

THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME MAGAZINE.

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THE DOMINION.

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Township Fairs.

The discussion of this subject, amongst others, at the annual meeting of the South Brant Agricultural Society, in which Hon. John Dryden, Minister of Agriculture, took a leading part, has brought again before the public a question which has for years been seeking a solution. In the Province of Ontario, under the present law, every Electoral District and every Township in each district which has organized an Agricultural Society is entitled, on compliance with certain easy conditions, to a share of the Government grant to agriculture, amounting last year to \$76,000, for the assistance of the societies in holding fairs and the payment of prizes. It has been urged in some quarters that under these conditions the fair business is overdone; that too many are crowded into the only two months in the year in which it is practicable to hold them; that too much of the time of too many people is taken up with fairs, to the neglect of other important work; and that many of the smaller shows, both District and Township, are badly managed, weak, and unsuccessful. While the latter statement is undoubtedly true, we are not sure that the other counts in the indictment are regarded by the majority of the people as well founded. If they are, and a reduction of the number of fairs is considered necessary, the next question which arises is whether it would be better to drop the Township fairs, or whether the District shows should go and the local organizations be strengthened? We confess to a feeling of sympathy with the Township fair. Many of these are well managed, and are quite as successful as most of the District shows. They have, where well managed, exerted a helpful influence in stimulating the farmers to improve their stock and other products of the farm, and afforded a pleasant holiday to many who do not enjoy the larger exhibitions. If the idea of the union of smaller shows could be expanded, and the number reduced in this way, it would doubtless be an improvement. This has been successfully accomplished in some

counties, the added financial strength enabling their promoters to erect substantial permanent buildings and beautify and improve their grounds. The Minister of Agriculture is reported to have expressed the opinion at the Brantford meeting that the people would finally be educated to the fact that it was to their interest to concentrate and combine in one big county fair, but in the meantime it is evidently too much to expect that in many cases the people of the townships would consent to giving up their local shows. The question has been raised whether it would be an improvement if the competition for prizes at Township fairs were limited to residents of the municipality. This might have the effect of inducing a larger number of farmers to improve their stock and enter the competition for prizes, a result which, if realized, would be an improvement; but, on the other hand, the falling off in the quality of exhibits at the beginning might in many cases affect the attendance to such an extent as to lead to financial failure. This might be modified to some extent by leaving the show open for a time to outsiders, but restricting them to one entry in each section in the prize list, and offering three or more prizes. A satisfactory solution of the difficulty is necessarily difficult where so many interests are liable to conflict. In the meantime we are not aware that any interest is suffering materially under existing conditions, and time may open up the way for improvements that will be generally satisfactory.

STOCK.

Our Scottish Letter.

THE WAR DISCUSSED.

The war is the great topic of conversation here, and by a letter which came in to-day from Alberta I learn that it is also the great topic in that far-off part of Her Majesty's dominions. Many young farmers are going off, having volunteered for the front; and while this splendid outburst of patriotism is pleasant to contemplate, one has feelings of regret when he contemplates the possibility of some of them not returning. Mr. Kruger is exacting a heavy toll from Great Britain—many noble families are in mourning already—and unless something unforeseen occurs, we are not near the end. The yeomanry forces are coming well forward, and some who thought soldiering fun are finding it grim earnest. Possibly few anticipated that citizen soldiers would be asked to go to the front. They have been asked, and their response is an eye-opener to continental nations. You have had some vapourings across the border from Canada, but the big solid heart of America knows that Britain opens up markets for all nations, and in spite of blots on her escutcheon, she is the great civilizing force in modern history. This war has taught the world that the British Empire is not an expression on paper, but a big factor in international politics. Canada is proving a true-hearted daughter of the great motherland, and her sons have nobly borne their share of the fight.

IN MEMORIAM.

After the war, probably most farmers here are reflecting the heavy death roll amongst Scottish farmers since the New Year. Never in my experience have so many standard-bearers fallen within so short a period. First, the Nestor of West Country discussions, Mr. Alexander Wilson, Langfauld's, Duntocher, was taken away. Beginning life with few advantages, he struggled on, and in the end was recognized as a spirited farmer who had battled bravely with Fortune in none of her kindest moods and emerged victorious from the fight. Had Mr. Wilson's lot fallen in other places, he would have risen to eminence. He had a logical mind, keen observation, fluency in expression, a pawky humor, and could never be ruffled in debate. Another veteran has more recently fallen in Mr. Thomas Biggar, Chapelton, Dalbeattie. He was 88 years of age, and was one of the best known men in the south of Scotland. A capable and enterprising farmer, he many years ago, in addition, founded the successful firm of Thomas Biggar & Sons, seedsmen and manure merchants, Dalbeattie. His son, Mr. James Biggar, has often visited Canada, where the firm had many friends, and both the McCraes and the Sorbys, at Guelph, were related to the deceased gentleman. Both Mr. Wilson and Mr. Biggar had served their generation, but the same cannot be said of Mr. James Archibald, Overshiels, Stow, one of the three brothers who made that great hill-grazing famous throughout the length and breadth of Scotland. Mr. Archibald's death was announced a week ago, and it is not too much to say that it created widespread consternation. He was in the prime of life, full of vigor and occupied with much business when the messenger came and he had to go. His skill as a breeder of Blackface sheep was equalled by a remarkable gift of expression and very considerable powers as a word-painter of his favorites. His acquaintance with hill-grazings in Scotland was unique, and there was scarcely one of them which he could not give a fair and accurate account of. As an arbiter he was popular far and

near, and possibly did more work in that capacity on hill pastures than any other man, if not than all other men in Scotland put together. He was a fine example of an intelligent, widely-read rural Scot, and his place amongst flockmasters will not be filled.

SHIRE HORSE SALES.

Shire horse breeders have again had a favorable series of spring sales. Three of these recently took place, and high averages were obtained. At Holker, once famous for its Shorthorns, the Hon. Victor Cavendish got £145 apiece of an average for about 40 head. At Waresley, Captain Duncombe walked off with £143 of an average for about an equal number; and at Blythwood, in Essex, Sir James Blyth did very well with an average of £116. This was his first sale. Still, the Shire does not make progress except in England. There has been a considerable revival in the foreign demand, but so far Clydesdales have had it all. The Shire has scarcely had a look-in, and recent advices from America indicate that this will continue to be the case for some time to come. The high prices realized for Shires are very gratifying to read about, but they are something like the high prices realized for certain families of Shorthorns from 1870-79, and one fears that a similar collapse is not impossible amongst the wealthy folks who are running the Shire business as befell the Bates contingent in their far-off palmy days.

The absence of a spring show in Glasgow makes a blank this year, and it is to be regretted that the Glasgow Agricultural Society was compelled to make a change. It remains to be seen whether it will be a successful change, and it is too soon to form any opinion on the subject. Clydesdales are at present in good demand. We have buyers from Australia and Canada going over the country, and although their purchases are not numerous, they keep the thing going and cause movement amongst horses.

Considerable trouble is being caused by owners on your side when they sell an imported horse to a buyer from the United States. The regulations regarding free importation of registered horses are by no means understood, and all horses registered in Great Britain or in Canada in standard books will not go duty free into the States. The rule is simple enough when you know it. The animal to be imported must be registered. His sire must be registered and his dam must be registered. The sire of his sire and the dam of his sire must be registered, and the sire of his dam and the dam of his dam must be registered. "Registered" means "numbered." To those who understand about Clydesdale breeding and pedigrees, this regulation seems absurd. Many a horse whose dam or granddam has not been numbered has more Clydesdale blood in his veins than one which has the numbers behind; but this does not affect the question; the rules are there, and must be conformed to. By insisting on these rules, the Americans greatly assist the cause of pedigree registration in Scotland.

THE MILK TRADE.

Considerable discussion is going on here on the subject of the milk supply. The milk trade is a big factor in west of Scotland farming, and, indeed, but for it agriculture would be in a bad way. The future of the milk trade is causing some anxiety, as farmers are being harassed with regulations begotten of the tuberculosis scare. The city authorities can hardly be blamed for being strict, as the medical men have made so much ado about the matter. It is, of course, easier to raise than to allay a scare of that kind, and one of the proposals before the country is that the city authorities should have the power to control the sanitary and general health regulations of every dairy sending milk into the city. Glasgow is already possessed of very ample powers, and other municipalities are likely to follow suit. The issue is wholly in favor of the farmer, as he will require to be supplied with well-equipped byres and dairy premises and a pure water supply. No doubt many restrictions of an irritating nature have been imposed on the dairy farmer, but on the whole, the general trend of public opinion has been favorable to an increased consumption of dairy produce, and especially of whole milk. In any case it is admitted that dairy farmers will fare better by anticipating the legitimate demands of the public health than by waiting to be coerced into the adoption of measures by the imposition of harassing regulations. "SCOTLAND YET."

Licensing of Stallions Recommended.

To the Editor FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

SIR.—Your enquiry re the "syndicate system," etc., of stallions to hand. It is something that I have given very little thought, hence could not give an opinion that would be of very much service to your readers, though I think the licensing, annually, at not less than \$40 per stallion, of every stallion that is allowed to serve a mare, by accident or otherwise, would be decidedly a great benefit to the horse breeders of Canada. At present I know of stallions that are serving mares at from \$3 to \$5, per insurance, that actually would not be even fairly good geldings if castrated, and no breeding back of that, and it is astonishing the number they serve per annum, and some of the worst-looking foals come from them that you ever saw, and it is remarkable the number of fairly good mares that are taken to the embrace of some of them. There are no less than three of such animals owned within one mile of where I am writing.

Bothwell Co., Ont.

O. A. COATES.