their principles and their understanding are among God's best works; and that other people's schooling, faith, principles and views of truth—whether human or Divine—are inferior and unimportant.

Yet withal, there is a shrewdness about them which forces upon you the conviction that they do not so much dislike to be taught, as dislike to seem to be taught. They like to impress you with the notion that what you may tell them is only a new statement of what they know already. It is inconceivable that anything really worth knowing has not come within the range of their opportunities; or if not theirs, then of their accredited teachers, the town school-master, the parson, the doctor, or the newspaper. In short, all that they do not know which is worth knowing, is known in their town, and they are in some sort partners to it.

Talk to a small farmer of this class about Mechi, or Lawes, or the new theory of Liebig, and he gives a complacent, inexorable grin,—as much as to say,— "Can't come that stuff over me; I'm too old a bird."

So indeed he is; and a tough bird at that. His mind is a rare psychological study; so balanced on so fine a point, so immovable,—with such guys of prejudice staying him on every side,—so subtle and yet so narrow,—so shrewd and yet so small,—so intelligent and yet so short-sighted. If such men could bring themselves to think they knew less, I think they would farm far better.—*My Farm of Edgetwood.*

VALUE OF PLOUGHS.—Among the Kaffirs agriculture is considered to be a kind of labour unworthy of a warrior, and it is therefore entirely left to the women. When they first saw a plough at work they gazed at it in astonished and delighted silence. At last one of them gave utterance to his feelings: "See how the thing tears up the ground with its mouth! It is of more value than five wives!"

COLD IN THE WEST.—A correspondent of *The Journal* in Bloomington, McLean Co., Ill., writes as follows on the 12th inst.—"I am able to give a connected account of the late cold weather and its effects. On the last day of the old year a terrible snow storm set in, which lasted for 48 hours. The snow was fine and dry, the thermometer standing during the day at 15 degrees below zero, and the wind blew with such violence that the snow was driven into dwellings and buildings considered perfectly tight. Cattle and sheep are kept in this county in the open air, at least great numbers of them, and the snow was driven into their hair and wool, chilling them so that they died by hundreds. In this county alone I have heard of hundreds of cattle and sheep, enough to amount to nearly 2,000, that froze to death. Friday, Jan. 1, was the last day of the storm. The snow had fallen about eight inches and was drifting. In the northern part of the State the thermometer ranged from 30 to 40 degrees below zero; in this latitude 20 to 30, and at Cairo 16 below. In this place the lowest point reached was 29 below. For the first nine days of the new year the thermometer in this city averaged 15 degrees below zero at sunrise of each day. During the most of the time the railroads were blocked. The weather was so cold that it was almost impossible for men to work on the tracks; the cuts were filled in many places to the depth of 12 feet, while the engines were constantly freezing and bursting; so that on the whole, one can readily conceive the difficulty of opening the roads. Our local papers are filled with details of suffering caused by the cold. In this county one whole family froze to death. Their house caught fire, and while they were on their way to a neighbour's they all died. A little girl in one town froze to death on her way to school. A man went into the woods with his team for a load of wood and was found frozen to death three days after. This is the record of deaths of one county, and allowing the same ratio for the entire West, you can form some idea of the terrible weather we have passed through. Hundreds of people have been partially frozen in this town and county. The suffering in this town was such that our citizens turned out *en masse* on the 8th with a large donation of wood, flour, &c., for the poor. The weather is warm and pleasant to-day, and the snow is melting slowly.

Markets.

Toronto Markets.

"CANADA FARMER" Office, Feb. 15, 1864.

For the last week the amount of grain and produce brought into market has been larger than at our last report, and the prices have become much firmer, although there is little advance, except in pork, which is going up rapidly. Fall wheat is active and in good request. Spring wheat much asked for and firm. Barley in small demand. Flour is firmer, with a slight advance.

Flour—Superfine at \$3 75 for shipment per bbl; \$4 to \$4 30 for home consumption; Extra, \$4 25 to \$4 65; Fancy, \$4 10 to \$4 20; Superior, \$4 75 to \$5 10; Bag Flour, \$4 per 200 lbs.

Fall Wheat, 85c to 98c for common to choice per bushel; \$1 00 to \$1 03 for good to choice; \$1 05 to \$1 08 for Extra. The latter price, however, is seldom given; \$1 05 is generally the highest price given.

Spring Wheat in good demand at 75c to 83c per bushel for good; 85c to 86c for extra; occasionally a load brings 87c.

Barley at 70c to 73c per bushel.

Oats at 38c to 43c per bushel.

Peas 45c to 60c per bushel.

Hay \$9 50 to \$10 per ton.

Straw \$5 to \$6 per ton.

Bran \$10 a ton at the mill.

Shorts \$13 to \$15 per ton.

Hides (green) at 4½c to 5c per lb., the latter price for extra.

Calfskins at 7c to 9c per lb.

Sheepskins at \$1 25 to \$1 75.

Lambskins at \$1 25 to \$1 70.

Coal \$7 25 to \$9 per ton.

Wood \$4 25 to \$5 50 per cord.

Provisions—Hams \$9 50 to \$10 per 100 lbs. Bacon \$6 50 to \$7 per 100 lbs. Cheese \$9 50 to \$10 per 100 lbs. wholesale; 12½c to 15c per lb. retail.