

# The Farmer's Advocate and Home Magazine

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## EDITORIAL.

Now that the need for extending the live-stock breeding operations of Canada is being so forcefully brought to mind in public reports, and by the demand for well-bred animals, "The Farmer's Advocate" readers are well advised in laying plans early for a decided advance during 1912.

"County Boards of Agriculture" is the contribution of Waterloo County, Ont., to the plans of the present season for the advancement of farming interests. Representing local farmers' clubs, it is designed to promote country interests, as is done by the city or town Boards of Trade. The new institution will be watched with hope and interest.

The proposal to investigate by Royal Commission the insufficiency of rural population in the Province of Ontario would find, among other conspicuous causes, the Western fever, which is working its own cure. In the next place, attention would be drawn to the pull of the industries and counter-attractions of the towns, but down deep as a root-trouble would be discovered a misshapen public-school education.

The New York Experiment Station, after lengthy and carefully-recorded trials, bears testimony to the value of the silo for supplementing the pastures which dry up in July and August, causing a large shrinkage in milk flow, which is difficult to get back, and very costly. Succulent summer feed is essential in sustaining the milk flow, and the silo is the most reliable method of securing such food.

It will pay every reader of "The Farmer's Advocate" to make a close study of the series of four articles on the purely business aspect of farming, begun in this issue by Prof. J. F. Snell, of Macdonald College. The series will continue through this month, and be concluded in January of the new year. They will be read to best purpose with discriminating reference to one's own conditions, and will probably elicit some thoughtful discussion in these columns during the present winter season.

Chinese farmers are very conservative; they are using the old methods of farming handed down to them by their forefathers, and have made hardly any improvement within the last 3,000 years," writes Canadian Trade Commissioner Jackson. The Chinese Government, he claims, is not active in encouraging the adoption of modern machinery. The small farmers cannot afford to buy machinery, and the rich landlords are not particular about introducing reforms. China is, however, awakening, and in recent years there has been more talk than ever before about introducing reforms in farming, but so far little practical action has been taken. In the whole empire there are only two agricultural colleges, while there is said to be no special agricultural paper, although a few papers have devoted a few pages to agricultural topics now and then.

## The Christmas Message.

Christmas has its own acknowledged place in the celebration of the birthday of mankind's best friend, and no class of the race has greater cause for gratitude for the origin and institution of this holiday celebration than have the people of the farm, who have the distinction of being partners with the Almighty in feeding His creatures throughout the world. Except in some unfavored sections, the returns for the labor of the farmers of the Dominion this year have been well up to the average, and more satisfactory than in most other countries, while market prices for nearly all products have ruled higher than usual, and prosperity in trade has prevailed. Even in those Western districts in which unfavorable weather conditions have caused disappointment in crop returns, there may be comfort found in the reflection that conditions are never so bad but that they might have been much worse. If in some places feed for stock is scarce, a review of similar experience in previous years may remind that, by careful and judicious preparation and feeding, the supply may be made to hold out beyond expectation, and the results to exceed our apprehensions. And even though more than usual may have to be purchased, the account may have been more than balanced by the bountiful crops of former years, and may be also by those of the following year. Trying experiences in the West have taught again the unwisdom of sole dependence on the wheat-growing game.

While the conditions of the year have not been more than usually favorable for fruit-growing, the horticultural exhibitions have afforded gratifying evidence of the successful results of improved methods of cultivation and of warfare with destructive insect life, enabling our country to take high rank in the production of first-class fruit, of which an interesting example is another successful outcome of "The Farmer's Advocate" demonstration orchard, as published in our holiday number.

A continuance of the blessing of national peace, while other countries are suffering the horrors of war, is cause for thankfulness beyond the conception of a people so favored as we are, ours being a record in this regard scarcely equalled in history, and no people have greater reason for gratification, in view of the proposals being made by rulers of nations in our day for the prevention of war by means of friendly arbitration.

Those of the people whose political organization may have been unsuccessful in the recent elections have the opportunity to exercise the grace of resignation, cherish the hope which "springs eternal in the human breast," and resolve to do yeoman service for their country as a watchful and patriotic Opposition whose policy may in due time win the favor of the electorate, and place them in the "seats of the mighty" once more. Those, on the other hand, in whose judgment the great public acted wisely, experience a lively sense of gratification.

To those of our readers interested in the mechanical progress of the age, the year has demonstrated effectually its conquest in the realm of improved machinery, electric power and aerial transportation, though many ambitious individuals during the year have by their death paid dearly for their daring.

It is gratifying to know that humanity in our age has not lost faith in itself and in the Providence that shapes the destinies of nations, and that, despite the ebullitions of personal and na-

tional selfishness, the idea of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man is steadily growing.

The national commission on education, which has awakened bright reflections of more enlightened school systems through which the business of the farm and home life may come to their own, is another welcome feature in the growth of public opinion in our country, and the report of the commission, which will probably be published in the coming year, will doubtless be of vital interest to the masses of the people.

In view of the reflections here enumerated, and others, the readers of "The Farmer's Advocate" will doubtless eat their Christmas dinner with relish, particularly as they have the wherewithal. And the editors herewith heartily wish them the usual compliments of the season.

## Corporation versus Individual Orcharding.

A careful reading of the story of our practical orchard work will suggest a number of important points for thoughtful consideration. One of the first that will occur to experienced orchardists is the contrast in profits between an orchard looked after by a thrifty farmer who has the trees on his own farm right under his eye, and, on the other hand, an orchard operated by a company, with headquarters in a distant city, and with hundreds and thousands of other orchards at widely-scattered points. It is true that we have been able to make a conspicuous success of rented orchards, and in the case of orchard No. 1, which is the fairest test, results have been far beyond anything we have ever dared to hope. We have succeeded in making a large profit, first because orchard owners in the vicinity where we operated did not realize the value of their orchards and were willing to lease them at figures below their actual earning capacity; and secondly, because, while experiencing some of the disadvantages of absentee management, these were greatly minimized by the fact that we had the hearty co-operation of the owner, and had only a moderate area of orchards under our control. Even so, we have found that we could handle three to five acres of rented orchards much more satisfactorily than we could operate double the area. As the acreage increases, difficulties multiply. Successful orcharding demands considerable labor, and certain of the operations, such as spraying and picking, must be accomplished in a limited time. To secure an adequate supply of even moderately efficient day labor is difficult at the best, and, with extensive operations, becomes almost impossible. There is nothing wrong about this state of affairs, but it may well give pause to the syndicate orchardist. We mention these points as throwing some light on the difficulties which confront the several companies that have lately undertaken extensive orchard operations in Canada. Without wishing any of them ill-will, we sincerely trust that their enterprise will be quite as discouraging as our experience leads us to expect that it will be. We should be exceedingly sorry to see the splendid orchard possibilities of this country taken out of the hands of the individual farmers to whom they belong, and leased for a song to capitalists. Notwithstanding certain probable advantages of corporation control in respect to marketing, and rapid introduction of improvement in cultural methods, we are convinced that there is much more aggregate profit to be realized when