

# The O. A. C. Review

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## Editorial.

Regret is often expressed that farmers, as a class, read very little literature which has a bearing on their occupation. Most progressive men take one or two agricultural journals, and some read these quite closely, but such is only as a tiny drop in the sea of reading matter which bears more or less directly upon farm work. Nearly every farmer will also have in the house some work on Veterinary Science, but beyond that, little or nothing can be found. Our Farmers' Institutes do a worthy work in distributing reports and bulletins, but some of our southern neighbors are adopting a scheme which is well worth imitating, and operating in connection with either this College or the Institute system. It consists of a Reading Circle, modelled after Bishop Vincent's world famous system of "Chautauqua reading." The Pennsylvania State College have founded a circle, and are meeting with a marked degree of success. Prof. G. C. Watson, their agriculturist, has charge of the work, and by means of a circular of explanation, accompanied by a descriptive list of the books prescribed, the idea is being made plain to the farmers. Members are enrolled free of charge, and are entitled to purchase any of the standard works on Agriculture, Horticulture or Chemistry at very low rates. Anyone wishing to receive the diploma of the Circle may do so by passing the prescribed examination, but this matter is optional, the object being to diffuse the literature rather than to teach. Members also have the right to secure the assistance of any of the College staff when difficult points are reached. Michigan has a similar system, and it too is successful.

The advantages of such a Circle need not be enumerated. Ex-students of this College should easily see its strong claims for serious consideration, and it is sincerely hoped that our Minister of Agriculture will look into the matter at an early date. The work could be done to the very best advantage by the Superintendent of Institutes, and there is a certainty that the seed would fall in good ground, because only those interested would invest. The expense should be very slight, and no money could be invested in a better cause. The main outlay would consist in remunerating the book dealers, and the greater the amount granted them, the lower the rates could be made. By way of example, the Pennsylvania Circle sells Dr. Armsby's "Manual of Cattle Feeding" for \$1.30, while no bookseller will retail it for less than \$1.75. Prof. King's book on "The Soil" sells for 57

cents, as against 75 cents at the stores. Bookdealers cannot well retail them for less, because the sale is (unfortunately) limited. To our minds, the plan is very simple, and deserving of a fair trial. Certain it is, that if farmers realized the advantage to them, success would be assured. What one has done, others can do, and if we so far outstrip the Americans in the magnitude of our Farmers' Institute work, it is only reasonable to expect that we could rival them in this also.

R.

A favorite ground for criticism by some of the opponents of this institution is the claim that our graduates leave the country when their course is completed. In this contention, however, an ignorance of our condition in this respect is only too evident, and for the benefit of the general public, we give the following statistics: Since being affiliated with the University of Toronto, in 1888, sixty-nine associates of the College have received the degree of B. S. A. Of this number two have since died, and for the remaining sixty-seven we are to give an account. Under the head of neutral or unclassified men we shall include four who are interested in Y. M. C. A., or other church work, and three out of six foreigners, who returned to their native lands after graduating. This leaves a round sixty. Forty-nine of this number are in Canada to-day, and two out of four who are in other countries for further training are to return at an early date. With the exception of one or two, who are on stock or dairy farms, all those in the United States are connected with Agricultural Colleges or Experimental Stations, and are thus in close touch with the farm community. Allowing for those on the staff of their Alma Mater, practically all of those in Canada are farming, or in dairy work - the men in other occupations being few indeed.

These figures are approximately correct, according to the most reliable data at our disposal, and they speak for themselves. No other agricultural college can claim to make such a showing, and we, as students, take pride in pointing it out. The fact that our graduates are needed in other lands shows that their work is appreciated, and that a B.S.A. is by no means an insignificant part of a young man's educational attainments. We do not claim, however, that all these men are farmers of the first class. That is too sweeping a statement. In this connection the following is quoted from an article by President Mills in *Farming*, for December, 1895. " \* \* \* those who pass for the B.S.A. degree are *nearly* all good men, and men who, *generally speaking*, give a good account of themselves." But we do say, and say it emphatically, that those men who fail cannot blame