

THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME MAGAZINE.

THE LEADING AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL IN THE
DOMINION.

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JOHN WELD, MANAGER.

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The Eighth Commandment.

Mr. Bernard Shaw, the playwright and author, is reported, in the newspapers, to have come to the conclusion that the Ten Commandments are out-of-date for this advanced age. That this is the working theory of a good many people, is evidenced by their conduct. If we may judge by the unearthings of the season of 1905-6 in Canada, it looks as though the eighth injunction in the decalogue were becoming obsolete, or else there is a deal o' haziness as to what it means. Shakespeare's "Iago" draws the lines more closely than at the taking of a loaf of bread, a mint of money, or a block of land. He says:

"Good name in man or woman
Is the immediate jewel of their souls.
Who steals my purse steals trash;
But he that filches from me my good name,
Robs me of that which nothing enriches him,
And makes me poor, indeed."

What shall be said of the extortions of the Plumbers' Combine, the scandalous dissipation of the savings of the people in the York Loan and its blood-sucking auxiliaries, or the million-dollar wreck of the Ontario Bank through unauthorized stock-gambling? It does appear to be high time for press and pulpit to set about giving some lucid expositions of the application of the four simple words, "Thou shalt not steal," in financial and commercial transactions, all the way from watering milk to the highest (or lowest) flights of frenzied finance. Once the public mind is properly clarified on this branch of the case—or simultaneously with that process—let us have a demonstration of the administration of justice which will adequately punish the convicted culprits, first for their crimes, and also as an effective object lesson to the rising generation. Sermons and editorials do not reach the Tom-and-Jerry political element, and moral essays run over the minds of the men who have been juggling with other people's money like water off a duck's back. Jail's the thing.

To Our Subscribers.

Our great aim for 1907 is to improve "The Farmer's Advocate and Home Magazine." People tell us it is first-class now, but we know that with the co-operation of our subscribers we can make it still better. Now, the more subscribers we have, the more money we shall be able to spend in improvements. We want to double our subscription list right away this fall, and are going to depend largely on our present subscribers to help us in doing this. Let each present subscriber obtain for us just one new subscriber, and the thing is done.

A little less than 3 cents per week for "The Farmer's Advocate and Home Magazine," 52 copies per year, Christmas numbers included! Surely it should not be hard to obtain one new subscriber when these facts are pointed out. Perhaps, too, you might call attention to our special rates to new subscribers as an inducement—from now until the end of 1907 (two Christmas numbers included) for \$1.50. The earlier the subscription, the more copies to be received.

Do what you can for us, and help us to make the fall of 1906 the banner season in the history of "The Farmer's Advocate."

Notes from Ireland.

AN AGE OF COMMISSIONS.

At present, no fewer than four Royal, Viceregal, or Governmental, Commissions are enquiring into matters closely affecting the future welfare of Ireland. There may be some political significance in this, for such a wholesale stocktaking of any country is too remarkable to be regarded as commonplace affair. Indeed, with vague promises (or threats—all according to the spectacles through which one looks) of extended local government, or Home Rule concessions by the Liberals, floating about, these inquiries might lend some color to the fancy that we will soon witness important developments in connection with the government of the country. Be that as it may, however, this is neither the place nor the time to deal with such topics, and until some epoch-making event actually transpires, the political aspect of these commissions may be left alone. The commissions, I may mention, are engaged in inquiries in the following directions: First, into the constitution and working of our Dublin University (Trinity College), which is the subject of much bitter religious strife, and where, by the way, a chair of agriculture has lately been established; second, into the working of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, whose operations in the cause of farming development now ramify practically the entire country; third, into the working of the Irish railways and canals, the proper control and efficient service of which are, needless to say, most potent factors in the development of any country; fourth, into the working of the Congested Districts Board.

This last-named institution, it should be explained, is a Government body, which was entrusted some years ago with looking after the poorer portions of the west of Ireland. Emigration has, of course, wrought such a change in most of these places that they now present anything but a "congested" appearance. Nevertheless, when the Board was called into existence, things were different, and the districts along the western seaboard were rather thickly peopled with poverty-stricken families. The change that time has brought about, and the inevitable overlapping of the Board's work by that of the Department of Agriculture, rendered the inquiry at present taking place a matter of necessity. It may not be a surprise to find the C. D. B., as a result, being merged into the Department, but one is not wise to attempt a dogmatic prophecy in such a matter.

Of course, of the quartette, the commission possessing the greatest and most direct interest

for farmers is that sifting the affairs of the Department of Agriculture. Its labors should now be getting near completion, for the sources to which it was advisable to resort for evidence must be pretty soon exhausted. Sitings have been held in all the leading centers, and evidence has been taken from practically every standpoint from which the work of the Department could be viewed. The great bulk of the evidence has been of an appreciative nature, and, even in those cases where the Department's methods have been found fault with, the best part of the criticism indulged in has been more of a constructive than of a destructive character. Personalities have been allowed to enter into the evidence in some places, and the head of the Department, Sir Horace Plunkett, has been rather bitterly spoken of on such occasions. However, the reason for this is easily found. Sir Horace, a few years ago, published a notable book, which he called "Ireland in the New Century," and in which he discussed several aspects of Irish economics. Among other matters, he wrote pretty plainly on the question of excessive church-building, priestly influence, and other highly-controversial ecclesiastical subjects. The book's appearance was the signal for a great outcry from the clerics and prominent members of the Roman Catholic Church, by whom it was stigmatized as an unwarranted insult to their beliefs and practices. This portion of the book may have been injudicious, from a public man in such a position, but it was doubtless an honest, outspoken expression of opinion. Nevertheless, the prejudice which it excited against the writer will die hard in some quarters, and it is to be feared that it accounted for a lot of the adverse criticism. However, leaving that particular matter aside, it is confidently to be expected that the whole inquiry will have a beneficial effect on the Department's work, probably enlarging its sphere of influence, and giving the country generally a deeper sympathy and more hearty co-operation with its work.

PRICES FOR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE.

The collection of statistics of any description, for a whole country, is a task that requires some time, and it was only this month (October) that the Department of Agriculture succeeded in giving publicity to the annual return showing the average prices current in Ireland for different descriptions of farm produce during the year 1905. Needless to say, information of this kind is always interesting and valuable, as, even if the returns cannot, in the very strictest sense, be accepted as infallible, yet, for all practical purposes, they are useful for the sake of comparisons. It may be here remarked that the prices of Irish farm produce are influenced directly by the conditions of supply and demand in the British markets. In other words, if the consumptive demand in Great Britain (from bigger population or more prosperous conditions) increases, prices in Ireland are likely to advance; whereas, if foreign imports increase, Irish prices are depressed. The variations occurring from year to year are due mainly to the effects of these two circumstances. The returns to which I have above referred, when taken in conjunction with the official figures of the Board of Trade regarding imports, etc., afford interesting study for our economists. They show that beef was 1s. per cwt. cheaper during 1905 than in 1904, and mutton underwent a similar reduction, the great contributory cause in each case being, no doubt, the marked increase in the imports of foreign dead meat. In regard to dairy produce, a satisfactory advance in price, amounting to 10s. per cwt., was registered during the year, there being a substantial decrease in the quantities of butter received from abroad; indeed, the only country that sent a larger supply during 1905 than 1904 was Canada. In connection with the butter question, an interesting table shows how considerable are the variations caused by the uneven output of produce at different seasons of the year; for, as I have pointed out in one of my earlier letters, winter dairying is very much neglected in Ireland. Consequently, the fact in question shows that, taking creamery butter for example, the average prices per cwt. during the four quarters of the year were:—First quarter, 105s. 1d.; ending June, 93s. 3d.; ending September, 104s. 7d.; ending December, 106s. 4d.

Among other things, what is returned as having

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