

Miscellaneous.

Education of Farmers: Music.

To the Editor of THE CANADA FARMER:

Sir, It is pleasing to observe that the farmer's education is every day becoming better understood by commercial and professional men generally. Formerly it was thought that a man (provided he was a muscular one), was competent to be a farmer; education was considered to be useless to him; but the time is fast approaching when it will be as essential for the farmer to go through a course of studies preparatory for his vocation as any professional man. A time will come when it will be necessary for every Rural School to have a small quantity of land attached for experiments. If our school sites were laid out systematically, and embellished with evergreen trees, &c., and had a patch of ground for experiments, the children would soon acquire a taste for embellishment that would lead them to adore and appreciate the wondrous works of their Creator. Likewise, if teachers were compelled to teach music in Rural Schools it would be a benefit to the rising generation and a blessing to their parents. An eminent writer states that "music exerts a most salutary influence upon human character and conduct. Mark its effect also upon the taste—how refining! Upon the energies—how animating! It frowns upon all that is low and grovelling—upon all that is dull and stupid; and produces lofty aspirations and lively movements." If music produces such salutary effects upon the human character it is the duty of trustees and my brother farmers to have music taught in their schools and families. We know that all men are not constituted alike, and consequently music acts differently on different persons. Some old farmers would rather hear the composed grunt of their fat porkers, than the sweetest sounds that ever escaped human lips. But man is a social being, and likes social gatherings; the farmer is deprived of those gatherings when compared with the professional man; this deficiency would be alleviated to a certain extent by music. If farmer's children were taught singing at school, a pleasant harmonious family circle would enliven their homes throughout the long winter evenings and, make home a home indeed, where the children would look back when grown to men and women, with pleasure and regret: pleasure to think how many happy hours they have spent in their dear old homes; regret to think that they will never meet again as joyous children to swell the sweet notes of "Home sweet Home," and enliven their parents as in the days of yore.

Hibbert, November 26, 1866.

R. H. S.

A Scotch Fair.

THE village of Melrose is one of the most beautiful that I have ever seen. It is situated on the river Tweed, at the foot of the Eildon hills. The herdsmen of the South of Scotland have selected it as a convenient place for the sale of sheep. It is not an Agricultural Fair, conducted by a society, with premiums for the best stock, but a day on which any person having lambs for sale may find a purchaser. The lambs sold to-day were not for the butcher, but were purchased by farmers for fattening during the winter.

Reaching the Fair grounds, we find long rows of booths and tents by the roadside, with a crowd of people surging to and fro. Gin and spirits are to be had. The landlords of the country inns are here to accommodate their customers with roast beef, boiled mutton, brandy, brown stout, and whiskey. Kettles are steaming, and coffee-pots bubbling on the coals. Housewives are attending to the wants of the hungry multitude. The business of the day is over, and the farmers and herdsmen are drinking health to the Queen. They make the table dance with their loyal lists.

While they are thus engaged, let us pass through the crowd and take a look at the lambs. The road was full of sheep as we came up, and here are flocks by the acre. Not in fences of wood, but each flock in a net. Each herdsman brings his own netting, drives his stakes, and thus folds his lambs. The fair finds us by its magnitude. The official report gives between seventy and eighty thousand lambs on the ground! Last year over sixty thousand were brought to the fair, but the show to-day is the largest ever held in Great Britain.

Your agricultural readers will want to have particular information about the sheep, therefore we will step over the netting and examine the stock. It is Cheviot breed, one-half and two-thirds blood. The lambs are compactly built, hardy, easily fattened, and suited to the climate. They have smooth faces and legs—wool of medium fineness. There is very little resemblance between this stock and that to be found in New Hampshire and Vermont—the Spanish merino, woolled all over to the hoofs, hoods over the eyes, and everywhere wrinkled large and heavy. I have not as yet seen a Spanish merino this side of the water, and the fields are sprinkled everywhere with sheep, which are raised more for mutton than for wool.

The pure Cheviots brought to-day from \$1 to \$5; the half blood from \$3 to \$7, and the three-quarter bloods \$7 to \$8—a falling off of from two to four shillings on last year's prices. This is accounted for by the poor turnip crop of the present season; but gentlemen with whom I conversed expressed the opinion that the value of sheep has reached a culminating point.

A most interesting feature of the Fair was the conduct of the dogs, for each herdsman had two or three—no curs, but real shepherd's dogs, each one of which seemed to feel that he was the special appointed guardian of the flock. In passing along the roads, although there were hundreds of flocks, rarely was there any commingling. If a lamb left his proper place the vigilant guardian had him back in a twinkling. If the herdsman wanted his flock to turn a corner, a wave of his hand and the dog was there. The only difficulty was from the over-zeal of the dogs, who seemed to desire to do their best in the presence of so many spectators. Not unfrequently the herdsmen left their flocks in the care of the dogs and attended to other business, and then it was interesting to see the Argus-eyed creatures sit on their haunches or stretch themselves at full length on the ground, their eyes always upon the flock, or else trotting here and there around the lambs. Although there were hundreds of dogs upon the ground, there was no neglect of duties on the part of Bruno, to make the acquaintance of his canine friends from the other parts of the country. Returning from the flocks, let us take a look at the people, for they are here—men, women, lads and lasses. This is a grand holiday. The factories at Galashiels, for miles upon the Tweed, where thousands of shawls are manufactured every week, are all closed, and the operatives are out for a breath of fresh air. Those herdsmen are stout, broad-chested fellows, with placid countenances, and pictures of health. The cheeks of the girls are like pippins. There goes a lass with a countenance as fresh as the morning, and with golden locks many a high-born lady might wish were hers. As you study their faces you see kindness, good-will, and hearty cheer. Their voices are not quite musical. They speak with the broad Scotch brogue, and when talking rapidly their language is almost unintelligible. But there is nothing of the Cockney about them, in behaviour or speech. It is mid-afternoon, and the whiskey is beginning to be felt. Here is a young man with a glass before him, singing with all his might. There is a gray-haired man, who will balance two hundred and fifty pounds in the scales, who has swallowed several glasses of spirits which somehow runs down into his legs, producing such a limberness of the knees that he cannot walk without a friend at each arm. The lads and lasses are drinking together. Little boys not ten years old are tipping their glasses. Showmen, with drum and trumpet, are calling the gaping crowd to see their wonderful exhibition. Here is a tribe of gipsies—a class never seen in the States—who live in their donkey carts. They have pitched their tents under the lee of a stone wall, where they will tarry till the Fair is over, then away to another gathering. That old woman, wrinkled, bareheaded, with discoloured hair, black eyes, and repulsive features, smoking a pipe, sitting on a stone, and looking loweringly upon the crowd, is a fortune-teller. There stands a little girl, eight or ten years old, dressed in rags, holding a moaning infant, while the mother is telling the destiny of the lads and lasses around her, by looking at the palms of their hands. There is not much to be seen by the crowd, but the great business seems to be eating and drinking, and at this the people of Great Britain will beat the world.—*Cor. of Exchange Paper.*

NEW STYLE OF AGRICULTURAL ADDRESSES.—A correspondent of the agricultural department of the Boston Weekly Advertiser is not entirely satisfied with the present style of managing agricultural fairs. The usual style of the annual address does not suit him. He says:—"Instead of a long speech by one man, let the time be divided among several. If the horses are examined first, I would have a horse man prepare himself to speak upon horses—their breeding, management, &c. He should be confined to half an

hour, and then another half hour may be devoted to asking and answering questions. If cattle are next examined, a man should be ready to talk upon the subject of breeding cattle, and give the most approved rules for the same. He might compare the breeds, and, being on the ground, all could see them. And when the sheep come up for consideration, have a man ready to portray the wool interest, and bring it home to the understanding of all. I would go through the whole catalogue in this way, and then farmers will go home with much valuable information. Then fairs will no longer be sight-seeing only, but will contribute to the intelligence of visitors."

FARM ISOLATION.—The *Prairie Farmer* regards the isolation in which most farmers live the greater portion of their time, as a matter of regret, being the main cause of the boorishness so commonly, and sometimes justly, imputed to them as a class. There is nothing in farming which needs tend to this, and in cases where the charge is justified, it generally results from the isolation referred to, and nothing else. If farmers would hold more frequent intercourse with each other, exchange opinions upon topics connected with farming and public policy, such social attrition would smooth down their rough points, if any they have, give freedom and force to their expressions of opinion, while promoting a spirit of brotherhood advantageous alike to the individuals and to the community. Isolation tends to cherish selfishness and a churlish egotism impervious to the kindly influences which soften the heart and give polish and ease to the intercourse of man with man.

VARIOUS SORTS OF CHAUNTERS.—We clip the following from a recent number of the *Mark Lane Express*:—A man being brought up at one of the police-courts, the magistrate asked "What is your trade?" "A horse-chaunter, yer vurship." "A what? a horse-chaunter? why what's that?" "Yy, yer vurship, ain't you up to that 'ere trade?" "Come, explain yourself," said the magistrate. "Vell, yer vurship," said he, "I goes round among the livery-stables—they all on 'em knows me—and ven I sees a gen'man bargaining for an 'orse, I just steps up like a tee-total stranger, and sez I, 'Vel, that's a rare 'un, I'll be bound, sez I; he's got the beautifullest 'ead and neck as I ever seed,' sez I; 'only look at 'iz open nostrils—he's got vind like a no-go-motive, I'll be bound; he'll travel a hundred miles a-day, and never vunce think out; them's the kind of legs vat never fails.' Vel, this ticks the gen'man, and he sez to 'imself, that 'ere 'onest countryman's a rare judge of a horse, so, please you, yer vurship, he buys 'im, and tucks off. Vel, then I goes up to the man vat keeps the stable, and I axes 'im, 'Vel, vat are you going to stand for that 'ere chaunt?' and he gives me a surrin. Vel, that's vat I call 'orse-chaunting, yer vurship, there's rare little 'arm in't; there's a good many sorts on us; some chaunts canals, and some chaunts railroads."

BLACK RAIN.—The *Aberdeen (Scotland) Journal* gives the following account of the black rain showers which are now so well known in Scotland, and which scarcely occasion greater astonishment in the regions where they occur than would a snow storm in New England:

Between the beginning of January, 1862, and the middle of January, 1866, there have been no fewer than eight authenticated black showers in Scotland. Seven of these fell in Slains, and the extensive surrounding district. Two of them were accompanied with pumice stones, some of the balls measured eight or ten inches in diameter, and weighed upwards of a pound avoirdupois. The first four, including the Carlisle shower, and the eighth, were contemporaneous with outbursts of Vesuvius, and the intermediate three with those of Etna. But now, through the instrumentality of the Rev. Mr. Rust, of Slains, who was the first to draw general attention to the Scottish showers, it has been discovered that England gets her share, likewise, of black showers, although she did not think that she was so distinguished. On the 3rd of May, of the present year (1866), the town of Birmingham, and the surrounding country, were twice, for three-quarters of an hour, each time, enveloped with black clouds producing darkness and rain. Accidents took place in the streets, vehicles were upset, gas had to be lighted at some of the crossings, and nearly in all places of business. Mr. Rust, writing for information, got inquiries instituted, and the result is found to be that a large quantity of black rain, similar to the Scottish, fell, and blackened rain water in tanks, and clothes on greens, not only in Birmingham itself, but at rural places many miles distant, unaffected by soot and smoke, and even windward of that town. So far as known, however, no word has yet arrived of any volcanic outburst, although, judging from what has taken place in Scotland, a probability exists that some volcano has been in a state of activity, emitting its contents, whether it be heard of or not.