

The Farmer's Advocate

"PERSEVERE AND SUCCEED" and Home Magazine. ESTABLISHED 1866.

VOL. XXXIX.

LONDON, ONT., AND WINNIPEG, MAN., AUGUST 11, 1904.

No. 620

EDITORIAL.

The Fairs.

The summer is slipping away, and the season of the fall fairs will soon be here. While it is possible to give too much time to fairs, to the neglect of seasonable work upon the farm, attendance at a reasonable number of these events may by good management be rendered profitable financially to the exhibitor and educationally to the visitor; while, rightly used, as a relaxation from the steady round of toil and a means of recreation, the farmer and his family may receive benefit and pleasure from the outing which the fair provides. And no class of our people are better entitled to a holiday than those of the farm. One of the features of the fairs that observant people wonder at and regret is that so few, comparatively, of that numerous section of the community, the farmers, participate as exhibitors of specimens of their skill in any of the classes of live stock or other farm products. The catalogue of entries of our largest exhibitions shows, in some of the classes, where good prizes are provided, not more than half a dozen exhibitors, and in some not half that number. The idea that it is not worth while to show unless one has a considerable number of animals or articles good enough to have a fair prospect of winning doubtless keeps many from entering the competition, but it is more prudent and less expensive to begin in a small way, with a few well-prepared exhibits, and if successful with these, to launch out further on a future occasion. And there is no better school in which to learn what preparation is needed to ensure a reasonable share of success than on the battlefield of the fair ground. The local fair, properly conducted and its privileges participated in, should serve the purpose of a graded school to prepare an ever-increasing number of young farmers for the competition in the larger shows. It is gratifying to know that efforts are being made to render our agricultural fairs more worthy of the name than they have been, and to combine practical education and useful object lessons with recreation and pleasure. The judging class for farmers' sons, buttermaking competitions for the daughters, practical demonstrations in the manufacture of articles in sight of the people, and similar features, should be more generally adopted and encouraged. While limiting competitions to the local districts and to the breeder and producer of the animal or article may be advisable in some classes to encourage new beginners, it is well where available funds permit, in order to insure the best possible display, to have classes open to the wider field of the Province, in order that the highest types may be seen and studied. If too many fairs are being held in some districts, with the effect of weakening all, the question of combination or consolidation may well be discussed and considered. If more are evidently needed in some districts, let them be organized on a sound basis, and in all cases where the horse-racing fraternity have gained control, and fail to give sufficient encouragement to the more useful departments, the farmers should interest themselves in securing better management and the improvement of the character of the fair and its administration. Farmers' sons and daughters should be encouraged to make exhibits at the local fair of animals or articles they have themselves fitted and prepared for competition. This will tend to develop the ambition to excel, to compete in the more difficult field of the larger exhibitions and to take a pride in their work. There are many good rea-

sons why every farmer should aid the local fair to the best of his ability, and seek to make it a success.

The Single-judge System.

The old adage, "In the multitude of counsellors there is safety," is being sadly discredited in these times. The large committee in any organization is now considered cumbersome, contributing to loquacity and retarding the despatch of business. Even the time-honored principle of majority-rule is fast losing its claim to infallibility, if not, indeed, to respect, for who will assert that the majority is always or even generally right? Time was when, in the judging of live stock at the fairs, it was considered unsafe to trust the work to fewer than three men, and at the more pretentious shows for the most important classes a jury of five was sometimes provided, in order that, by the combined wisdom of the majority, even-handed justice and absolutely-correct awards might be more certainly dispensed. But experience proved that difficulties, delays and abuses abounded about in proportion to the increased number of the awarding committee. Later, the dual-judge system was generally adopted, and still has its advocates in some who consider it safer to have consultation and a comparison of judgment. It is freely admitted that the bench of two is an improvement on that of three, if a referee is provided, which, of course, makes expenses for three, but in working it out in practice it has been found that, too often, protracted consultation ends in compromise, and the conviction on the part of at least one, if not both, that the placing has not been the most consistent possible; while the time occupied in the discussion and settlement of differences often delays the proceedings and deranges the programme of the show. Even where two men have the courage to disagree, which is rarely, the finding of an acceptable referee causes delay, and in the end, as he is not allowed to consult with the others, his decision is that of a single judge. It is not easy to find even one good judge of any given breed who is willing to act, acceptable to exhibitors, and disinterested, and, as a matter of course, it is more difficult to find two such, and still more difficult to find three. And since it is now the custom to pay at least the expenses of judges, the single-handed system is much less costly to the fair association. A competent judge can hardly regard it as a compliment to be bracketed with another, as it seems to imply a want of confidence, either in his ability or his honesty, to place another with him to act as a check on him. Those who have officiated singly are, we believe, almost invariably better satisfied with their work than when they have acted with another, and more ready to defend it if necessary. And the exhibitors fare quite as well, on the whole, at the hands of one as of two judges. At the Toronto Exhibition last year, two full days were occupied in placing the awards in one breed, and three days in the case of another breed, while a single judge did the placing in two breeds in one day, finishing early in the afternoon, and giving quite as good satisfaction to exhibitors. It is true, the entries and sections were somewhat more numerous in the former classes, but, all the same, the delays in deciding were intolerably tedious. And yet the Toronto Exhibition is about the only show of any importance in Canada at which the breeders ask for more than one judge. The report of the late Winnipeg Show reveals, in a class where two officiated, evidence of the evil of compromise. It is an antiquated idea, and should be

abandoned. Even conservative old England has gone ahead of us in this regard, the Royal Agricultural Society and the Smithfield Club having adopted the single-judge system, with this improvement in the case of the former show, where, for the economy of time and to avoid overworking the judge, the larger classes are divided, one judge being appointed to place the males and another to rate the females. The best principle is to select one competent judge of good character, to trust him fully, and hold him responsible for his work. He will then feel that he is put upon his mettle, and will be most careful to guard his reputation, since he has no one on whom to shift the blame for any mistakes that may be made.

The Crop Outlook.

Over the greater portion of Eastern Canada harvest is well advanced, and the character of the unripe crop is fairly well ascertained. With the continuance of favorable weather until the end of the season, the returns from the year's operations may be considered highly satisfactory. With the exception of wheat and corn, the field crops may be pronounced good. The hay has been all harvested, and is considered unusually heavy, although there is not as much clover in it as is desirable.

Fall wheat, which is now being harvested, was badly winter-killed in most districts, and in many places rusted. Care will have to be taken to secure good seed, as there is not much fit in many neighborhoods. The spring crops of barley, oats and mixed grains are invariably good. Over the greater part of Ontario where dairying and the growing of such crops as corn, roots, sugar beets, beans and tobacco is followed, the condition of the grain crops is most encouraging. This is one of the strong features of mixed farming, not simply the returns from a given crop or operation must be considered, but the effect upon succeeding crops of such operation or cropping. In the sugar-beet districts, the beneficial effects following the cultivation of the beet crop are everywhere evident. In this the sugar-beet people see the chief strength of their cause, for not only do the beets return a good profit, but the land is cleared of weeds and fitted in the best possible condition for the following crop.

Corn is, unfortunately, a poor crop all over, largely owing to the lack of vitality in the seed, and partly to the rather backward weather in the spring. Occasionally one finds a good field, and the explanation invariably is that the owners, acting upon careful observation and published information, carefully selected their seed and dried it last fall. This year's experience will emphasize the importance of seed selection upon the minds of all corn-growers, but the lesson has been dearly bought.

In the bean and tobacco growing districts, the prospects of good crops are exceedingly bright, and a big crop means much to the farmers of the south-westerly counties of Ontario, where fields of beans from ten to fifty acres in extent are grown, and where it is no unusual sight to see ten-acre fields of the green "leaf."

In the fruit sections of Ontario, high, firm prices in a great measure compensate for a comparatively light crop; while in some of the maritime districts a big crop, particularly of apples, is expected. The severe winter, however, has left a deep imprint in the orchards, plums, pears, peaches and apples of the King, Baldwin and other varieties now showing their dead and dying branches. More liberal cultivation, pruning and spraying would help these orchards to soon