

A CHANGE OF SUBJECT

Editor Boys' Club,—I hope we boys are not getting tired of writing to the club. I for one, make the excuse of being too busy to write oftener.

We have plenty of snow around here and by the looks of things we will have an extra supply this year, and we certainly need it. I have four steel traps this year but have not caught anything yet. Say, how do you boys bait your traps for muskrats, weasels, minks, badgers? Badgers and weasels are numerous around here this year, but muskrats and mink are scarce, because there is so very little water. I did not know anything about trapping until last year and it really is not very much I know about it yet.

Some boys in this district make an inverted L and put the one end through the ring of the trap and the bait on the other end, they then stick the trap end in the ground and set the trap under the bait. Others peg their traps to the ground and put the bait under the snow and set their trap on top of the bait.

Would it not be good if the editor would get up debates and contests in essay writing, for it gets a kind of tiresome writing about trapping all the time?

I received a letter from John Davidson and one from Henry Veldhuis, but have not answered them yet.

A SASKATCHEWAN COYOTE.

(The reason that subjects for essays and debates have not been given out in the club is that the editor wanted to be sure that the boys talked about what interested them most and not about what interested the editor most. It is your page and you can do what you like with it. Hope we shall get the opinion of others on this subject.—Ed.)

WHAT EDUCATION DOES THE FARMER NEED?

In the *Advocate* for August 24th, this question is raised in the Boys' Club.

Though by no means a boy, I have very strong opinions on this matter, which I regard as of the utmost importance to the future of our country.

Competition is increasing yearly, and very soon the ignorant farmer, who cannot adapt himself to changing conditions, since he cannot understand them, will find that he is losing money.

Farming nowadays calls for something more than hard work to make it really profitable.

Whether stock raising, wheat growing, dairying, mixed farming, fruit growing, or poultry raising, the farmer requires an amount of technical and scientific knowledge sufficient to raise his business to the rank of a profession—that is if he is properly equipped to make all the money out of it that there is in it.

Geology, agricultural chemistry, bacteriology, botany, biology from a practical standpoint are all of the utmost value. A sufficient knowledge of entomology to understand his insect friends and enemies and how to encourage or defeat them will often make all the difference between success and failure.

A knowledge of veterinary work will often save the life of a valuable animal, besides saving annually many dollars. Carpentering, blacksmithing and practical engine management are also indispensable. In fact, I might increase the list indefinitely, but I have, I think, said enough to show that a greater range of knowledge is called for in farming than in most professions, and the sooner it is raised to this rank the sooner will good farming become general. When this time does come the uneducated farmer will be regarded by his educated neighbors as the quack is now regarded by the M.D., but he will not have the quack's chance of

making money, since he has nothing wherewith to gull the public.

Furthermore, the uneducated man does not get one-tenth the pleasure out of life that the educated man obtains, and he is a much less useful member of society, though drudges will, I suppose, be always in demand.

Again, the uneducated farmer has not a clear enough outlook to stand up for his rights. He is swindled on all sides, no matter how smart he may think himself; he is jealous of his neighbor, and this deals a death blow to co-operation, the keynote of success, and politically, he is the tool of every smooth-spoken politician, who often sways him both to his own detriment and to that of the country in which he lives.

W. J. L. HAMILTON.

SHEEP DOG TRIALS

In Lord Rothschild's Park at Tring, there will be gathered a great company of shepherds and flockmasters. They will have come from the northern fells and dales, the grassy plains of the west, the hills of Wales, and the populous sheep country beyond the Cheviots. Some of them will give evidence of astonishing lung power; others, of extreme proficiency in the art of whistling. A few will carry shepherd's crooks, and most of them will be experts in a silent language of signs made with the hands and arms. But, quaint and interesting as this pastoral company will be, the dogs which the men will bring with them will be the greater attraction. For the sheep-dog trials at Tring have a fame wherever in Great Britain sheep are moved about difficult country, and the dog, in his highest state of mental development, takes command of things as the real flockmaster.

NOT A SHOW DOG

From the fancier's viewpoint the sheep-dog as a rule is beneath consideration. His breed is often nondescript, and, if it be pure, some essential show-point is usually lacking. The show bench is not his place, for all his superlative intelligence and valuable service. His show is the sheep-dog trial, and there he may shine and win prizes, even if he have but one seeing eye and his coat be the veriest motley that ever covered a mongrel body. The training of a sheep dog, although it requires some patience, is not necessarily the protracted business which one might be led to think from watching the clan methods and perfect tactics of the dogs when at their work. Frequently a dog under a year old gives an excellent display on the show course, and he may not have inherited (as many of the animals undoubtedly do) a sense of what is required of him. If his master's methods be to direct him with a series of whistled orders he must have a fine ear to interpret correctly every varied note and modification. And if he have to work according to shouted commands or movements of his master's hands and arms he must have a perfect understanding of the code employed.

A GREAT MEMORY

When a dog has once learned the code he does not easily forget it. "Some of my dogs have taught me," once said a shepherd to me. "When I've got hold of dogs already broken and found they answered a certain whistle, I've stuck to that whistle, although maybe I've never used it before." The tricks of the sheep-dog are manifold. Perhaps there is nothing of its kind better to see than a test which consists of marking a few sheep, in a flock and setting the dog to separate and pen the marked animals. The latter, with a dab of some pigment on their backs to distinguish them, are indicated by the shepherd, and, by

clever tactics and without undue hustling, the dog will get them away from the main body and hold them up while his master deals with the flock; or he will keep the flock together while the selected animals are secured. In the wilder parts of the country a dog is often sent out to collect and bring in a flock so widely scattered over the hillsides or the rolling downs that many of the sheep cannot be seen at all. Yet in due course the flock is observed coming slowly forward—and not a sheep missing—with the dog briskly busy about them, until they are rounded up at last before the shepherd.

WHAT THEY DO

Something of the capabilities of our best sheep-dogs will be witnessed at Tring. Each dog will be given three wild mountain sheep to bring to his master from a point half a mile away, where they will be slipped from a cart. The shepherd may not move from his position; but he must send his dog off and direct him according to his own methods by shouting, whistling, or waving his arms and stick. The dog will first have to drive his sheep to a hillside on the left, then bring them through two sets of false fences, across a valley, through a narrow opening in another false fence, and by a circuitous route to a fourth false fence, which, having been negotiated successfully, the sheep will be in a position close to the shepherd, who will then be allowed to assist his dog to put the animals through both arms of a Maltese cross constructed of hurdles, and to complete the test by securing the sheep in a small pen. A wave of the shepherd's arm, and off goes his dog in a semicircle on the side indicated, finally bringing up close to his sheep, which his sharp eyes have quickly discerned. The sheep are nibbling unsuspectingly, and just as they become aware of the dog's approach the shepherd gives a shrill, slurred whistle, the signal for the dog to lie down. The sheep must not be frightened. They have thrown up their heads and are making away from the dog. A short, sharp whistle, and the dog rises and moves slowly forward. The sheep begin to run. A prolonged whistle, and the dog drops again, only to get on his feet a moment later when the sheep are still, and thus, by sheer tactics, gradually work the animals across to the first false fence.

A WONDERFUL PERFORMANCE

Fence after fence the dog will negotiate in this manner, getting his sheep through the gaps either by stealth or, when they are standing close to the openings, by relying on his speed and suddenly dodging them through. Having brought the sheep to the Maltese cross the dog will crouch on one side of them, while his master, advancing on the other side, will, with arms outstretched, gradually work them through the cross, the dog crouching or advancing as directed. In the same way the final penning will be effected. At a recent sheep-dog trial, when the sheep were exceedingly chary of entering the pen, the dog played a highly interesting part. He was at first crouching about ten feet away from the animals, and his master stood with arms extended as far away on the other side. "Come on a foot!" the latter shouted, and the dog advanced two paces, as near twelve inches as could be, while the shepherd also came forward a foot. The sheep moved a little nearer the pen and stopped, looking back at the dog. Again, "Come on a foot," and the same performance was repeated all around. When it had been repeated eight times, and the sheep were at last secure, both man and dog were almost within the pen themselves.

TWO LANGUAGES

Some of the shepherds have very powerful and far-reaching voices, and command their dogs throughout by shouting, to which, if the wind be favorable, the dogs, as keen as can be to hear their orders, respond immediately. One Welsh shepherd, who enters his dogs in the brace competition (wherein six sheep are liberated and the dogs, one on either side of the animals, work them through the obstacles and eventually secure three in one pen and three in another), works one dog in Welsh and the other in English. Neither dog pays any attention to his comrade's orders, and the

extraordinary performance proceeds amid a bewildering babel of shouts. "Cerdh fwrdd"—Get off! and both dogs start together to circumvent their sheep. Perhaps the latter breaks away on one side, and the other bursts forth. "Gorwedd lawr"; or they show signs of stampeding on the other side, and out goes the same order in English, "Lie down!" "Gyrr nhw fwrdd"—Drive them on! "Tyrd yma"—Come here! And so this astonishing display of sheep-dog sagacity continues until the Welsh dog and the English dog have each penned their sheep, and the spectators are wondering what more there is for a shepherd's dog to learn.—London Daily Mail.

CLUB CHIPS

Johannes Tatz says he wants to be a member of the club. He can do it by writing a letter about anything in which boys are interested. He says he is going to trap this winter.

Here's a good experiment to try on Christmas night when everybody wants to be amused. It must be prepared beforehand. Pour a pint of clear water over two or three leaves of red cabbage and let it stand for an hour, then pour the liquid off into a china pitcher or any pitcher not transparent. For the actual exhibition have four apparently empty glasses. Fill them from the pitcher and everyone will be surprised to see the liquid in one become a fine green, in another blue and in another yellow, while the fourth remains red. The secret is that though the glasses appeared empty only one really was. Of the others one had six drops of strong vinegar in the bottom, another six drops of a strong solution of baking soda, and another six drops of strong solution of alum. Try it.

NOT A VERY GOOD CROP

Dear Editor,—This is my first letter to the club, and I would like to join it. I go to Fairmount school. I am in the fifth grade. There are quite a lot going to our school. We are going to have a Christmas tree this year. We live four miles from town, and we have a section and a quarter of land, but we had not a very good crop this year. Wishing your club a success.

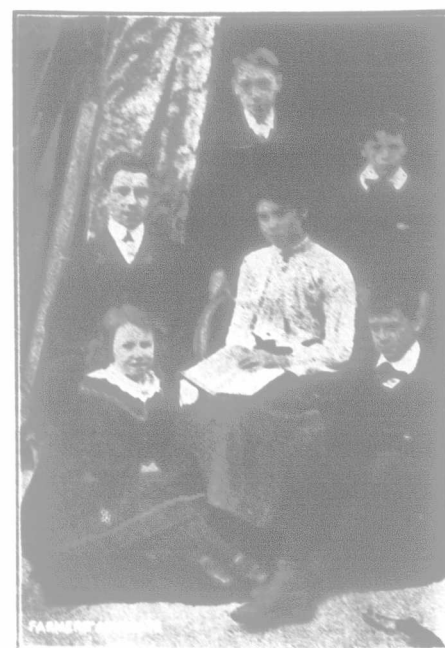
FRANK PROVEN.

FOX TERRIER FUN

Dear Editor,—This is the first time I have written to your club, but I have read and enjoyed it. We had to kill a horse this fall and one died. I have a fox terrier pup that is about eight weeks old and he will play with one cat and barks and teases the others. He will sit down on his haunches and eat bread from your hand. He bothered our collie when he had a bone and got bitten in the cheek. I caught forty-seven gophers last summer. On Arbor Day I caught eight gophers. I caught a rabbit this winter in a snare. I have not been to school for a week, for the road is full of snow.

I do not agree with Defender of Nature. I have not a gun, but have caught many gophers, but do not believe in killing song birds. My two older brothers and two older sisters can skate, but I am not able to skate. Yours sincerely,

JOHN BLAIR, JR.



All Good Canadians Now.