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EDITORIAL.

Mr. Albright's Letter on the Ontario Agricultural College.

We cannot but commend the refreshing candor and courage with which Mr. Albright, elsewhere in this issue of the "Farmer's Advocate," deals with the course of study and methods of teaching pursued at the Ontario Agricultural College, Guelph. That he is no disappointed sore-head, and that he has been studying at that institution to some purpose, are evident from the honors which he earned in the recent annual examinations, the results of which we publish. Having taken one half of the two-years' course, he states his intention of returning to complete it, so that it is no more than fair to credit him with an honest purpose in pointing out what appear to him weaknesses in the course and plan of teaching, and suggesting remedies.

Now, the Agricultural College belongs to the people of Ontario, and its purpose is to promote the best interests of agriculture—the greatest industry in this Province—primarily by the training of young men for that avocation. How best to further that object is, therefore, a matter of concern to every right-thinking person, who will also be disposed to consider on their merits any suggestions that may be offered in that direction.

The first point of importance in Mr. Albright's letter is that the College has been fitting too large a proportion of our best men to occupy professional positions in the United States. It does seem to us that that is largely a matter of supply and demand. Young Canadians stand well in the esteem of business men and heads of public institutions in the Republic. Agricultural schools and experiment stations have been multiplying across the line, and this, with the general commercial activity there, has naturally drawn away not a few of the best graduates of the O. A. C., and they have done the country and the College honor. Just now Canada is enjoying a period of great industrial and agricultural expansion, population is flowing into the country from the States and elsewhere, and we believe the trouble referred to will to some extent tend to right itself when these graduates begin to realize the excellence of home opportunities. The only other way to stop the exodus of B. S. A.'s would be the narrow policy of shutting up the College or sweeping away the four-years' course that qualifies men for advanced positions. The intelligence of Ontario will hardly tolerate that. The four-years' course must surely be an incentive and an advantage to the whole institution, and with an adequate staff and equipment the two-years' course should not be impaired. Are the two not compatible? By its excellence and practical nature, as Mr. Albright contends, the two-years' course should be made the stronghold of the institution with the rank and file of young farmers. We say, let the Legislature provide the College with ample means for both purposes. Picayune politicians declaim that "the College don't pay." It is not supposed to pay directly, any more than a public or high school, and the College farm, being part of the institution, may not be able to show much of a surplus either.

Reverting, in passing, to the minor suggestion that beekeeping should be made optional, it might be well to do so as an economic study; but as a lesson subject in natural history we doubt if there is any living animal the nature

and habits of which will lend themselves more readily to instruction of interest and value than the bee under the direction of a real educator.

In order to improve the College course and do away with cramming or "plugging," which means systematically memorizing a lot of mere facts in order to pass examinations, Mr. Albright advocates abolishing the lecture system in teaching and adopting the high-school or text-book method. We must confess at once that there is great peril in the lecture system if, as alleged, it degenerates into using the class period for the dictation by a teacher or professor of an array of notes. If the pupil understands that this teacher will set an examination paper at the close of the term, he will, naturally, look for a paper within the limits of the notes and "cram" them accordingly. But we know well, also, that in high and public schools men with the most approved text-books in their hands are the very high-priests of cramming for examinations. Without going further into their respective weaknesses or merits, the "Farmer's Advocate" is satisfied that the roots of this trouble lie deeper than the question of Text-book vs. Lecture. In the last analysis it resolves itself into a question of qualification for the great work of teaching. We are firmly of opinion that the time is at hand when those responsible for the general conduct of such institutions as the Ontario Agricultural College must take more carefully into consideration the pedagogical qualifications of those who are to compose the professorial staff. It is not enough that aspirants to positions as agricultural teachers have been able to pass high examinations in technical knowledge, but are they trained in the all-important work of teaching? Have they grasped the true genius of education, which is not merely the acquisition of facts, but the training of human faculties, the equipment of men and women for successful service in whatever particular avocation in life they may be called upon to play their part?

A word in closing regarding the relatively small attendance in years past of Ontario farmers' sons at the College. Our correspondents have indicated a variety of reasons, but there is another to which we feel in duty bound to refer, viz., the way in which the College has been handled about in party politics. On the one hand it has been portrayed on the hustings as beyond reproach, and resenting the suggestion of any need for improvement; and on the other as a highfalutin and extravagant institution, richly deserving ridicule and censure. Prejudice has doubtless deterred many from attending. We are glad to believe that these extreme attitudes are being gradually modified. A fair and open-minded discussion will not hurt the institution. It will do it good by bringing to the front the needs of the people on one hand and of the institution on the other, and disarm prejudice by showing that those in charge, while having reasons for the faith that is in them, are ready to consider any suggestions calculated to enhance the efficiency and popularity of the College.

Minnesota Graduates in Agriculture.

In the University of Minnesota, this year, there are but two students receiving degrees in agriculture. The Farm Students' Review deplors the fact that so few of the youth of Minnesota take advantage of the opportunities offered in the College of Agriculture to get an education for a profession that is not overcrowded. In Ontario, this season, but eight young men students of the O. A. C. graduate as B. S. A.'s from Toronto University.

The Need of the Times.

The greatest need of the rank and file of farmers in Canada at the present time is a clearer conviction that the hope of this country lies in the bestowal of greater attention on the improvement of the live stock in the hands of the general run of the farmers as well as of the breeders of pure-bred stock. If the impression prevails, as we fear it does to a large extent, that the breeders here are catering mainly to the trade in the neighboring country, which is our principal rival in the British market for live stock and its products, and if most of the best of our stock sold by breeders is going across the line to improve our neighbor's stock and our own is not being improved in the same ratio as theirs, it is clear that our country is thus being heavily handicapped in the race for supremacy in our best market, and that our reputation for the production of high-class commodities must suffer, and we shall be forced to content ourselves with second- or third-class prices.

An observant person travelling through our country even in so favorable a season for growth of crops as the present, cannot but be impressed by the fact that most of our farms are producing crops very far inferior to what they are capable of doing if they were properly managed. The soil is not at fault, for in no country is there better, but the fact is plainly this: that the farmers too generally are yet depending on the raising of grain to sell as such, instead of feeding it to stock and selling it as stock or the products of stock, and meanwhile making more and better manure to keep up the fertility of the farm, so that the crops grown on it may give a fair return for the labor and expense of producing and handling them.

The labor problem in these times is a serious one, and the raising and feeding of live stock is its surest and safest solution. It takes just as much labor to produce a half crop as a whole one, the same implements and the same time in cultivation, the difference in expense being that a full crop requires more handling at harvest, but the satisfaction of seeing and handling it offsets that feature, and there is no question as to the profitability of the two systems of procedure. That there are more half crops than whole ones produced even in our fair Provinces, of which we are wont to boast, is too patent to need proving, and the question arises, can we afford to farm in this fashion? There can be only one answer, and that is, that the longer this course is continued the worse the situation becomes, the more difficult to restore the land to a paying plane of productiveness, and the ultimate result must of necessity be that the farmer who is depending on his farm for a competency will fall far short, if, indeed, he escape absolute failure.

The only remedy for or relief from this state of things within reach of the average farmer lies in turning his attention to the raising and feeding of more and better stock, with the emphasis on the word "better," for he can just as illy afford to feed inferior stock as to grow inferior crops. It costs as much to raise a scrub as a well-bred animal, and in the market the scrub sells for less than one-half what the superior sort will bring at the same age. For proof of this statement, it is only necessary to go into the stock yards and see, as one may almost any day, one lot of cattle selling at 6 cents per pound and another lot of the same age begging for buyers at 3½ cents, both lots being fat in their way, the