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EDITORIAL.

Letters to a Young Farmer.

A young farmer writes: "I have a bunch of feeding steers that, if well fed this winter, would make good export cattle in the spring. Owing to the difficulty of securing satisfactory help, I have been advised to sell my steers this fall, as prices for feeders are fairly good, and sell the hay and grain they would likely consume, and so lighten my work through the winter. Would you advise this course?" In the average years, and with the average prices for cattle in the spring, and of grain and hay on the market, when the value of the manure is taken into consideration, we are confident it is more profitable to feed the cattle on the farm, especially if they are a good class. The market prices for hay and coarse grains are seldom tempting, and they cannot be marketed without labor that is less congenial than feeding and caring for cattle. We can hardly understand why any man would not rather feed cattle than load and unload hay and grain, team it, often over bad roads, and peddle it around town. He cannot do this without help, and any stock he has at home cannot be regularly fed if they are depending upon him. Taking the prices prevailing for beef cattle, one year with another, we believe a better price may be obtained for these products through the cattle, if judiciously fed, than on the feed market, and, generally speaking, the feeder does not have to seek for buyers, but needs be on his guard lest the drovers, ever alert for bargains, catch him napping, and get his cattle at less than their value. We know it is difficult to figure out a cash profit in feeding beef cattle, when the market price of what they eat is charged up to them, but that is true of many things raised and kept on the farm, and yet most farmers make headway financially. We know a good many who have for twenty years or more made it a rule to feed beef cattle in considerable numbers every winter, buying the cattle when they have not enough of their own raising, and they have made money, paid for farm after farm, setting up their sons in business, and having a comfortable surplus. If some men can do this, there is no valid reason why others cannot. Of course, it requires close attention to details to ensure success in this, as in any other business. It is not the men who potter with fast horses, or go to town every day, and waste time talking politics, or in idle gossip, who turn out a bunch of cattle of which they may feel proud, and which makes them money, but those who attend to the feeding regularly, and watch the condition and appetite of each individual animal, suiting its ration to its requirements, and making all the conditions conducive to the comfort and thrift of the stock. If the feeder realizes but one cent per pound advance on the cost of his cattle, besides the selling price for the added weight accruing during a reasonable feeding term, when he has the feed grown on the farm and stored there, there is profit, as a rule, in the operation, and he has besides a lot of good manure left to add to the fertility of his land, enabling him to grow heavier crops of hay and grain, and so increasing the value of his farm.

Regarding the labor question, does not the difficulty in securing suitable help arise largely from the common practice among farmers in this country of discharging their help when winter approaches, no matter how satisfactory they may have been, turning them adrift, and taking

chances of securing them again in the spring, with the result that, in many instances, the men find employment in the city or town, and are lost to the farmer for good. If farmers would feed cattle, and thus find permanent work for men where they might, from practice and experience, become more perfect in their work, they might, it seems to us, retain such help for a much longer period than they do, and with mutual benefit to employer and employee.

The Potato the Favorite Crop.

Great Britain has an organization known as the National Potato Society. This Society recently held a show in the Crystal Palace, London, where an immense collection of varieties of the great table tuber were on exhibition. Among the rest were a few varieties that were exceptionally remarkable for their yielding proclivities or disease-resistant powers. In this list was "El-dorado," for a pound of which an English grower recently paid two hundred and fifty pounds (twelve hundred and fifty dollars). Other varieties were on exhibition whose value was placed equally as high. These facts are significant of several things, the most obvious of which is that the potato is coming to be regarded as a great possibility as a moneymaker, and they incidentally show the great importance that is being attached to ability to yield heavily and to resist disease. They also excite the question: What is being done here to improve the potato crop, and what is the status of potato-growing in Canada? In Ontario, according to the last crop report, the average annual market value of the potato crop for the past twenty years has been seven million dollars, and the average yield per acre one hundred and fifteen bushels. This average yield is not high, especially when compared with the reported yields of some of the best varieties tested last year at the Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa. There several varieties yielded over four hundred bushels, and two varieties over five hundred bushels per acre. But even these very creditable yields do not compare with many of those reported by English growers. One variety, for instance, "Discovery," grown by the Suttons this year for the first, gave as high as fifty tubers to the hill, and in one case eighty.

The fact that at the Experimental Farm the best yielding varieties returned over five hundred bushels per acre, and the lightest yielder only nineteen bushels, goes to show that these worthless varieties should be abandoned, and every effort made to secure and propagate the better yielders. We submit that our experimental farms might better employ the land and time devoted to the potato than by making comparative tests with so large a number of varieties, to the exclusion of work calculated to develop heavier yielders and more disease-resistant varieties. In all agricultural work, selection is the keynote of success, and this feature should receive more attention at the hands of our agricultural experimentalists. The ravages of rot is becoming a serious question with our growers, and while it has been demonstrated that spraying with Bordeaux keeps the disease in check, it is also desirable that we should have a variety that is at least partially immune from disease. Work of this kind by the English growers has given to certain varieties a value higher than that of any other fruit of the earth. Has the potato not some ardent friends on this side the sea, who are endeavoring to give it a greater value.

Horse-breeding as a Business.

Firm, high prices has been the burden of the heavy-horse market reports for the past several years, and the demand for heavy working horses is to-day most encouraging to those who raise this class of stock. Not every farmer is by nature a horse-breeder, but certain it is that every farmer who, by his good judgment, care and successful handling, is able to produce serviceable, salable drafters ought to take advantage of the situation and enlarge his operations. The status of horse-breeding in Canada is peculiar. There does not appear to have been any considerable inclination among breeders to make a business of producing breeding draft stock for improvement purposes, similar to those breeding operations followed by so many cattlemen, and yet there does not appear to be any pronounced reason why such should not be the case, for a comparison of prices of foundation stock discloses the fact that there is little difference between that paid for our best beef-bred matrons and the first cost of a draft mare or filly. But we would not leave the impression that there has not been made good progress in the building up of a splendid class of draft horses. All credit is due those enterprising importers who are engaged in supplying the country with such superior draft stallions, and thus aiding in producing a foundation of horse stock of such a desirable character. We have accomplished great things in this direction, but is it not time for many to take a step further, and lay a foundation in pure blood in order to raise breeding stock to supply the demands of newer countries, such as our own Northwest, the Argentine, South Africa, and other countries, and to meet the tremendously increasing demands of older Canada in the present era of prosperous development? Our conditions are most suitable, our draft stallions as good as any that can be had, and the horsemen of this country are as intelligent as those of any nation under the sun, so that all that remains is for individual breeders to establish an ideal type in mind, and proceed to build up a stud after that type. New breeds of draft horses are not wanted, but, doubtless, the natural conditions existing in Canada would tend to produce a certain type of animal, of whichever breed is exploited. The main requirement in our horse-breeding operations, however, is rigid selection, both in the first stock bred and afterwards in the mares retained for breeding and the sires employed. We can easily afford to part with undersized, ill-formed, cold-blooded or sluggish-moving mares, but we should retain and add to the supply of heavy, clean-boned, active ones, and these, if grades, should be consistently bred to horses of a certain breed, and, if possible, to those of a certain type within that breed, in order that there may be more uniformity in the resultant stock. Operations of this kind lead but in one direction, toward improvement in heavy-horse breeding, must necessarily lead to purity of blood, and, finally, to the production of the best type, namely, that having sufficient weight, without waste, built upon the lines of greatest force, and capable of withstanding the greatest wear.

November, so far, is favoring Canada with charming weather, mild and bright, with little frost and much sunshine, favorable for farm work and for the stock in the fields, all of which is very acceptable, following an unusually cool and cloudy summer.