

## The Farmer's Advocate and Home Magazine.

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DOMINION.

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on the value of approved equipment, not included in above, will be paid, the amount not to exceed \$200.

There are other grants, in addition to those mentioned, which are in a way rewards for compliance with certain regulations, but all the reimbursements of the Department are, of course, subject to certain regulations. School boards or ratepayers interested in the improvement of educational facilities in their neighborhoods ought to become fully conversant with consolidated school plans and apply them to their sections, to see if the scheme is workable. The argument in the past against consolidated schools was that they are too expensive. Nothing is too expensive that will give rural boys and girls a better opportunity to equip themselves for citizenship. There is no better investment than that which education affords, and a few dollars one way or the other should not be permitted to obstruct the improvement of educational facilities in any section in Ontario.

### Nature's Diary.

BY A. B. KLUGH, M. A.

#### Fox-Farming.

Fox-farming is an industry which has aroused a good deal of interest in Canada in recent years. The foundation of this industry is due to the high prices which were realized for the pelts of such wild silver and black foxes as were obtained by trappers and hunters—the price ranging from \$300 to \$2,500 depending upon the beauty of the fur. Very naturally the raising of animals, which, when about eighteen months old would have a market value of a thousand dollars or more, appeared to many to promise tremendous profits.

The silver or black fox is a melanistic phase of the common red fox, and these individuals are produced in the same litter with pure red individuals, and often also with what are termed cross foxes. The terms silver and black are often used indiscriminately in speaking of this phase, though as a matter of fact there are three distinct types of this phase, known respectively as silver, silver black, and black. A silver fox is silvery all over, except on the neck, dark below and white only on the tip of the tail. A silver-black fox is black all over except the hips and forehead, which have silvery hairs, and the white tip of the tail. A black fox is black all over except the white tip of the tail. A cross fox is red on the sides, neck and ears, and silvery on the back, shoulders and rump.

The first attempt at fox-farming of which we have any record is that of Benjamin Haywood, of Tignish,

Prince Edward Island, who forty years ago obtained several litters from foxes kept in captivity. This first attempt was a failure because the necessity of keeping the foxes quiet and in seclusion was not realized and the young were destroyed by their parents. Prior to 1890 several fox-farming projects were undertaken, by Paquet Bros. at St. Joseph d'Alma, Quebec, Revillon Freres on the north shore of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, George Clark at St. Catharines, Ontario, Johann Beetz at Piastre Baie Quebec, and T. L. Burrowman at Wyoming, Ontario.

The industry was first placed on a commercial basis by Charles Dalton of Tignish, P. E. I. and Robert T. Oulton of Alberton, P. E. I., in 1895, who first made use of the modern method of large wire netting enclosures. Tuplin, Gordon and Rayner in Prince Edward Island, and Burrowman in Ontario, began to get successful results in breeding, and as soon as reports of the success of these breeders gained circulation general interest was aroused and the boom in fox-farming was on. This boom flourished exceedingly in Prince Edward Island, and in Northeastern New Brunswick, particularly in the former province, and as in the case of all industries which are boomed it became highly speculative. Companies were formed, prospectuses setting forth the huge profits which could be certainly and quickly made were spread broadcast and a large amount of capital was soon invested in the industry. As a consequence the price of breeding stock soared until a pair of first-class silver foxes could not be secured for less than \$25,000. Those who were in the game early enough, who really understood the methods of breeding, feeding and keeping, and who could sell all their good individuals as breeders at the high prices then prevailing made money, but those who went into companies which were launched as mere speculations, which had no competent man in charge, and who had to pay the enormous prices for their breeding stock usually lost all they invested.

The inevitable result of this "wild-cat" speculation was that the boom broke and thus unfortunately the industry received a set-back from which it is only now beginning to recover. As a matter of fact this industry if intelligently and honestly conducted is perfectly sound, and will yield good returns, not, it is true, the enormous profits set forth in the flamboyant prospectuses of the time of the boom, but a fair profit nevertheless.

How far the predominance of Prince Edward Island in fox-farming is due to the high fur value of the native foxes of that province is a point which is hard to determine, but it is a fact that they possess the finest fur of any of our Canadian foxes. This fact is brought out by the returns from the huge fur sales which take place in London, England, which is the leading fur market of the world, where the pelts of red foxes from Prince Edward Island have brought higher prices than those from any other province. The fox of Prince Edward Island is usually assigned to the species *Vulpes rubricosa* which also occurs in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Gaspe, but since the foxes of "the Island" have been geographically segregated for a very long period of time from those of the mainland, careful investigation of the skeletal characters, and it is these characters which largely determine the specific distinctions among mammals, may reveal that they belong to a distinct species, or at least to a distinct sub-species or geographical race.

One fact in regard to the fur value of foxes, and in fact of fur-bearing animals in general, has been brought out, and this is that cool and at the same time a humid climate produces the finest quality of fur. Animals of very dry regions, of open prairies and also of exposed sea-coasts have coarser fur. This fact has been made use of in the modern method of fox-farming, in which the animals are kept in pens in the woods, and this method has the dual advantage of providing seclusion and at the same time of favoring the production of a coat of fur of the finest quality.

(To be continued.)

### Some Scotch Proverbs.

BY SANDY FRASER.

The ither night as I was sittin' by the fire readin' my paper the auld wumman cam intae the room wi' a book in her hand an' sat doon by the table an' started readin' to hersel'. It has to be somethin' pretty interestin' to tak' Jean awa' from her sewin' or knittin', sae after a while my curiosity got the better o' me an' I says to her: "What kind o' a love-story hae ye got there, Jean? I thought ye had quit readin' novels about forty-five years ago," says I.

"It's no novel," replied Jean. "But it's something you might be interested in, juist the same, gin ye could understand it. Jennie sent me this book aboot a week ago an' I hae been tryin' ever since to see if I could mak' anythin' out o' it. It's in the broad Scotch, as ye call it, and it's a lot o' proverbs an' sayings that are supposed to hae something like the wisdom o' Solomon in them. But I'm missin' the point o' maist o' them for want o' an interpreter. Like I used to when I was a wee lassie at home and my father wad be tellin' a story to some neebor that had called around. The story wad all be in English till he cam' tae the joke at the last. That wad be in Gaelic and it might as weel hae been in Greek, sae far as us youngsters were concerned."

"But, gin ye like, Sandy," Jean went on, "I'll read ye some o' this stuff an' we'll see what ye can mak' o' it. Ye pretend to ken a lot aboot the language o' yer ancestors, sae here's the chance for ye to display yer learning. Will we start in right here where I hae been readin'?"

"Go on it, Jean," says I. "If ye rin me up against a snag I'll admit it. But ye mun be feir aboot it an' no' go to makin' words o' yer ain'."

"Gin I did that I'm thinkin' ye wad invent a meaning for them," replied Jean. "But here's one to start wi', anyway. It must be somethin' aboot gettin' married, I guess. 'A bonny bride is sune busket.' What dae ye mak' o' that, Sandy?"

"Hoot, that's easy," I replied. "It's one way o' sayin' that a guid lookin' bride is no' hard to dress for her wedding. I mind o' anither saying we used to hae that wis somethin' like it. 'A short horse is sune wispit.' Which meant that a short horse was quickly curried. What's next on yer list, Jean?" says I.

"Here it is. 'It's ill gettin' the breeks off a Highlandman.' What's the meanin' o' that?" "Weel," says I, "it juist means that it's hard to tak' the pants off a Highlander, seein' it is his habit to wear naethin' but the kilts. Some Lowlander said that after he had tried to get pay for his stolen sheep, I guess."

"Vera weel then," continued Jean. "Here's anither. 'Ye are as lang in tuning yer pipes as anither wad play a spring.' 'Spring' means a tune, to a Lowlander," I explained. "But that's the way they had o' sayin' that ye were as lang in gettin' started at a thing as anither wad be in doing it."

"Listen tae this," went on Jean. "He should hae a lang-shafted spune that sups kail wi' the deil." "Yes," says I, "I suppose they mean that a mon should be weel protected an' keep baith his eyes open, when he happens tae be dealing wi' unprincipled men. They're right enough, too."

"Noo tak' this one, while ye are on the subject. Let ae deil ding anither." "That," I said, "is juist the Scotch for 'set a thief to catch a thief.' 'Ding' is an unco' guid word to use when ye are talkin' aboot gettin' a slap on the side o' the heid."

"Here's somethin' aboot the weather, I think," says Jean. "An air winter makes a sair winter." "An early winter makes a hard winter, that's all," I replied.

"There's aye water where the stirkie droons." What's a 'stirkie,' will ye tell me?" "Oh, juist a young coo, that's all. The way an Englishman wad put that proverb wad be, 'there must be fire where there's so much smoke.'"

"Noo this," continued Jean. "A blate cat makes a proud mouse." "Blate means shy," says I, wi' a wave o' my hand. It was a lang time since I had had the opportunity to gie Jean sae muckle information. But she wasna satisfied yet.

"Better a toom hoose than an ill tenant," she read out. "Toom means empty," I said.

"And noo listen tae this, will ye? 'It's na mair pity to see a woman greit than tae see a goose barefit.' 'Weel,' I commented, "ye ken that it's no hard for a wumman to cry if she canna get her way itherwise."

"Here's one to try ye," says Jean, lookin' further doon the page. "The water will never warr the widdie." Pit that intae English gin ye can." "Here it is then," I returned. "The water will never cheat the gallow's." Juist anither way o' sayin' that the man that is born to be hung will never be drowned."

"Well," said Jean at last, "I think I'll have to try ye further along in the book, or ye will get to thinkin' yersel' mair clever than ye really are. It explains everything at the bottom o' the page here, so gin it comes to the warst I can help ye oot. Noo what dae ye mak' oot o' a proverb like this; 'There's mair madness nor makin's.' 'No use,' says I. "I'm stumped. Come on wi' the answer." "Here it is then," replies Jean, lookin' pretty weel pleased. "Girls are mair plentiful in the world than rabbits." Noo try this one. It refers to those that can never talk but aboot the one thing. 'Ye bried of the gowk, ye have not a rhyme but one.'"

"Give it up again," says I. "That language was invented afore my time."

"I'm thinkin' so," says Jean wi' a laugh. "Here's the translation; 'Ye take after the cuckoo, ye have but one note.' Are ye ready for anither, Sandy?"

"I might as weel be hung for a sheep as a lamb," I says. "But dinna be puttin' ony Dutch words into the next one, for ony sake."

"Weel, seein' ye are a farmer ye ought to ken what this one means," said Jean, shuttin' the book. "Sokand seill is best." Yer last chance, Sandy." "I'm done for then," said I. "What's 'sokand'?" "It's juist the sock, of the plow, or the plowshare, as they call it. An 'seill' means 'happiness.' Sae what the proverb is tryin' to say is juist that the best happiness comes to the man who hauls the plow."

"Not a bad one to be endin' the lesson wi'," says I wi' a sigh o' relief. It reminds me o' what auld Robbie Burns says in some one or ither o' his poems.

"Up wi' my ploughman lad,  
Here's to my merry ploughman;  
Of a' the trades that I do ken,  
Commend me to the ploughman."

"Good," says Jean, gettin' up an' puttin' her book awa' on the shelf. "Ye ken yer Burns's pretty weel. What a pity ye are not better posted in the language he used."

If olecmargarine is to remain a staple product on the grocer's counter it becomes all the more incumbent upon the National Dairy Council, and dairy interests generally, to educate consumers to the health-giving properties of milk and its products, and show wherein butter-fat has no substitute. Placed fairly before the people who have a thorough understanding of the ingredients contained in butter and margarine, and know how these ingredients function as nutrients there is nothing to fear for dairy products. The dairy interests, we believe, would do well to expend their energies on an educational campaign, and allow consumers to be the judges.