

Editorial.

Is a Breeder's Good Name Better than Pedigree?

BY MARSHFIELD.

What constitutes a breeder? If every man who breeds stock were a breeder there would be a revolution in our beefing and dairying industries. There are many preliminaries to be learned before the art of breeding should be put into practice,—such for example as the art of feeding and management. Scrub stock is the legitimate offspring of scrub pastures and meadows, and these again can often be traced back to scrub intelligence. The alphabet of the art of breeding is a knowledge of the best methods of rearing animals for the various objects sought, and then follows skill in the principles of selection. The best test of the breeder is the improvement of his herd with each succeeding generation. To attempt this with an entire dependence upon pedigree would be a most risky undertaking. Pedigree is book-breeding, and yet farmers scoff at the idea of book-farming. The breeder sees evidence of pedigree in every movement and in every point of the well-bred animal; even records are of no consequence to him, these also being delineated on its features. Stockmen, judges at fairs and agricultural college experts have yet much to learn before they make us a nation of breeders. For educational purposes, points and other indications of performances should be weighed on the balance with the practical results. Many of our so-called experts have mistaken their calling; they judge by current prejudices instead of substantial realities. The time is fast approaching when our tastes will become so perfect that we cannot distinguish beauty from utility; the unsightly, ill-favored breed of to-day will be the favorite of to-morrow. The days of judging milk animals by beef points will soon be numbered. Call it by what name we may, the principle inculcated upon our minds by our show experts is that of breeding for tallow alone; they have merely forgotten that the days of tallow candles now belong to the dark ages. I might even go a step further and say that we are breeding for oleomargarine. What is the result? "Oleo. must go," they pitifully exclaim; it is ruining our dairying interests; laws must be passed for its suppression, and an army of analysts and other government officials must be enlisted for the purpose of executing the law. All these ills arise from awarding prizes on a false principle. Even the municipalities sometimes become affected by the scourge, offering to duplicate the prizes given at the big shows, thereby duplicating the intensity of the madness.

The real secret of the pedigree boom is that a vast majority of our stockmen have gone into the business without first studying the preliminaries. The result is that many of our scrubs are becoming scrubber, and many of our well-bred animals are degenerating into scrubs faster than they can be kept improved by fresh importations. We have the material all ready; the builders are wanting. Let the breeder's good name be pedigree. In a few short years he will know the great grand sires and dams of all his herd, and then most danger of reversion will be past. His self-interest will be to pro-

tect his good name—like men in other pursuits. Granting that pedigree is a protection against liability to variation from a well-marked ancestry, let it be thoroughly understood that under our average mode of selection and management, there is a greater tendency to variation than there would be under a complete system of selection and management with unpedigreed animals. Besides, why not protect the farmer all round? Why should not the dishonest seedsmen who defraud the farmer by changing the name of his wheat, be called upon to produce his pedigree? There is scarcely an article which we eat, drink or wear but should be pedigreed on the same principle—even for stronger reasons; for the practiced eye can more easily detect a false pedigree than a false variety of seed or a false superphosphate. Pedigree is the parent of booms with all their attendant iniquities, and so long as it is encouraged, the breeding art will remain undeveloped. If the names of England's aristocracy are to be perpetuated through our herds and flocks, let it not be at our expense. Lock up the pedigree libraries.

Preservation of Our Forests.

We have been honored with a visit from Mr. R. W. Phipps, clerk of forest preservation, who is employed by the Ontario Government to conduct the bureau of forestry lately established by them. At the request of the Provincial Treasurer, he has addressed a circular to each of the county councils urging them to take the subject into careful consideration, and forward him the conclusions they shall have arrived at. Having dilated on the necessity of checking the rapid destruction of our forests, he dwells on the common practice of allowing cattle free access to our timbered lands, whereby they destroy the underbrush, and the larger trees become more and more subjected to the mercy of the winds. Grass grows up and every influence tends to aid the destructive hand of the axeman.

These considerations have led to the suggestion that an act be passed under which any farmer by fencing in his bush or any portion of it against the ingress of stock, may enjoy tax-exemption of such enclosures.

We have on numerous occasions urged the necessity of encouraging tree-planting in every possible manner; but the matter must be considered from the beginning in all its bearings, else endless grievances may arise. There is scarcely a farmer in the Province who has not made some mistake in the laying out and clearing of his land, and this has arisen from the fact that he did not at first see far enough into the future. Similarly we already see evidence of blundering in our mode of tree-planting. In our tours through the country we observe many trees planted along the road-sides, some planted inside the fences, others outside, and where snake fences exist they are planted on the line, one tree in each fence corner. In the west the trees are mostly all maples, planted at very irregular distances apart, some growing in soils which would be better adapted to other kinds of trees. The young saplings are usually procured from neighbors who have been far-seeing enough to fence in their woods several years ago, and we have seen some farmers who have

saplings enough to supply their whole neighborhood.

It would no doubt be a laudable thing to agitate the encouragement of enclosed forests, and even the planting of seeds or saplings in those portions of our forests in which the trees have been too extensively culled out; but care must be taken that this mode will not be a source of discouragement to other branches of forestry, or clash with the scope of the question as a whole. If the Government can do anything to stimulate individual exertion, it will possibly be better than too long neglect; but Governments have yet to show that they are the most enterprising portions of the community. If an enterprise fails under the direction of the Government that is no proof that there would also have been a failure under private enterprise. Politically speaking, the magnitude of an undertaking bears a direct relation to the number of office-seekers amongst the members of the party in power.

The great objection to the scheme advocated by Mr. Phipps is the difficulty of enforcing such a law. Owing to a liberal culling out of the timber, the most of our wooded land is luxuriant with grass, and when it is considered that a great many farmers attempt to graze a cattle beast on every acre of shelterless pasture, the temptation to turn the herd into the woods for grass and shelter would be so strong that the law would be as dead a letter as the lately passed act relating to the destruction of noxious weeds. Besides, large acreages of bush lands are already fenced in, and their profits as pasture grounds are a much greater sum than any tax that would likely be remitted. It would require a whole army of Government officials to enforce such a law. These remarks, however, apply only to the older settled districts; where a large percentage of the district is wooded there is still less necessity for such a measure. Farmers who take no interest in posterity cannot be forced to do so by legislation.

There is another aspect of the question which demands special consideration. Is the question of tree-planting for wind breaks to be totally ignored? If not, what portion of the farm should remain wooded, and what area should be allotted to wind breaks? From which of the two systems are we to derive the chief timber supply of the future? The one question is so interwoven with the other that they cannot be discussed separately. If the one system is to receive Government support, why not the other?

It seems to us that if private capital were invested for the maintenance of nurseries, saplings of every description of trees could be supplied at very small cost, and planted either on sparely wooded lands, or in rows between fields as wind breaks. In this manner a uniform system of planting could be established throughout the Province, and such trees could be selected and planted by experts in the business as would be adapted to the climatic conditions and to the soil and aspect of the different localities.

The commonest kinds of weeds which abound in Manitoba are wild buckwheat, lambs' quarter, wild sunflower, cockle, mustard, wild oats and Canada thistle. The law relating to their destruction is vigorously carried into execution