Agriculture.

What have We to Learn from the Agricultural Exhibitions of 1880 and Previous Years?

Any one who visited the Agricultural Exhibitions of our own Dominion last fall cannot fail to be impressed with the wonderful advancement we are making. Looking around on one piece of machinery or another we are lost in wonder as we view the various fitting pieces, their connections, and the stupendous whole. Here a machine is exposed for the performance of something in the agricultural line, which it was unable to perform a year ago, on account of some deficiency in its mechanism. There science brings to light some new invention which was only thought of yesterday, which many eager, anxious eyes are gazing at, and minds deeply lost in thought as to how some improvement can be made or some new theory can be developed. Here again is a machine with some appliance adjusted, bearing the mark of first prize, with scores of others standing around it with no mark at all, but in the breasts of these unsuccessful owners there is brewing that ambitious rivalry that says within itself, "we will exhibit something even superior to that in the year to come."

It is the above that we learn from the exhibitions of 1880 and previous years. If my neighbor excels me this year in carrying off the prize, I am bound to put forth greater efforts to beat him next year. If in machinery, by the introduction or adjustment of a cog-wheel, the machine is rendered serviceable to a greater degree than mine, I will endeavor to even introduce some new improvement into the same machine next year. If in the manufacture of cheese by some new method he has attained to some perfection in the pressing or discovered something by which the milk can be used to better advantage at a certain temperature, that makes the cheese better than mine, I will endeavor to discover some other new method whereby I can even excel him next year.

If in the ladies' department of some particular line of exhibit one lady, by some delicate ingenious pattern of antimacassar work, carries off the palm, the lady along side of her, by a careful scrutiny, may conceive in her mind's eye that by the blending of the same color differently a pattern far more delicate and beautiful than that on which she is now looking can be produced, and determines there and then that she shall have the prize next year.

What do we learn by these exhibitions? We learn everything. To what can we attribute the great improvement in the live stock of Canada other than to the shows? We learn that if we have a good article some one else has better, and to be successful we must try and obtain better. The great cause of our splendid herds of Herefords, Durhams and Ayrshires is mainly due to these shows, as also our improved class of horses and hogs.

Not only is the great gain to the farmer seen clearly at the Provincial and County Shows, but we would say that by far the greater gain is in his own, the Township Show, at his own door. Even here is exhibited keen competition on the part of the exhibitors, keen determination not to be excelled, fixed resolutions made and nursed within the heart not to be outdone next year if unsuccessful this year. Some new kind of seed must be obtained, some different method of applying manure must be adopted, some field must be drained, some new book must be read on the subject. Then all these cross his mind and must and will, if he is ambitious at all and wants to become successful. What, we ask again, creates and carries into effect these things but these exhibitions, and do we not see these transpiring every year in our own neighborhood? To dispense with our exhibitions would be like laying the axe to the root of the fruiting tree, and the sword of death to both arts and science. What could more stimulate the farmer to improve in agricultural products than driving home his team ticketed first prize, and with him in the same waggon it may be a firkin of butter with a similar mark on the lid, and what determination is in his eye even to do better when another year rolls round. If he has anticipated a prize when he has failed, he learns how he did it, sees how he committed the error and determines to correct it. Canada, or more particularly the Province of Ontario, has made of late years very rapid strides in science, art and agriculture, particularly the latter, and we must say that the great impetus given her has been mainly by her exhibitions, in which all have taken a deep interest, not only Provincial and County, but also in Township Shows, and may the day be far distant when the government, corporations, or even individuals, will endeavor to discontinue the township exhibitions, which have been such a boon to the nation's advancement and to the farming community in particular. W. M., Owen Sound.

[This essay was received too late to compete for the prize offered on the above subject, but on account of its merit we give it a place in this issue.]

"Practical Farmer" says, in reply to the question: "What is the best method of saving manure from the cattle?"—"I permit it to lie in the stable for a few days, the more objectionable part thrown back, so the cattle have a clean bed, permitting the litter to gather to considerable depth. By this method, the floors being cemented, the liquid is absorbed. My ideal method, however, is to let the stock run loose in moderate-sized inclosures, keep them well bedded with straw, and permit the manure to remain for several weeks. The treading of the stock is advantageous. More liquid is saved by this method than by any other." As soon as it is taken from the stable, it is covered with plaster (gypsum); after heating moderately it is turned and mixed at intervals until thoroughly rotted. He says he objects to water standing in troughs in the winter after being drawn, as it gets colder. It is not economical to let cattle drink very cold water, as food is consumed heating it, that otherwise would produce flesh.

The annual meeting of the Ameliasburgh Agricultural Society was held at the Town Hall, Township of Ameliasburgh, Prince Edward County, on Thursday, January 13th, 1881, at which the annual report was read, showing—Receipts, $604; disbursements, $645.64; showing a membership of 192, which is considered by the officers of the Society to have been largely increased by the FARMER'S ADVOCATE being sent to its members for the last few years free. The following officers were elected for the present year:—Elijah Sprague, President; Dr. A. J. Fill, Vice-President; Edward Roblin, Secretary-Treasurer; also a full Board of Directors, Auditors, &c. N. A. Peterson was recommended as a Director to County Society in the place of the retiring President, John G. Peck. Has been the custom of the Society for several years to recommend the retiring President to the County Society as a Director; but the retiring President requested some one else to be recommended, as it was his intention to move to the Far West in the spring. The FARMER'S ADVOCATE was again unanimously recommended to be forwarded to its members for the year 1881.

THE TEMPERATURE IN THE SOUTH-WEST.—McReady, from Corpus Christi, passed up the trail the middle of December with a large drove of cattle, driven from Southern Texas. The cold weather caught them on the trail, and in a few days 400 froze to death. Twenty-six horses also froze to death.

According to Dr. Wiedehold, fungus growths in cellars may be combated either by burning sulphur or by pouring two parts of concentrated sulphuric acid over one part of common salt, and so closing all openings as to prevent any escape of the vapors.

A Barnyard Advocate.

"What a lean-looking barnyard: nothing in it but two big manure heaps. You don't feed your stock anything, do you?" This was the running salutation of a seedy stranger one day last winter, who said he was a farmer, and had come to look at the pigs. "Anyhow," he continued, "I never saw such a barnyard before, and if it was not for so much manure, I would imagine you did not keep any stock, but I suppose you do. Why there ain't any tracks only to the well. My barnyard is all trodden down, and you can see fodder all around. It looks alive, and is alive, for I keep my stock in it. What is a barnyard made for if not for stock to run in? They want the air and exercise, and the barnyard is the place to get both." "So it is," I broke in, "and the place to get lean, too. Can you tell healthy-looking cattle?" I modestly enquired. "I should say I can," was the somewhat boastful reply. "My cattle are healthy. They eat a pile of fodder every day. I only lost two last spring," continued the stranger; "one of them had the hollow-horn, and the other died having her calf." "Do you fodder in the middle of the day?" I asked. "Of course I do; I throw out feed all around the yard, and they help themselves." "Don't your cattle destroy as much as they eat?" I inquired. "Well, suppose they do, it is not lost, it goes into the manure." "Are you sure," I asked, "they eat all they want before it gets under their feet and is trodden into the manure, when they will not eat it? In my opinion at least half of it is thus wasted, and the other half which they may eat is used up in keeping your cattle from freezing, so that really your cattle are no better off, so far as any gain is concerned, and your barnyard feeding is almost a complete waste. If this amount of fodder was given to them in a warm stable, it would all be eaten and changed to a better quality of manure, besides making growth. A barnyard in winter is a proper place for manure, and that is all; certainly not to feed stock in."

It was after dinner, and the cattle had been turned out and had had their drink and noon feeding, and now they were lying down chewing the cud—each one a picture of comfort. "I declare," said the advocate of barnyards, "they do look good. Now I see how it is. You feed your stock in the stables." "Yes, and keep them there all of the time, except while they are out to water. While they are drinking the stables are cleaned and the feed put in, when they are immediately put back." "Why, how fat they are," said the stranger. "A number of these cows would make good beeves, and the young cattle are fat too. Oh, you feed grain." "No," I told him, "they have had nothing but cornstalks and a few roots. They have probably not been fed so much as yours, but the difference is, these cattle are kept warm, and all they eat goes to make growth, while more than half of the feed given to yours is used up to keep yours from freezing, besides what they waste. It takes food to keep stock warm, just as it does to keep them alive. I make the stable furnish the heat by keeping the cold out; you put yours into the cold and then try to keep it out by throwing out the fodder to them; you work all summer to keep your stock alive through the winter."

"Horn-ail is chiefly caused by poor blood and poor circulation, and exposure does more to produce this condition than anything else. Your cow lost her calf and died from weakness caused by your barnyard wintering. No doubt of it. A cow in good condition rarely loses her calf, and if she does she generally gets over it, while weak ones are always liable to abort, and to die afterward. It is a wrong notion that cattle must be kept in a barnyard all day, or a part of a day, to get exercise. How much exercise will they take during the day? Just enough to get from one pile of fodder to another, or to find, if they can, a warm spot to stand on. If you do not believe this, watch a cow and see. Fasten cattle in the stable so they can get up and down easily, and this is all the exercise they require. You see these cattle are fastened with a chain, and they can move around freely and lick themselves and get up and down without straining. This is one reason why they are so healthy. Stancheons are more confining and straining for them. I will not have them in my stable; I think they are cruel."—F. D. Curtis, in Tribune.