

Contributors, &c., to the "Canadian Farmer."

HORTICULTURE.

T. O. Robinson, Owen Sound.
O. L. Whitney, Lecturer Michigan State Grange, Muskegon, Mich.
P. H. Henderson, Bertie Vineyards, Stevensville, Ont.

POULTRY.

Geo Elliott, a taker of eight prizes at the Provincial Poultry Show-Port Robinson Ont.

APRINT.

D. A. Jones, of the Beekeepers Association of Ontario, Heaton Ont.
R. McKnight, Bee-Keepers Association, Owen Sound.

MAPLE SYRUP, SUGAR, &c

Levi R. Whitman, an extensive manufacturer Knowlton, Quebec.

ORCHARD CULTURE.

Dr. Joy, Tilsonburg, Ont.

VETERINARY.

O. Elliott, V. S., St. Catharines, member Ontario Veterinary College.

GENERAL FARM SUBJECTS.

M. McQuade, Egmondville, Ont.
S. T. Pettit, Belmont, Ont.
E. S. Urcel, Newport, N. S.
George Crood, South Hawdon, N. S.

LADIES' DEPARTMENT.

Mrs. S. H. Nettles, Grimsby, Ont

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W. P. PAGE AND S. W. HILL,
EDITORS.

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WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12, 1884.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS AT SCHOOL.

The feeling which is spreading rapidly among the agriculturists of the country that the subject of agriculture should receive more attention in our public school is but the beginning, we hope of a radical change in the educating of our young. The true aim of all systems and methods of education is to increase the intelligence of the people, to make the citizens of a country more skilled in their callings, to make labor more effective, to elevate the standard of general morals; in short to make men and women more useful, more happy, and more capable of fulfilling the high duties which fall to our lots as citizens and immortal beings. And if any system of public or private instruction is to bear such fruit, it must be a system in which the practical and the real, takes precedence of the artificial and the imaginary. It is in this direction which the system of education pursued in Ontario is markedly defective. We have too much of the ornamental and too little of the useful. Our children are compelled by the various courses of study to pay too much attention to subjects not of prime importance to them, whilst other subjects of the very first importance are greatly neglected or forgotten entirely. The fact seems to be lost sight of that we are an industrial people, and that perhaps nine out of every ten pupils in the classes of a public school will be engaged in some one department of labor. There is a great deal of myth about higher education applied, as it often is to the courses of study pursued in some high

schools and academies. That is the highest and most needful education which performs the best service as a promoter of the very best service of the people, among whom it is disseminated, and it is in our public schools where a large majority of our future citizens receive all the school training which they will get; it is there where a reform must be made if our system gives results such as the expenditure made to sustain it would demand. The farmers of the country are beginning to see that the present state of things is having some bad results, that their sons are, by the school training which they receive, being made no more fit to engage in the duties of the farm, but that they are being made dissatisfied with the calling of their fathers, and anxious to enter the professions or merchantile life. No wonder that their fathers who do not understand the real cause of such, are prejudiced against liberal educational training; but the blame does not rest with education. It rests with the defects in the system under which their boys have been educated. There is nothing in extensive learning to prejudice a young man against labor. There is in it however a power which should reveal the true nobility of work, and a power too, that makes workmen effective. What are the defects then? We answer that the first defect in the education of our public schools, is that a thoroughly good foundation is often neglected. In one sense our public schools here through all the years advanced very little. We doubt whether the primary subjects, and especially these represented by the three immortal R's, are taught any more thoroughly than they were years ago. Indeed, in many schools reading and writing are almost totally uncared for and pupils are led into the subjects of so called higher education before they can decently inscribe their names upon a copy book. In arithmetic, too little attention is paid to elementary rules, and in some cases pupils who are working in the mysteries of compound interest and cube root, are found to be terribly deficient in a thorough training in addition and the other elementary rules. This want of thoroughness in part can be charged to the large number of subjects included as in the public school course. The mind of no young person, or old one either for that matter, can grasp a dozen things at once and become duly proficient in any one of them. The next defect is in the fact that our school training is only slightly practical dealing mostly with subjects outside the arena of practical industrial life. Doubtless every one of our readers has noticed this fact and regreted it. Boys, whose future lives were to be spent on the farm have suffered wonderfully in this particular. They have many a time been forced to trace out minutely the course of some stream having its rise in the far off mountains of Asia or Africa. They have been compelled to sit for long and dreary hours tiring their tongues and dislocating their jaws in learning the pronunciation of the names of cities and towns in Siberia, the land of serfdom, or some other clime equally important to a resident in Ontario. They have found labor for days in committing to memory, from grammars, definitions, to understand which an intelligent adult would be compelled to consult a dictionary provided with an index and they have been required to learn with exactness a history of the doings of Romulus, or Alcibiades, or other persons of equally late existence until in dreams they have founded cities on sites of hills,

engaged in Persian wars, conquered vandal tribes who immortalized their bravery by standing in the heat and bloodshed of a modern Thermopylae. But whilst they have delved thus into the minutia of the geography of almost unknown countries, or the detailed history of nations whose existence is now almost a myth. They have left untouched many subjects, a knowledge of which would greatly assist them in the duties which they will be called upon to perform. They have learned nothing of the composition of the soil of their country, and nothing of the history of growth and development in the plant world, from which they must derive a large portion of their future income. They have not been thoroughly skilled in the measurement of lands or timber. They do not know the alphabet of useful drawing nor are they at all proficient in a knowledge of bookkeeping or conversant with an easy and ready style of business letter writing. It short, they have spent their time in doing much, which will be of very little, if of any, use to them, whilst things of the very greatest usefulness have been neglected, or entirely left out of the question. There is no reason why chemistry as particularly applied to agriculture should not be taught, and practically too, in our country schools, and other matters useful to the occupation of a farmer could be taken up also, such as botany in its practical bearing, the science of drainage, the care of fruit trees, etc., or the management of physical health and the prevention of disease.

(Continued next week)

WRITE.

We have time and again given invitations to our readers to write for their paper. We repeat the oft given request again. We want to make the FARMER the voice of Canadian agriculturists. We intend to battle boldly for their rights; to struggle constantly to advance their interests; to lend our aid in opposing any encroachments upon their rights; to assist in making their labors more profitable and their disappointments and failures fewer. In short to help them in every way in your power.

Our farming friends can give us valuable assistance in the way of good practical correspondence. Give us your experience upon matters which have interested you. They will interest others. Tell us where you have failed, and where succeeded. You will thus assist in keeping others from failing in the same particular. You will also lead others to success. Do not plead your poor literary training. Write and we will see that your errors are corrected.

We have a large number who are sending us short letters on live subjects. We desire others to do likewise. In conclusion let us again request you to write for your own paper—THE CANADIAN FARMER.

An "old farmer" who gave our readers a spicy letter upon "A Farm Sheep" last week, and who when closing it to retire for his afternoon snooze on his home made sofa promised to greet them again in this issue, has not come to hand. We trust that the cause of the non-receipt of his letter is nothing more serious than having overslept himself. We hope he will awaken in time to speak to our readers in the next issue.

Green's Nursery Catalogue from Rochester, N. Y. is on our table. It represents many new varieties, as well as the older ones, illustrating well the many vines and plants he purposes introducing for the season of 1884.

Imported oats reported by Mr. Tate as grown from 1883 stock: 117 bushels at \$1.50, \$175.50; less cost of seed, \$3.50; difference on each acre, \$172.00; some previous yields would be over \$200 per acre; one hundred acres being \$20,000 per annum. The Farmers' Advocate was wrong; Mr. Tate confirms your correction of that journal. Yours truly,
JAS. KENNIE.

NEWSPAPERS IN SCHOOLS.—What they call "newspaper geography" has been introduced into some of the American schools. The teacher takes the morning paper, reads such news as seems best to him, and the pupils are required to find out on the map the places mentioned. By a well-informed teacher—and with a little trouble any intelligent teacher could keep informed upon the news of the day—such a lesson might be made the most interesting and most instructive on the programme. It might easily include history and biography, as well as geography.

Correspondence.

This page will be devoted to the exclusive use of Correspondents. All of our readers are invited to write upon subjects of interest to agriculturists.

IMPROVED CATTLE.

ED. CANADIAN FARMER.—I am certain the readers of the FARMER will be thankful to the writer for his article on the Dutch or Holstein cattle. So far as I know scarcely any attention has been paid to this excellent breed of cattle in Canada. In fact, I am aware now of only one herd in Ontario at least, but from the article of our "American cousin" it is quite clear that the breeders of the Holsteins are not prepared to take a back seat when the good qualities of cattle families are brought prominently before the public. I will not say that our friend is not correct, and I would ask him in his opinion the prepotency of the male Holstein compares with that of the Hereford. This quality to the Canadian farmers is a very important one, for however good the breed may be in its purity, if the male animal has not the power of stamping his progeny with his own good qualities, the grade following the mixture with common cattle would not be much improved. We, who have taken an interest in the Hereford, claim that our male animal has this power to a degree not excelled by any other breed. We have had to fight for every inch of ground which we now hold. When we came on the field we found it well occupied by the Durhams, and the potency of their animal was even at that time unquestionable nor have we the least desire to call it in question now. The Durham is a superior animal, but we claim that the Hereford, take him all in all, is his equal, and that the Hereford has not, nor is he likely to disappoint the stock-raiser in the least. The Hereford is an excellent grazing animal, and I think it is not claiming too much to say that this distributes his beef better than the Durham. His potency is equal to the Durham, and we of course have certainly nothing to fear as to the improvement in mixing with common cattle. What the general agriculturist is to look for is not merely the good qualities of any breed in its purity, for all cannot afford to go with pure stock at least for years to come, but he should carefully enquire as to what breed is most likely to improve the progeny by a union with the common stock. Why one pure breed should be superior to another is this particular we do