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EDITORIAL

CONTROLLING THE LIGHTNING BOLT.

We wish to draw the special attention of our readers to an article headed "Re Lightning Losses and Prevention," by A. Lindback, Provincial Fire Commissioner of Manitoba. Before publication, this article was submitted to a practical man, who has given the subject of lightning protection very careful and intelligent study, and has erected and repeatedly described in our columns a cheap and simple, though effective, homemade lightning-rod, consisting of nine strands of soft, galvanized, No. 9 wire, twisted together. This form of rod, erected, and grounded according to directions, has been fully endorsed by eminent authority, and has, according to several instances of presumptive evidence, proven entirely efficacious in drawing off a lightning bolt harmlessly into the earth. For the lightning-rod idea is by no means a humbug. The humbug consisted in the exorbitant prices charged and the shady tactics employed by that erstwhile class of gentry, the lightning-rod agents. It is not out of place to mention that a considerable number of these homemade rods have been put up in Middlesex County, as per instructions in "The Farmer's Advocate," and a lesser number in other sections of the country. In view of these facts, the following comment on the above-mentioned article will be read with interest:

"Mr. Lindback's article contains the best lot of condensed suggestions I have ever seen on the subject. There is nothing in it but what I can endorse. The paragraph referring to the liability of the human body to draw a stroke from a rod, I would understand as emphasizing the danger of actual contact with a lightning-rod during a storm.

"Some insurance companies, at least, doing business in the Western States make it a condition of insuring cattle against lightning that grounded wires be attached to all wire fences at specified distances. The same rule, if applied in the East, would, no doubt, lessen the increasing losses from that source.

"Mr. Lindback's last suggestion, that farm insurance companies make a special classification for rodded buildings, and have an inspector to see that all are in order, if acted on, would eventually, I believe, result in practically wiping out the enormous annual losses from lightning fires which are borne at present."

MONOPOLY IN NOMENCLATURE.

The letter headed "Naming Clydesdales," appearing in this issue, raises a question of especial interest to breeders of all classes of pedigreed stock. The system of granting to breeders the exclusive privilege of using, in the registry of their animals, a certain name as a prefix or affix, has been adopted by several of the British breed societies, and has been in use for years. And there would appear to be no valid reason for objection to this arrangement as applied to a farm, flock or herd, or their products, since it tends to engender a feeling or sense of pride in the owner, inciting the ambition to excel, and to make a worthy reputation for himself and his stock. Several other breed societies, both in Britain and America, at the inception of their pedigree records, adopted and have continued the system of excluding duplicate names, no two animals being allowed registry under the same name. And to this rule we have heard no objection, but believe it is generally considered a sensible provision, avoiding the confusion and misunderstanding incident to

the registry of many animals under the same name, as, for instance, in the case of the noted horse, Prince of Wales (673), in Volume One of what is commonly known as the Scottish Clydesdale Studbook, in which no fewer than fourteen other horses are registered under the same name, though, of course, with different numbers. The only way in which it would appear possible to avoid this difficulty in the case of a record in which the principle of "one animal, one name" has not prevailed, is to fix a date in the near future from which no two entries shall be made under the same name. This would appear to be fair for all, and would, to some extent, at least, mitigate the objectionable feature. But the granting, at a late period, the special and exclusive use of a name, or part of a name, that has been in common use, certainly has the appearance of bestowing a monopoly, which, if allowed to anyone, should be conferred upon the breeder by whose skill and judgment the animal of note was produced, rather than upon the fortunate party becoming the owner, and profiting thereby. For this reason, if for no other, many will doubtless sympathize with Mr. Findlay, who recorded his protest against the motion in the Council of the Clydesdale Horse Society of Great Britain and Ireland, conferring the right to the exclusive use of the name Baron, which has for so long been common property. While there could be no reasonable objection to granting the owners of Baron's Pride a patent on the use of the word Netherhall (the home of the noted sire) or any combination of the name of the horse with that of his home, there certainly does not appear to be good ground for giving away the name Baron, which is so commonly used in connection with other words in the naming of horses and other stock, as in this respect it appears more objectionable than in the case of either or any of the three or four names previously granted by the Scottish Society. It is true that the demand for a monopoly of the use of a name has not been great in Clydesdale circles, but there is no knowing how soon it may become epidemic over the seas or here, or on whose toes it may tread, and the Canadian Society will do well to give the question careful consideration before committing itself to a system which may lead to abuse of privilege, or may not be wisely applicable to conditions in this country.

THE FAMILY FETISH.

Secretary Sangster's reference to the more clear defining of "families," while having little necessary connection with the subject-matter of his letter, namely, the granting of an exclusive privilege for trade purposes, yet serves to recall incidents in the history of successes in animal breeding, some of the most pronounced of which might, in their inception, be regarded as accidents, so unpremeditated and unexpected were they. The great Clydesdale sire, Darnley, so potential a factor in the uplift of the Clydesdale breed, was, we are told, practically a catch colt, the product of mating his dam, who had been bred all season to the Keir stud horse, with Conqueror, "with no other thought than that of getting a foal out of her somehow," the result proving a "prince of the blood."

In Shorthorn history, we are informed that Hubback, the most influential of the early sires of the breed in the foundation of the erstwhile popular Bates Duchess family, was a little yellow, red and white bull, of no special pretensions, serving cows at a shilling a head when bought by the Collings for ten guineas. And Champion of England, the sire which made the Cruickshank herd famous, and well-nigh transformed the type of

the breed, was the product of a sire bought at butcher's price, of which the purchaser was so nearly ashamed that the bull was kept out of sight in a back field with a few cows that had proved difficult to settle in calf, one of which was a plain cow that from this mating produced the prodigy whose blood, more than that of any other, has coursed the veins of champions galore in the leading Shorthorn show-rings of the world in the last quarter of a century. The success of these outstanding individuals in their influence on the character of the breed was doubtless due largely to the superior judgment of their breeders or owners in using them and their offspring in a system of judicious inbreeding to intensify the potency of the blood; but when that system became a fetish, and the "family" fad was practically worshipped, as in the case of the Duchess tribes, inferior and disreputable specimens being used for breeding purposes, the result was the wreck of the family, and of fortunes as well. The danger lies in paying more attention to pedigree than performance, to breeding from inferior individuals because of their more or less remote relationship to a star performer, and not on account of superior merit in themselves.

An important lesson to be learned from the history of prepotent sires is the wisdom of retaining the services of such as long as their usefulness lasts, rather than relinquishing them for untried or unproved ones. And danger lies in the use of inferior or even mediocre scions of a noted family, when better individuals of sound breeding and respectable relationship are available.

CONTINUATION-CLASS WORK.

The Ontario Minister of Education's annual report has not been made public, and it is now the month of June. This is most unparalleled. Either the report is necessary and useful—and if so, should come forth during the session of the Legislature—or it is unnecessary and useless, and if so, it can be dispensed with entirely. Perhaps the day of reports is past. Before me lies, however, now, one report, which has reached daylight from St. James' Square. This is the report of the Inspector of Continuation Classes, R. H. Cowley, Esq., M. A. Although this report is dated January 15th, 1908, and covers in full the entire calendar year of 1907, yet it was not available to the public until the end of April. It took over three months from the date of presentation to the Minister until it was published. Certainly, this is procrastination with a vengeance. But one might ask, why has the Minister himself not issued his own report for 1907? Who knows why?

There is very much that is of public interest in Inspector Cowley's prompt annual 1907 report, and a careful reading of it convinces one that Mr. Cowley is a most energetic officer. He reports great progress in this particular branch of our school system. The school boards are enthusiastic, and the schools are doing good work. Their great progress and growth is due to the Inspector's readjustment of the Government grants, and to his unerring tact and sympathy with the people. Mr. Cowley desires to place before his schools a definite objective point, and would make it one of not simply culture, but of economic service to the future citizenship of our people. Definiteness of aim will make the work more practical, and, if practical, the rural classes will appreciate and support. There is no doubt of this.

There were enrolled in 1907 nearly 5,000 students, and of these, 40 per cent. were from the farm. That is, two out of five were from the soil, and the Inspector states that of every three from the farm, only one returns. This means that