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Nov. 1874

THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE.

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Correspondence.

Ottawa, Oct. 10, 1874.

The Exhibition which took place on Sept. 15th, 16th and 17th, at Ottawa, was a general success. People that have been eye witnesses to the previous Exhibitions, consider this the best that has ever taken place on the grounds. The grounds on which the Fair was held were in good order; they have one drawback, however, in being too small. After riding two miles into the country one would not suppose such would be the case.

As the animals were brought into the ring their appearance showed that the people in the vicinity of Ottawa have not lost their taste for well bred and well developed stock, as the people in western Ontario generally believe, on account of their living so near the French. The quantity was not large; we would have liked to have seen more exhibitors. It seemed as though there were only about animals enough to take the premiums, and that they were all sure of some prize. Each class of horses seemed to be about equally supplied with animals. The Durham cattle were of good quality and were in good condition, rather better than the pastures would have made them if no other stimulant had been applied. Ayrshires were rather more numerous, and were good.

In swine the only class to which prizes were awarded was the improved Berkshire breed; there being considerable opposition in this class, a very fine display was made.

Sheep.—The long drought affected the show in this class very much, the sheep being of a very inferior quality and very diminutive in size. They reminded me very much of sheep I had seen in some of the northern townships, where, after a few generations, there noses become pointed by continually picking the grass from between the stones.

The horticultural department was very good, considering the season. The fruit was also very good, although not in great abundance. The directors had it well protected by a wire screen, for fear the temptation might be too strong for the people in this part of the country, for they do not often feast their eyes on much fruit.

The fine arts and ladies' departments were very well filled, there being some very superior work exhibited, and showing much good taste on their behalf. A. J.

Light on the Oil Question.

To the Editor of the Farmers' Advocate.

Dear Sir,—Your columns being open to the Farmer and Mechanic, will you allow me to direct attention to a very great evil which affects our pockets seriously, and adds to the burden of the whole community of farmers and artisans. And while directing attention, put the question, Is it right that a few of the nabobs amongst the Oil Refiners of Canada should form themselves into a ring and so get the control of the oil refineries of Canada for the purpose of running up the price of oil, to the serious loss of all the consumers. Is it right?

2. Looking at the oil question rightly, when the best distilled oil can be bought from the oil refineries at Petrolea for 3½ cts. per gallon, and treated for 1 cts. per gallon, and barreled at 4 cts. per gallon, with duty of 5 cts. per gallon—or 13½ cts. per gallon—looking at these facts, there is no need of the public being called upon to pay 25 cents wholesale, and up to 50 cents retail, per gallon for the especial benefit of this ring.

Call attention to this sharp practice of these few (or the five) who hold the supply to-day, the present Government in its wisdom would do well to remove the duty of 10 cents per gallon on the importation of refined oil, which does not add to the revenue of the country, but only prohibits the importation of oil, which can be bought in New York for 12 cents per gallon. This course would interfere with the very questionable operations of this ring or any other oil ring hereafter; and the Government would be justified in taking off the duty. Why should they impose a duty amounting to over 75 per cent. to the benefit of these few, and to the detriment of the masses.

Yours truly,
REFINED DAYLIGHT PETROLEUM.

The yams have grown well this season with me considering the time that they were planted, and that was between the 15th and the 20th of May. I planted 160 tubers and cuttings and 157 came up after a long time, as the ground was not warm. I took up one that had grown seven inches long. I intend to leave this year's crop in the ground and take up what I left in the ground last year. I took a good many up last spring that weighed from one to four ounces and one to six ounces. I did not let any fresh manure come in contact with them at the time of planting. I find there is no trouble in raising them. They should be put out in the spring as soon as the frost is out of the ground and the ground is dry. You said in the September number of the ADVOCATE that the Chinese yam has not succeeded. Well, I don't wonder at it; you must have kept the tubers and cuttings in too warm a place; I know by what you sent me. They were dried up so that they were useless—that is, the cuttings. They should have been put in a dry cellar and covered over with earth. I took up some yams yesterday, one that had the cutting attached to it that I planted last spring, perfectly sound as it was the day I planted it, and one had a tuber attached to it perfectly sound. GEO. EMBURY.

We may possibly be yet in error in our opinion that Chinese Northern yam will not come into general cultivation in Canada. We shall be pleased to hear from others with whom they may have succeeded.—Ed.

THE CROPS AROUND OTTAWA.

Gloucester, 12th Oct., 1874.

SIR,—In your October number, on page 148, under the head of "Crop Report," your correspondent signing himself "D. L." has, in many respects, given a very untruthful report. He says in the first sentence: "The drought has been most injurious in this part of the country, much of the soil being light." Now, although the season has been a very dry one, it has not been so "injurious" to the field crops as your correspondent would lead one to believe; nor is it true that "much of the soil is light" about Ottawa, as any person knowing the country can testify.

He says that "wheat is not much more than half the crop it was last year." This, so far as fall wheat is concerned, may be true, as it was considerably winter killed, but the spring wheat is quite equal to last year's crop.

Some of the farmers here, and good ones too, do not bind their oats any season, and as for the "pulling of peas by hand," it is a perfect myth and not worthy of belief.

The potatoes are a fair crop, but not quite up to last year's yield, and "vegetables and roots" are not "a complete failure." It was remarked by a gentleman at our township show here on the 6th inst., that the vegetables were superior to what he saw at Toronto at the late Provincial Exhibition, some of the cabbages weighing forty pounds.

And the fruit that I have seen at the City of Ottawa, County of Russell and Township of Gloucester Shows would compare favorably in quality, if not in quantity, with anything I have seen at the western shows. The two concluding sentences are the only reliable ones in the whole communication.

Hoping you will give this a place in your next number, to counteract any unfavorable impression of our part of the country that "D. L.'s Crop Report" may have raised in the minds of your many readers,

I remain, yours respectfully,
J. J. SMYTH.

[We do not hold ourselves responsible for all communications, and are pleased to have correspondence that will tend to give correct ideas on any subject of interest.—Ed.]

WOOL CLIP.

SIR,—Below you will find a correct account of my wool clips for 1873 and 1874, and it is at your pleasure for inserting:

My clip of fleece wool in May, 1873, was 102 lbs. from 12 sheep, or an average of 8½ lbs. of saleable wool per sheep. My clip this present year, in May, was 144 lbs. of fleece wool from 16 sheep, and loose wool 12 lbs., making a total average of 9.34 lbs. per sheep of clean, washed wool. Breed of sheep chiefly Cotswold; some a sprinkling of Leicester blood.

I remain, yours, &c.,
RICHARD PIRT.

Ashworth P. O.

Wild hogs are the most dangerous game in the Virginia mountains. They are found in herds of five to twelve, and the sight of a human being is the only signal for attack that they require. The intruder has then nothing left him but to outrun them or climb a tree and wait for them to leave.



AGRICULTURAL.

PRIZE FARMING IN IRELAND.

The offer of prizes of small pecuniary value for excellency in the management of farms, has been found to have a remarkably good effect in Ireland. Whether or not something of the same kind might have a similar result with us, were our agricultural societies to offer premiums for the best cultivated and improved farms within their jurisdiction, it is of course difficult to say. Doubtless, as a means of greatly benefiting agriculture proper, a portion of the funds of State or County Associations might well be diverted from the fostering of the fast horse interest, and appropriated to this purpose. But whatever might be the result, if it be attempted in this country, it will be instructive to note what has been done in this way to improve the condition of agriculture in Ireland. It is only since the year 1870 that the principles of agriculture have been taught in the public schools of Ireland, and school-farms or gardens have been cultivated in connection with these schools, as practical illustrations of the lessons taught. These have been very successful, and have greatly aided in improving the condition of the small Irish farmers, most of whom, or 317,457 out of 608,864 occupy farms of less annual rental than \$40.

As an additional encouragement to improved cultivation and homestead arrangements, the Irish Government has given, through the Commissioner of National Education, twenty-four prizes, three for each of eight districts, in which there are school-farms, of the value of \$17.50, \$12.50, and \$7.50 respectively, to be distributed annually for the next five years. The conditions are simply that the farms shall be of not more than \$40 annual rent, and that the successful competing farms shall be adjudged to excel in neatness and cleanliness of the house; in the amount and quality of the produce of the land; in the character and condition of the stock, which includes all live stock kept for profit, from horses down to bees; and in any other circumstances that may attract favorable notice. A successful competitor can take no more than three prizes in five years, and prizes are not given unless the farms are sufficiently meritorious and deserve them.

The examinations for the award for the present year have recently been made, and the judges' reports published. From them sufficient can be gathered to show that the expenditure has been productive of a vast public benefit. On all the farms which competed the improvements were very remarkable. The educational results were conspicuously shown by the greater money profit derived from the farms in consequence of their improved management: so that, should the prizes be withdrawn at once, the benefit would be a permanent one. The homesteads have been fenced in from the public road, and surrounded with gardens; gates have been hung; calves and pigs of improved blood have been raised; manure has been collected, and composting has increased its quantity and quality, and in the process cleanliness of yards and stables has been inaugurated.

In one case a woman, who farms 15 acres of land, has won a prize; she was the daughter of a farmer who had died, leaving a dependent family, and had been a pupil at one of the schools where agriculture is taught. Another successful competitor had never before had a field of clover or turnips, but now has adopted a rotation in which these ameliorating crops occur, and exhibited fields of each in excellent condition. His farm is said to be a model of clean cultivation and productive crops. He has made money by these improvements, and will never abandon them. Another competitor's farm, which last year was very foul with weeds, was found entirely free from them this year. The competition has brought many of these small farmers into popular distinction, and made them men of mark. Some of the farms are visited by other farmers from far and near, much enthusiasm has been awakened, and the spirit of improvement is active and general.

While appreciating the difference that exists between farmers and farming in Ireland and in the United States, there is yet ample opportunity here for improvement, similar to that here related, which might be started by a similar agency.—American Agriculturist.

FIFTY BUSHEL OF WHEAT PER ACRE.

The average yield of wheat per acre varies largely in different States. In some States, according to the statistical reports, the average yield amounts to only nine bushels. In New Jersey it amounts to about thirteen. Of course such accounts of crops must be considered only as approximations to the actual product. If the average yield per acre is represented by thirteen bushels, there must be hundreds of acres which yield only four, five and six bushels, as it is known from actual weight of the grain that a great many farmers raise from twenty-five, and even thirty bushels of beautiful grain per acre.

Such approximate accounts of the wheat crop reveal certain impressive facts concerning the cultivation of this valuable cereal, which should arouse tillers of the soil to a careful consideration of the immense loss sustained, both by the proprietors of the land and the government in consequence of such meagre crops. Bountiful harvests not only render tillers of the soil more independent, pecuniarily, but they tend to augment the revenue of the government. It is an impoverishing policy, in more than one respect, for a farmer to pursue that system of management which will return him only six, nine or twelve bushels of wheat per acre; as the expense of ploughing, harrowing the ground, putting in the seed and cutting the corn with the reaper will be about as great when the yield is only eight bushels per acre as when the product is forty, or even fifty bushels. Land in a poor state of fertility will require about two bushels of seed wheat per acre. The product may be eight or ten bushels. It will not pay to attempt to raise wheat at such a costly rate. The productive capacity of a large portion of the tillable soil of America can safely be computed at forty and even fifty bushels of clean and bright grain per acre, provided the land is tilled as it should be, and as it will pay to cultivate it.

It was a common occurrence, when the pioneers of our country first removed the forests, to hear of forty, fifth, and even sixty bushels of beautiful wheat per acre. Even at the present period numerous accounts are rendered every season of the actual yields of large fields in which the product is represented by forty, some fifty, some sixty, and a few more than sixty bushels. Here, then, is an impressive fact, which furnishes an instructive commentary on the cultivation of wheat. The pioneer farmer of Western New York was wont to cut down all the timber on a given area of ground, let the trees, brush and all remain for a few weeks until the weather was hot and dry, when the ground would be cleared by a huge bonfire, the surface thoroughly harrowed (not ploughed), and one and a half bushels of wheat put in. An ordinary yield would be thirty bushels of clean and plump grain. A fair crop would be spoken of as forty bushels, and a first-rate harvest as fifty bushels without a weed or thistle or panicle or chaff among the growing grain. If an acre of fair wheat-land now covered with heavy timber be cleared in the same manner, and seed wheat be put in about the first of September (from the first to the tenth at the North), the proprietor can rely on a yield of forty bushels of choice grain with almost absolute certainty, provided he sows choice seed.

This fact furnishes a correct idea of the natural wheat-producing capacity of the soil. But most Americans are so grasping that the most fertile ground that can be found is soon badly impoverished by injudicious management. When a forest is cleared, every tree and stick of firewood is removed without returning one atom of fertilizing material to aid in maintaining the original fertility of the ground. It is a difficult and tedious process to renovate a field that has been completely impoverished by judicious management. But if the precaution were observed to maintain the fertility of rich ground by returning a fair equivalent in the form of some kind of fertilizing material every time a crop is removed, there would be no difficulty in raising from thirty to fifty bushels of superb wheat from every acre that is adapted to the production of this sort of grain.—N. Y. Observer.