

The doomed ox spent the night in ruminating his condition, and the affair preyed so heavily upon his mind that he lost all heart and flesh. Towards morning, however, he turned into a revengeful mood, and meditated escape from the grasp of the law. In the morning the farmer found the ox nothing but skin and a massive frame of angular bones.

"Are you prepared to die?" said the farmer. Just at this juncture the ox began to inhale huge draughts of air, and continued to do so until the arrival of the officials, when he became so much swollen with air that they passed him by, thinking him to be a registered animal. The farmer felt astonished at the ingenuity of his ox, and began to feel true sorrow for him. However, when the ox regained his previous proportions, the farmer rebuked him for his deceit, to which rebuke the ox replied:

"There is nothing unfair in war. The enemy shouldn't complain if you use their own class of weapons. Besides, pure compressed air is a more wholesome beverage for man than diseased blubber, and far cheaper. I pray you, my good master, just let me fatten myself up for the Government fat-stock show at Christmas, and I will make amends for any grudge you may have against me."

With mingled confidence and pity, the farmer gave his consent.

Meanwhile the ox lived on two meals a day, viz., wheat straw for breakfast and air for supper, and, although the thought of competition caused him many a pang, yet on show-day morning he felt confident of success. There were thirteen steers in his class, and when the ox gazed upon their massive proportions, resolving upon the red ticket, he swelled himself up until his hide was just the thickness of the skin of a soap-bubble, and another draught of air would have caused a dangerous explosion. His rounded form and gigantic frame were the admiration of all the judges, and the eyes of the vast crowd were all fixed upon him.

The owner of the ox now hastened triumphantly out of the ring with his red ticket held aloft in one hand, flinging his hat into the air with the other, amidst the vociferous "hoorahs" of the rejoicing crowd.

After this great victory, the farmer felt in his conscience that he had run a great risk, and told the ox that the block was thereafter to be made the crucial test, in which case he could not see what other tactics could be adopted.

"When that time comes," said the ox, "you will find my ingenuity equal to the occasion."

The profit of a crop is the last few bushels and the profit of a fat animal is the last few pounds.

If you would give your horses a good night's rest, give them a good cleaning up every evening. They will feel and rest better by having the sweat all rubbed off, and everything cleanly about them. It will pay to attend to these matters even if you have to quit work a little earlier to do it.

G. J. Kromer, Cape May Co., N. J., has been very successful in breaking a cow of the habit of sucking herself by painting the teats with mucilage, and then dusting them with pure capsicum (red pepper). It will not sicken the cow, but she will be entirely satisfied with one taste of those teats.

### PRIZE ESSAY. Agricultural Exhibitions as Educational Institutions for the Farmer and His Family.

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*What are agricultural exhibitions held for?* This is a question that is at once suggested by reading the above heading of this paper, and a question that very few take the trouble to answer. Well, let us see. Viewing the exhibitions as they are held and conducted at present, we find that the principal attraction is the trotting and horse-racing that have become so prevalent at our shows. Most of the farmers who take stock and produce to the shows take them for the purpose of trying to win a little money with the prize, and also to let their neighbors see what they have got. But it is not the farmer alone who is benefited by the show; for upon visiting any of our fair grounds we find them almost covered with an innumerable number of jewelry and pea-nut stands, while quack doctors and noisy side-show men make the air ring, again and again, with their jargon, as if the exhibition had been got up solely for their benefit. Show day is the time for the farmers to get together and talk over the events of the next election, or deliberate on the good and bad points of a neighbor's horse. This seems to be what the fairs are for chiefly, but we find a few farmers who really attend them for a nobler purpose—that of getting a little information concerning their business. But, strange as it may seem, there are only a few farmers who go for the purpose of being educated, while the others get about as much benefit from them as a man would from the FARMER'S ADVOCATE when he refuses to read it.

*Whose fault is it that our exhibitions are not more educational to the farmer?* It is very hard to tell exactly whose fault it is, for it seems to be nobody's in particular, and yet it is partially the fault of almost everybody. In the first place, it is the farmer's lack of interest in his business, for if he would only take the interest in his work that other people take in theirs, he would add greatly to the success of the fairs, besides aiding himself. Ambitious jockeys and horsemen, who each thinks he has the best horse, are greatly to blame for the present state of affairs; and the way in which the prizes are distributed tends to lower rather than raise the standard of our exhibitions. For instance, we find on some of our prize lists that fifty or seventy-five dollars is the prize given for the best trotting horse, while not more than two dollars falls to the lot of the man who has the best two bushels of wheat. Now, when this is the case, we can scarcely call our shows *Agricultural Exhibitions* at all, for all the attention is paid to the animals, and scarcely any to the real agricultural part. It would be better to call our fairs "fat stock shows" and be done with it, for the majority of them come nearer to that than to anything else.

*How might a change be made so as to make them more educational, and what would be the educational advantages derived from them?* In the first place, let every farmer take a deep interest in the exhibition and do his best to make it more beneficial to his fellows. Then, lose no time in getting up a feeling against so much trotting. Why this has so much importance attached to it we can not see. Of what use are

trotters to the average farmer? None at all; and I can see no reason why such large prizes are given to trotters and such small ones to draught or general purpose horses. The method of giving prizes should be reversed, the large prizes being given to animals that are some use in the world, and let the others take care of themselves. The general purpose horse is the one for the farmer, and should receive the most attention at our fairs. Then it would be better if all the quack doctors and side-shows were banished entirely from the grounds, for they only serve to block up the grounds and keep people from seeing more important things; and, besides, the majority of them turn out to be frauds after all.

Then let the farmer notice the peculiarities of the different breeds of horses so that he can tell which would be the best adapted to his locality. A farmer on a stiff clay soil would not do a great deal with a span of ponies; and if he would only notice the different breeds of horses at the fair, he could tell which would be hardy, easily kept and adapted to his farm. Again, when he visits the cattle he should take particular notice of them, so that if he had a good farm for dairying he might select those cattle which would be likely to give the best returns, and if he intended to raise cattle for beef he could also make a selection in that particular line; or if he wanted a general purpose cow, here is his chance to select, for when you have a large herd of the same breed of cows you can at once see their leading characteristic much better than when only a single animal is examined. Similarly with sheep and pigs. Let him notice the breeds suited to his wants and locality, and run into that line of stock as soon as possible. Next, let him step into the hall and there look at the fruits and see which are the most profitable for him to raise; and if he happens to see some of the exhibitors about, he may, by asking a few questions, soon get a great many hints on their successful cultivation and preservation. Also among the root crops he may find out what kind of soil is adapted to the different crops, and the manure that each one requires.

Suppose a farmer wishes to buy a new reaper or mower and has not yet decided what kind to get. Let him go out among the machinery and examine the different makes of machines. He will then form an opinion as to which one he wants; and will ask persons whom he meets how such and such a machine works, and can make a purchase to suit him. Or if it be plows or harrows that he requires, here is his chance to make a selection.

The agricultural exhibition is chiefly for the farmer, but the family may also receive a great deal of benefit if they only will. The boys may follow the directions given to the father; and the wife and the girls may find a great deal among the fancy work to interest and instruct them. They will see patterns of fancy work that they can look at and copy when they get home, or they can see some nice way of putting up fruit; or perhaps in a chat with some exhibitor of butter they may learn of a better way of treating their cream to make good butter. There are many other ways that the family may be educated at the exhibition, but no more need be mentioned.

Then there are many ways in which our exhibitions may be improved. For instance, let