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The Dominion Portfolio of Agriculture.

The death of the late Premier of Canada, Sir John Thompson, involved the choice of a new leader for the Government, and the reconstruction of the Cabinet, but the Portfolio of Agriculture remained as it was—filled by a professional gentleman, a lawyer, we might add, doubtless capable in his own avocation, and with strong political claims on the emoluments of office, no doubt; but with this aspect of the case the FARMER'S ADVOCATE is not concerned. At this writing, a political upheaval at Ottawa has left the position again vacant, Hon. Mr. Angers having withdrawn from the Government, and his resignation being accepted; hence, a new minister must ere long be chosen, and the Premier should weigh well the consideration of Agriculture in making his choice.

When election time comes round, farmers are told from the hustings that they are the "backbone," "bone and sinew," and the most important class, representing the great producing industry of the country, the progress and prosperity of which depend upon the progress and prosperity of farming. It was in professed recognition of the special pre-eminence and needs of farming that the Portfolio of Agriculture was created. If any department of the Government presents possibilities for new and practical lines of work, where actual knowledge, born of experience and personal sympathy, is needed, surely it is here, where we have an elaborate Experimental Farm system, with live stock, fruit-growing, and a host of other associated lines of work being pursued. As our readers are aware, there is the large Central Farm at Ottawa, and four similar institutions, presenting, in addition to all the actual details of ordinary farm and live-stock management, a great variety of important experimental work. It is, therefore, a department where practical knowledge is one essential.

Does any one suppose that the necessities of agriculture would have been so well served in the Province of Ontario, for example, had the Minister of Agriculture been picked, say, out of the legal profession, and on account of his political claims merely, instead of such eminently practical and competent men as the Hon. Chas. Drury, and Hon. John Dryden, the present incumbent? Hence, we do not present these considerations from a narrow, class view that there must be "a farmer in the Cabinet," though it is rather late in the day to raise any objections as to the capacity of farmers in the conduct of public affairs, either in the domain of legislation or administration.

Actual knowledge of the conditions and needs of farming, a good grasp of the agricultural situation and its tendencies generally, backbone enough to stand squarely for the interests of the farmer, progressive ideas without any waste of resources (because Canada has no money to fritter away, judging from our national balance sheet), and common sense in the general management of the Dominion Agricultural Department, are what the farmers of Canada look for, no matter who may construct the Government or control the destinies of the country.

STOCK.

Our Scottish Letter.

Since last I wrote, death has been busy in the ranks of the British stock breeders. Amongst those whom he has claimed are Mr. James Beattie, Newbie House, Annan, uncle of the late well-known Simon Beattie; Mr. Amos Cruickshank, Sittytoun, Aberdeenshire, the immortal founder of the Aberdeen Shorthorn; and Mr. Robert Thompson, of Inglewood, Perth, perhaps the most distinguished of the younger race of Shorthorn breeders. All three were eminent in connection with the cosmopolitan breed of British cattle. They had few equals in their respective spheres, and the first and second, at least, did more than most men to make the breed popular in Canada. It was from three Annandale herds, of which his uncle's was one, that Simon Beattie purchased the first Shorthorns which he exported to Canada; and when we saw the splendid remnant of Mr. Beattie's herd dispersed at Edengrove, a few weeks before his death, we found it easy to appreciate the Canadian's love for the red, white and roan. Cattle such as were then sold by the veteran are not seen every day. They are the cattle of the world, because they are the best general purpose cattle the world has ever seen. Better cattle there may be in individual cases on the earth, but sure we are that no better cattle were ever presented for sale than those which formed the staple of the Newbie dispersion. Mr. Beattie has long exceeded the allotted span: his was a green old age; and when the Man with the Scythe arrived, he found a shock of corn fully ripe for the sickle.

Such also was true of Mr. Amos Cruickshank; one of nature's noblemen, a leal-hearted Aberdonian, combined the quaint simplicity of the Quaker with the business acumen and shrewdness of the men of the Granite City. Had there been no Amos and Anthony Cruickshank, there would not likely have been any Aberdeen Shorthorn to boast about at the present day. And we do believe that but for Canada the Aberdeen Shorthorn would not so soon have secured the popularity to which it so rapidly attained. It was Canadian buyers who first gave the Cruickshank Shorthorns the "boom." What is a Cruickshank Shorthorn? An animal serviceable to the butcher; a block of beef which a man who has to live by beef prefers to buy. At first he was not a fashionable Shorthorn. Oh, no! Not by a long way. The fashionable Shorthorn was an animal which a butcher would not look at; he was an animal for which men gave £2,000 unseem, or rather having seen his pedigree and discovered that he was descended in the eighth generation from a first-class cow. Of course it was an absolute certainty that he would breed back to this distinguished ancestor, and not in the least like himself, which last was a mercy! When these nice animals were fashionable, of course Cruickshank cattle were unpopular. It was good for them that they were. We only begin to fear for any breed of stock when it becomes popular. It has reached that stage, and now at a sale one hears it said that a bull is worth buying because he has five top crosses of Cruickshank blood. If he has likewise a Cruickshank carcass, and if his father and mother had Cruickshank carcasses, then all may be well. But if he had five top crosses of Cruickshank blood in his pedigree, coupled with a carcass which Amos Cruickshank would have disowned, the sooner his throat is cut the better. The brothers Cruickshank, in the days when a Bates Duchess sold for £1,000 because she had five top crosses of Bates blood, and a Warlabby bull with six top crosses of Booth blood sold for £2,000, had the audacity to set all the theories at defiance and breed Shorthorn cattle which butchers admired, from a combination of Booth and Bates, and sometimes without the help of either. In the end they created a race of Shorthorn cattle which saved the breed from dishonor, and now at the Warlabby sale one of the noted sires in the catalogue was a Collie blood. How much the cattle-breeding industry of the world owes to Amos Cruickshank and his brother will never be adequately known. It was not only that they bred a new race of Shorthorns, but that at the same time they initiated a new era in stock breeding of every kind. They directed men's attention to the truth that there are two points always to be considered—blood and form—and the one without the other is incomplete.

Mr. Robert Thompson was a Cumberland farmer and landowner, who brought to the breeding of Shorthorn cattle a richly-stored mind and a warm enthusiasm for the cattle which have made Cumberland famous. His cattle were neither Booth, Bates nor Cruickshank. I would call them Cumberland. Mr. Thompson was all for style and milk, with flesh, and better than most men, he succeeded in realizing his by no means easy aim. Molly Millicent, his celebrated cow, once seen could never be forgotten; and such a combination of style, quality, scale, and feminine character, has not come within the range of our vision. A much younger man than either Mr. Beattie or Mr. Cruickshank, Mr. Thompson had for long been a great sufferer, and death to him must have been a happy release. These three men have occupied all our attention in this letter. They are men whose memories will long be green. They spent their lives to good and noble purposes, and we doubt not will have reaped their reward.

SCOTLAND YET.

Selecting and Preparing Shorthorns for the Show Ring—An Experienced Feeder Writes.

SIR,—It is a great mistake to suppose that almost any calf, no matter how bred, will make a show animal if properly fed. I believe that two-thirds of the chances of success depend on proper selection, the other third on feeding and treatment in general. If the calf is descended from ancestors full of show-yard qualities, namely, a symmetrical frame, smoothly, evenly and thickly-covered with mellow flesh, and in possession of a robust constitution, and the calf, say at two weeks old, has this symmetrical frame, and a soft, pliable skin, we have made a grand start towards the goal of our ambition. But if the calf shows signs of unevenness of form, whatever its fleshing qualities may turn out to be, discard it,—it won't do. But in the selection there are other minor points to attend to. The calf should be of good size—a little larger than the average, strong and straight in limb, and appearing (but in reality not so) a little too long and lanky. A calf of this conformation will stand well, and be a good mover.

I would have the calf dropped from September 1st until the last of November (September, if possible), but this cannot always be done. If the calf is strong when dropped, don't be in a hurry to get it to suck; it will get there as soon as it requires it, if left entirely alone, and do better afterwards. In the meantime let it get strength from what is already in its digestive organs, and from the oxygen it absorbs in breathing. In two or three days take the calf right away from its dam, and allow it to suck twice each day. It should have milk enough so that it will scarcely eat anything for at least six weeks. It is now in a box stall, provided with a rack for hay, two cribs—one for chop stuff, the other for cut mangels. About this time have a handful of clover hay in the rack, a little chop, and a few mangels, cut very fine, in their respective cribs. If it don't eat them, take them out at short intervals, feed to something else, and give the calf a fresh supply. Now, don't waste your time in stuffing oats or bran into its mouth; it will eat when it gets hungry; continue this all winter, increasing the feed as its appetite increases. Don't be afraid of giving it too much; it won't eat too much if fed all it will eat from the start—no more than a three-year-old steer will eat too much grass on a good pasture. He is now four months old. Let it still suck the dam as at first. It will eat nearly a bushel of mangels and seven or eight quarts of chop per day;—well, give it all it wants. Fed enough in the morning so that he will only just clear it up by noon; the same in the afternoon, and the biggest feed of all at night, and the more it eats the more it will grow; but if, perchance, there is some left in its crib in the morning, remove it, and at all times see that the cribs are scrupulously clean. About this time have an eye to their feet; if not kept clean and well-bedded they are apt to get foot-sore. This is bad for the calf. It makes them feverish, and spoils their appetite—just the very thing you want to keep at its best. To prevent this, keep them well-littered, and give them daily exercise, and if they show the least sign of being affected, dress between their hoofs with a weak solution of carbolic acid, and bind their whole foot up to their ankle with strong cloth.

It is now the 24th of May, and he has been fed up to this on clover hay and chop stuff (composed of corn and oats, equal parts by measure). In the absence of oats, nothing is better than wheat shorts, and all the cut mangels it will eat. It has been made very comfortable, and subjected to no rough usage; but now we must make a change in the feed. (What a pity we could not have mangels the year round, they are the best things for calves that grow.) We must substitute grass for hay and mangels. Great care must be taken not to derange the digestive system; if this takes place, we not only lose the present, but are apt to lose some of our past feeding. The weather has now become warm; after the calf has sucked in the morning, say at five o'clock, turn into a small paddock until after breakfast; repeat the same in the evening about the same hour. About now look sharp after their underpinning; see that none of them are "knuckling over," this spoils their appearance, although it does not injure their health. This trouble can be avoided by trimming their feet to their natural shape, and giving them exercise. It is now August; continue the green food, and let the chop go on the same as ever. Feed lots of green corn now. About the middle of the month feed a little hay, to accustom them to their show-yard ration. About ten days before the first show begin to wean the calf, but do it so gradually that the calf won't know it. About three days before going to your show, reduce the grain ration one-third; it will eat better while away from home. Load on cars as quietly as possible, and if possible take them to your station in your wagon. If the weather is cool they are better in a box car; they see fewer sights that frighten them. The calf is now a year old. Feed same as before, but more bulky and less concentrated food. It is an easy matter keeping them in shape after this. Don't give tonics to increase their appetites; it may do for a while, but the reaction will come. In a word, don't fool with their digestive organs.

I have tried oil cake and oil meal to a limited extent, and had to abandon it. They eat more chop stuff without it. Never tried any of the prepared cattle foods, having no faith in them. The