

THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME MAGAZINE.

THE LEADING AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL IN THE
DOMINION.

PUBLISHED WEEKLY BY
THE WILLIAM WELD COMPANY (LIMITED).

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AGENTS FOR THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME JOURNAL,
WINNIPEG, MAN.

LONDON (ENGLAND) OFFICE:
W. W. CHAPMAN, Agent, Mowbray House, Norfolk Street,
London, W. C., England.

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which they live, and the wonder in such cases has been on what hypothesis they were nominated, unless it were on the judgment of some possibly ill-informed official, or the recommendation of the political representative of the district from which they were chosen. Admitting that instances of incompetency in the men sent out have so far been the exception rather than the rule, it must be conceded that there is grave danger of abuses growing out of a system so closely associated with politics, where so many are looking for favors, and the patronage of M. P.'s or Government officers is so liable to be sought or used to help a friend, regardless of his qualifications. It is quite possible that the circuit-judge-system cure might be as bad as or worse than the old go-as-you-please-system disease. It certainly would if it became a matter of political patronage.

An effort has, in the past, been made by the Dominion breed societies to have the judges chosen from a list of capable men named and published by the societies, but the Boards of Directors of the leading and most of the local exhibitions make their appointments of judges with little regard, and, in some instances, with a total disregard to these lists, and the Government officials, in their selection of expert judges, evidently pay as little attention to the nominations of the breeders, but, in some cases, employ men whose names have never appeared on the breeders' lists. Probably one of the excuses for this course is that, in the effort to make the fairs more educative, the so-called expert judge is required to publicly give reasons for his decisions, and for this reason men are chosen more for their ability as public speakers than as discriminating judges. While this system may, in theory, appear commendable, is it not found impracticable, as a rule, where the judge has a large number of classes to pass upon in the few hours of an afternoon, and liable to lead him into altercations with exhibitors, causing delay and unpleasantness? Besides this, does not the system unduly limit the list of available judges, for the reason that many of our best

judges are not gifted in public speaking, and would decline to accept an appointment under such conditions from innate modesty, if not from the conviction that an honest and capable man need not or should not be required to give reasons for his actions? Is not the consequence that many men better qualified as judges than some of those chosen are, for this reason, unavailable? And, as for the educative influence of giving reasons, is not the proper placing of the exhibits, with regard to type, character, constitution and quality, irrespective of owners or origin, of much greater importance from the standpoint of instruction than the glib attempts of an orator to justify or account for palpable misplacements or the preference of undesirable types?

We admit that, where the time permits and the judge combines the necessary gift of tongue with the discernment of the judge, there is an unusually strong combination as a feature of the exhibition, but it is obviously difficult to secure. It would seem to us that if the plan of circuit expert judges is to be continued satisfactorily, it would be necessary for the breed societies (Horse, Cattle, Sheep and Swine) to devote more time to the nomination of competent men for the respective classes, so that there would be a wider list of names from which the selections might be made. The publicity given these lists in the agricultural press would have a winnowing and corrective effect which, with the experience of the agricultural societies where these judges act, will aid in the evolution of a plan which will combine the maximum of advantages with a minimum of undesirable features.

We submit the question to our readers for discussion through our columns, and invite a presentation of the views of those interested, in the hope that suggestions may be offered that may lead to some satisfactory settlement of this vexed question.

Notes from Ireland.

THE FORESTRY QUESTION.

The interesting account of the proceedings of the recent Forestry Convention, given in "The Farmer's Advocate," impressed me very forcibly with one fact, namely, that, so far as this nationally important subject is concerned, Canada is attentively considered by the Government authorities, to a much greater extent than is Ireland, or, indeed, the kingdom as a whole. Over here there has, of late, been no end of lamentation about our rapidly-disappearing woodlands, and the consequent bleak, dismal and neglected appearance of the hillsides and waste lands in many parts of the country; but the State has shown little inclination to take any prompt or active measures calculated to remedy the existing condition of things.

The new Government has, it is true, given some vague promises of a Commission to enquire into the subject, and we are thankful for even this; but all the same it affords no guarantee that the question is going to be immediately and effectively grappled with. Accordingly, it was with interest—perhaps a little envious interest, too—that Irish arboricultural enthusiasts were informed of the sympathetic attitude adopted by the representatives of the Canadian Government in connection with the recent conference.

It is a great pity—nay, more, it is a crying shame—that our legislators at home have not wakened up to the importance of the subject, and made provision for an extensive system of planting throughout Ireland and the Kingdom generally. Established and controlled by the State, as is the case in many Continental countries, there can be no doubt that systematically-conducted forests would prove remunerative in more senses than one, in those islands. It may also be pleaded that if the State discharged its responsibility in connection with afforestation, the great and serious problem of the unemployed would be brought immensely nearer solution. There is no doubt that there are thousands of men at present walking the streets of our great cities who might, with all-round benefit, be set to work at tree-planting—of course, under skilled supervision. But the Government authorities appear to be cautious to a fault, and the money necessary to undertake extensive replanting has not yet been advanced, or even promised. All the time our woodland areas have, it is to be feared, been becoming beautifully less.

Particularly acute is the question at the present juncture, when so many Irish farmers are becoming land owners under the Land Act of 1903, for it must be admitted that there is a very strong temptation, under such circumstances, to turn trees that may be growing on the farms into hard cash. Even some of the big landlords have been avaricious enough to dispose of the trees on their property before selling to the ten-

ants. It is, therefore, evident that, as in most things, so also in forestry, people need to be educated; and in Ireland the farmers, in many instances, need to be taught that it is a short-sighted, and, to say the least of it, an unpatriotic policy, to denude their land of trees. The word "patriotism" has a peculiar charm for the average Irishman, and the appeals which have been made in its name to farmers to spare their trees, have not been altogether without avail.

While I speak of the failure of the Government to make strides in the matter, it must not be inferred that the subject is altogether neglected, for such is not really the case. There are several agencies at work endeavoring to educate the people as to the great importance to the country of trees, and thereby urging, not only abstinence from destroying trees, but also the planting of them here and there. For instance, the Department of Agriculture, although it has very little money to expend for the purpose, has put into circulation large numbers of leaflets and posters, appealing to farmers to spare their trees. The Department has also established in the County of Wicklow a school, known as the Avondale Forestry and Poultry-fattening Station, for the training of youths as foresters. The county instructors from different parts of the country have been given a course in the subject at this station, so as to qualify them to advise any farmers who may appear inclined to go in for planting on his farm. En passant, it might be mentioned, as an item of interest, that the site of this school—indeed, the building which was utilized for it—was the residence of one whose name will for all time be remembered by Irishmen—Charles Stewart Parnell. To come back to the subject under notice, however, reference must be made to the work of the Irish Forestry Society, which was founded a few years ago, and which has labored towards the only practical goal for a private and unsubsidized body, viz., the education of public opinion. Thanks mainly to its efforts, the movement known as Arbor Day—no doubt long established in Canada—has been introduced into Ireland. In several parts of the country the Arbor-day movement has been adopted, and is observed, and its inevitable influence must be to arouse attention in and enlist sympathy, especially among the rising generation, with the reforestation of waste lands and the protection and extension of existing forests.

IRISH HORTICULTURE.

Among the many branches of work for the betterment of the country, the Department of Agriculture has provided for schemes for the fostering and encouragement of horticulture, and, thanks to the operation of these schemes, considerable improvement has already been brought about in the manner in which gardens and orchards in different parts of the country are looked after by those responsible for their management. I mention the subject for the purpose of stating that, as indicative of the growing importance of the horticultural industry, a new periodical, exclusively devoted to the country, and bearing the title Irish Gardening, has just been brought out under most auspicious circumstances. The fact that Ireland has not yet had a paper exclusively devoted to gardening, must have militated against the development of the industry; but the new educational journal under notice is calculated to give a decided lift to the craft. Irish Gardening, though not sent out to the world as an official publication of the Department of Agriculture, is very closely associated with that body, as it owes its existence to the repeated requests of the Department's county instructors in horticulture, all of whom individually volunteered to take an active part in its production and circulation. Then, again, its editor is one of the officials of the Department in Dublin, and so, too, are practically all the contributors to the first number. As a "send off," the first issue contains a letter from Sir Horace Plunkett to the editor, in the course of which that gentleman, than whom there is none better acquainted with rural Ireland, says: "I cannot conceive of a more timely or useful publication for the development of one of Ireland's most neglected and most immediately practicable resources. What especially appeals to me is the admirable relationship you propose to establish between practical horticulture and the sciences underlying it. . . . As I wish to give little more than my sympathy, will you allow me to place in your hands a sum of £10, for the purpose of widely disseminating the first or such subsequent issue or issues, among likely readers, especially cottagers, who, in your judgment, would be benefited by paying more attention to this important element in their domestic economy."

It may be presumed, therefore, that the appearance of this new paper is regarded as a notable departure so far as horticulture in Ireland is concerned.

CANADA AN EXAMPLE FOR IRELAND.

Lord Aberdeen, who is our new Lord-Lieutenant, recently made some remarks on horticulture which, while on the subject, I may allude to, because his words were not without their interest for Canadians. For instance, His Excellency claimed to be something of a fruit-grower himself, having been responsible for the formation of perhaps the