

THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME MAGAZINE.

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AND N.-W. T.

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tention of soil moisture and ensure the growth of sufficient straw to produce a crop.

A firm soil does not mean a condition approaching hard-pan nor a baked clay, but a well-worked, thoroughly-pulverized soil, made firm by skillful plowing and subsequent cultivation.

Right here there is room for much study regarding the principles of plowing and cultivation and the particular make of implement best calculated to accomplish the desired object.

No matter how skillful the operator may be, however, his work cannot be as successful as it should if the soil he is operating upon is in bad mechanical condition or devoid of humus. Humus, decayed vegetable matter, grass roots or manure in the soil is beneficial, on account of the following, among other reasons:

- Prevents soil drifting.
- Prevents clay soils baking.
- Absorbs and retains moisture, affording the growing plants a more regular and uniform supply of moisture throughout the season.
- Encourages seed germination by taking up and retaining warmth.
- Reduces labor; plows clean and do better work, as do other implements of tillage.
- Permits of a firm seed-bed, without danger of packing or baking.
- Ensures better crops and greater profits.
- Therefore, get humus into the soil.

An Unmerited Accusation.

In "Farm Siftings," of January 20th issue, appears a reference to the Alberta oat question, which, while championing the cause of the Albertans, has also reflected on the integrity of the Commercial, which, through an oversight, was allowed to creep through, and which is, we believe, entirely unmerited. The publication referred to is a reliable trade paper and endeavors to further the agricultural interests by quoting liberally from up-to-date agricultural literature, so that its constituents may be well informed as to what is going on in the agricultural world. As the policy of the "Advocate" is "to build up and not tear down," we deplore the statement referred to.

Harold D. Buchanan, Cottonwood, Assn. "Your Christmas number was perfect this year, the illustrations being most natural."
January 30th, 1902.

The Western Cattle Business.

Last season's transactions in cattle were not too satisfactory to the Western rancher, for which many reasons have been advanced. The buyer was blamed, who, hating to unveil the rancher's eyes, blamed the railway company, who in turn blamed the existing conditions on the season. No one was honest with the other in the matter, because each was averse to hurting the other's feelings, although all suffered in pocket.

The time has come for heart-to-heart talks in the matter, and while the railroad rates and accommodations are yet far from perfection and the cattle buyer looks the hardest after his own interests, we might say briefly that "it's up to the rancher" to make the required and necessary change—that is, if he wishes to get any share of the British markets for his products. So long as he will buy inferior stockers, so long as he will buy inferior bulls (even pure-breds), because they are cheap, so long will continue dissatisfaction in the cattle business. Coupled with the above causes are the putting of unfinished stuff on the market and a lack of knowledge of what really constitutes a good animal. Texas has made a name for herself with cattle, but did not do it with the help of the \$50 or \$100 bull; the Texans stayed the limit even if it reached the \$1,000 mark, and to-day they reap the benefit. The sooner the rancher buys the best stuff and stops being the dumping ground of the culls of even pure-bred herds, the better for himself. We often hear it said that "\$100 is all a rancher will go for a bull," which is only too true. Again, the West has been the dumping ground of Ontario- and Manitoba-bred stockers, the former often the get of a dairy bull, the latter in many cases only a little better. If the rancher insists on a better class of stockers and a better class of pure-bred bulls, he will get them if he pays the price. He holds the key to the whole situation. Some of the ranchers know that the above statements are only too true; in fact, it was left to one of them to stem the tide of the thin-beef heresy at the late Fat Stock Show at Guelph, and protest most emphatically against applying the bacon-hog standard to export steers. A campaign of education along live-stock lines is the need of the hour, if Canada ever hopes to be as well known for her beef as for her cheese. In this connection, the rancher must fight shy of the Ayrshire-Shorthorn crosses, as however valuable the female product of such a cross may be for the dairy, the steers will never make first-class export cattle. If people do not know a good bull or a good steer when they see one, paying high prices for poor stuff will not help them out; the fellows that know are rarely guilty of buying a poor bull because he is cheap.

Farm Siftings

A neighbor showed me a circular letter he received recently, in which a city friend (!) advises him to ship his own wheat. The captivating bait is also thrown out to get him to take a bite at speculating in options. We sometimes hear of a wheat-man winning a few thousands in the wheat pits of Chicago or St. Paul, but we seldom hear of the fellows who dropped their pile at the same game. A shrewd farmer said recently: "We are bled by the wheat buyers, from three cents a bushel up, so that they may reimburse themselves for their losses in speculating in Chicago wheat." Is he correct?

Judging by the reports I read of the fat-stock shows, cattle and other live stock are getting too well fed these times. Isn't that exaggerated? From the appearance of my neighbors' cattle, their owners are guilty of the sin of omission (of feed) instead of commission. Average Canadian farm stock never suffers from too much feed or too much flesh or fat. An occasional hog or sheep or even hen may get that way, but for every one overfed there are thousands underfed.

Good stallions seem to be coming to the country, according to the "Advocate's" Gossip columns. In addition, good brood mares are what are wanted to help along the breeding of horses.

Now is the time to study the seed catalogues, and select your garden and field seeds. Be careful from whom you get flax. It is usually accompanied by mustard or other foul seeds. Corn, roots and grass should be on your list of things to plant the coming spring.

Speaking of seed, the grain to be planted should be clean, sound and large. Remember, bluestone and don't agree well, and for that matter the black fungus of oats has little

use for formalin. The selection of large seed from the heaviest-yielding grain, year by year, will mean a better sample and increased yield.

It is in order to decide now whether you will purchase a bull for that grade herd of cows. Select a good pure-bred and do it soon, as the ranchmen will soon be culling the Manitoba herds.

Manure piles steam this winter, showing that fermentation and rotting are going on. Mix the manure from the horse and cow stables, one helps the other. A hide is often used to draw out the manure from the stables, one winter usually sufficing to wear it out. A small stick riveted on each end of the hide will help it last.

What a comfort and convenience a workbench and a few tools is to a farmer, especially during the rush periods of work. A good plan to follow is to have boxes arranged with an assortment of nails, bolts and nuts, etc., so that they can be secured without loss of time.

One of the unfortunate signs of the times is that some farmers will allow a few professional agitators from the cities to come out and tell them they are not doing well and make them feel blue generally. Whereas, if the truth was known, very few farmers want for a good living, and those of them that observe business principles are increasing their bank accounts or their investments on the farm, live stock, etc. We want more farmers to do their own thinking, and not let the demagogues act as their guide-posts.

INTER PRIMOS.

A Westerner Promoted.

Dr. J. G. Rutherford, the newly-appointed Dominion Veterinarian, is a Western man, making his home at Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, for many years.

The Doctor is a Scotchman, having been born in 1857, at Mountain Cross, Peeblesshire, his father, Rev. A. Rutherford, M. A., of Edinburgh, having been for fifty years minister of that place (Mountain Cross). He came to Canada in 1875, spent one year at the Ontario Agricultural College, Guelph, taking first prize for practical agriculture, and one year at Bow Park Stock Farm, Brantford, with the late Mr. John Hope. He graduated from the Toronto Veterinary College, where he was a gold medalist; practiced in Woodstock, Ont., where he was Government Inspector for Oxford County, and at Saratoga, N. Y., where he was veterinarian to a prominent racing stable. Settling in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, in 1882, he was appointed, in 1884, by the Provincial Government, district veterinarian, which position he held until 1892. He served as veterinary surgeon to the Northwest field force under Middleton in 1885, and was present at Fish Creek and Batoche, receiving the medal and clasp. He married, in 1887, Edith, daughter of Washington Boulton, Esq., of Ancaster, Ontario. He has been president of the Portage and Lakeside Agricultural Society, of the Driving Park Association, of St. Andrew's Society, and repeatedly president of the Veterinary Association of Manitoba, and president of the Horse Breeders' Association of Manitoba for the last five years, and chairman of the Portage la Prairie General Hospital since its inception.

His early training in agriculture caused him to take part in matters of interest to farmers, and he labored earnestly in the local Farmers' Institutes, and brought to his town the well-known Thoroughbred, "Kilburn." His efforts for the advancement of the veterinary profession in Manitoba were, in a great measure, the source from which the present Veterinary Medical Association and well-constructed Act sprang, and at the hands of the Association he has received the highest honor it can confer, by being made its president; later, he was elected to the Local Legislature for Lakeside, which constituency he represented from 1892 to 1896, when he resigned to enter the larger field of Dominion politics. His public record has been a good one, and has shown him to be animated by patriotic motives and sound common sense. His interest in horse-breeding was not confined to himself, as he fathered the Manitoba Horse Breeders' Lien Act, than which a better measure is not to be found on any statute book to-day, as is shown by the request of the Ontario horsemen, who are now asking for similar legislation. As president of the Horse Breeders' Association of Manitoba, he used his influence to get the British Government officer to purchase army horses in the West. About a year ago he was appointed by the Dominion Government to look after the testing of cattle in Great Britain for importation to Canada. For this work he was stationed at Glasgow, where he resided until the close of the season for shipping live stock to Canadian ports. A practical live-stock man and a successful veterinarian, we feel the Dominion veterinary interests are now placed in safe hands, and look for the Dominion Veterinary Department to get in closer touch with the live-stock interests of Canada than heretofore.