

THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE
AND HOME MAGAZINE.
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THE DOMINION.

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Delays are Dangerous.

There is, perhaps, no class of the business community, as a rule, so prone to the habit of procrastinating the performance of obvious duty in the line of his avocation as the average farmer. The nature of his calling and work is such that he can, without apparent danger of immediate loss, more frequently defer the doing of definite work to a future time than can a tradesman, a merchant or a professional man. His independence of the patronage of other people—which if wisely used and not abused is one of the finest features of the farmer's life—may be, and too often is, made the excuse for putting off till "a more convenient season" the performance of work which his better judgment tells him should be done sooner. It is not generally because of a lack of intelligence or of industry that this tendency exists, but often owing to indifference or an easy-going way into which he has, it may be unconsciously, allowed himself to drift. He knows that as a rule there is a right time and a right way to do most things, and that the right way, taken at the right time, is practically certain to prove the most satisfactory in performance and the most profitable in results, and yet he too frequently defers the duty till it is too late to ensure the best outcome, and contents himself with a lower grade of work and a lower standard of attainment than his best convictions would suggest.

Even the best and most ambitious of farmers we are sure will admit that they do not farm as well as they know how. It is true of men in every calling in life that they have not improved their opportunities to the full, but we are inclined to believe this indictment applies, for the reasons above assigned, to a larger proportion of those engaged in agriculture than of those operating in other lines of business.

Speaking generally, intelligent farmers have a tolerably correct idea of the proper treatment of the soil and the cultivation of crops in order to the

reasonable expectation of a profitable yield, and also of the feeding and management of their stock to produce paying returns; but the trouble is that so many so often fail to put into practice the knowledge they have, and consequently come far short of the realization which awaits the husbandman whose whole duty has been faithfully done. It is more true in the case of the farmer than of any other class of men that "Providence helps him who helps himself," for the forces of nature are more generally at his disposal and ready to contribute to his welfare if he will but avail himself of the blessings they are waiting to bestow upon his labor.

We readily admit that the farmer, in dealing with the problems of the soil and of animal life, has his full share of difficulties to contend with, many of which are quite beyond his control; that occasionally conditions of weather or other contingencies prevail which offset and, it may be, completely nullify his best efforts, well meant and honestly made; but these are the exceptions and not the rule. In no line of life is the axiom more generally realized to be true that "what is worth doing is worth doing well." The tendency to get into and remain in a rut, to follow in the path that our forefathers trod, irrespective of changed conditions of soil, trade, and markets, is akin to that of procrastination.

Thousands of farmers in this fair country have lost half a lifetime by continuing to depend upon the sale of grain as their main source of revenue, and clinging to the vain hope that the times and markets would so change that the old-time experiences would return to them, while meantime



THE LATE ROSA BONHEUR.

their farms have grown poorer from the fact that they have been selling its fertility, while giving it back little in the way of manure wherewith to recruit, and they find themselves contending with the double disability of low prices and light yields, and in addition to these, in many instances, having the interest on a mortgage to meet—a crop which grows the year round, in bright or stormy weather.

On the other hand, those who have read a good agricultural paper thoughtfully, and profited by the experience of enterprising and advanced farmers, as seen in their work and related in their writings, by turning their attention to dairying and the raising and feeding of stock, have, while keeping up the fertility of their farms, found themselves in touch with the tendency of the times and the markets for live stock and its products, which are by far the best we have. And these are the farmers who are paying their way and feeling safe in the line of work they are pursuing. The crops they grow are designed chiefly to be fed on the farm, and they confidently look for good yields, because their land is in good heart and their crops are marketed through their stock in the form of meat and milk or wool. The man who makes live stock the main feature of his farming will plan to cut his crops at the stage in their growth when their feeding value is the greatest, which in the case of hay is when in early bloom, and of grain when in the dough state, before the sap in the straw is exhausted and only woody fiber left. This is another instance where the average farmer who despises "book larnin'," as well as many others who know better, suffer loss both in the quantity and quality of their crops by procrastinating, for

there is always greater loss from shelling in the handling of grain that has been allowed to become fully ripe before being cut, while the fresh bright color and the weight are also wanting.

Many farmers who are fully persuaded of the advantages of underdraining low-lying land when the subsoil is such that surplus water cannot get away readily by percolation and the natural fall is insufficient to take it away by surface furrows, put off from year to year the work of draining portions of fields on which the crops annually hold out the signal of distress in the form of a sheet of water on the surface after a shower, of dark wet streaks in plowed land where all should be uniformly dry, of curling leaves of corn or yellow leaves and spindling stalks of grain, resulting in a delayed harvest and a diminished yield. A small outlay in tile drains would give the needed relief, working a wonderful improvement, and the increase of a single crop would fully repay the expenditure, while the satisfaction of seeing a uniform growth would itself be a recompense; but the work is delayed, not because of doubt that it would pay, but because it can be deferred to an indefinite period in the future, and so the owner loses a lot of pleasure which he might profitably have enjoyed, and in which his neighbors and all who pass by that way might have shared. The failure to make provision for supplying some succulent food for the cows during the dry time which is pretty sure to come in the midsummer months (minimizing the milk flow), delaying the cultivation of root crops till the weeds have grown to be bold robbers that are hard to subdue, the neglect to fix the broken fence till the cows are in the corn,—these and a hundred kindred incidents which are liable to follow in the wake of the easy-going farmer, need only be hinted at as a reminder of the folly of putting off till to-morrow what had better be done to-day.

STOCK.

Bath and West of England Show.

The sheep section of the Bath and West of England Show at Exeter this year was one of very capital merit and quality in most breeds. The following will be found to be a brief summary of the principal events in connection with the several breeds, and we follow the order of the official catalogue.

Cotswolds were not a large exhibit, but the merit and quality of those which in the yearling ram and yearling ewe classes secured the first and second prizes in each class for Mr. W. Houlton were considerably in advance of similar winners in previous years, their type being good and their fleece and flesh excellent. Mr. F. Craddock's flock came in for R. N. in each of these classes, with very level and typical sheep. The ram lambs were a small class, Mr. R. Swanwick being winner of both the first and second awards with lambs of high merit and quality, whilst Mr. F. Craddock was again R. N.

The **Devon Long-wool** sheep, a breed having many great merits, somewhat similar to the Lincoln, made a grand display, and it is evident from the greater energy now shown by its breeders that this breed will in the near future hold a far more important position in the export trade than it does at the present time. Mr. T. White was very successful in the yearling rams, a very strong class, being first and third, with one of Mr. R. Cook's second, and Mr. C. G. Thorne's R. N., two of Mr. A. C. Skinner's breeding being H. C. The whole of these were very good sheep of their breed—good in fleece and flesh. The yearling ewes were another excellent class, and the three premier pens of Messrs. R. Cook, F. White, and C. G. Thorne were of very equal merit, the order of precedence being as given above, a second pen of Mr. R. Cook's being R. N., and in the pair of ram lambs this latter breeder was again to the front, securing both the prizes with first-class, evenly-matched lambs, Mr. A. C. Skinner being again R. N.

South Devons, an almost similar breed to the previous, were present in large numbers and strong merit with good quality, Messrs. E. Stooke, J. S. Hullett, W. F. Sobey being the principal winners in yearling rams, whilst for yearling ewes, a strong even class, Messrs. E. Stooke and F. A. Short shared the honors between them, and Mr. F. S. Hallett led in the ram lamb class with two pairs of lambs of great quality.

Southdowns were a weak class, the winning ram of Earl Cadogan's being a weedy one, weak in scrag and not masculine enough, whilst the second ram from Lord Bathurst's was of a good masculine type and flesh, but not good enough in its fleece, Sir James Blyth being third with a moderate ram. The yearling ewes were better than the rams, the order of precedence being the same, the leading pen of Earl Cadogan's being very nice ones, but not in any degree exceptional. Mr. H. L. B. McCalmont, M. P., a new exhibitor, was first in the ram lamb class with a pair of capital lambs.

Hampshire Downs were a large entry of great merit, and the Chilmark flock of Mr. James Flower