

The Farmer's Advocate and Home Magazine

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Vol. XLVIII.

LONDON, ONTARIO, MAY 29, 1913.

No. 1119

EDITORIAL.

If we get a summer between the hot drouth of 1911 and the cold deluge of 1912, it will be a treat and relief.

We wrote last week about the inadvisability of plowing a field on the wet side, and then letting it lie untouched for days. The printers made it "west side," which spoiled the meaning.

One of the finest samples of oats we have ever seen was a few bushels of registered Banner which came from Prince Edward Island this spring. The Island Province can certainly grow oats.

The remark has been passed in some quarters that the revision of the Bank Act is not a matter which greatly concerns farmers. Ask sufferers from the Farmer's Bank failure what they think of that.

Why should the farmer with a comfortable home and business of his own, envy the man who may any day have to be seeking a job, and who never knows when he may have to vacate the house he occupies because of possible inability to meet the rent?

It is but a short while since fur-farming was a romance of the newspaper feature artist. While prosecuted in an inconspicuous way for some considerable time, it has recently in Prince Edward Island attained the prominence of an important phase of live-stock breeding.

If the same enterprise and capital were applied generally to the more prosaic branches of husbandry—sheep breeding for example—that have gone into the promotion of the silver-fox industry, would we not be witnessing some astonishing results in production?

Lightning rods, by establishing easy exchange of electric current between earth and cloud, prevent a great many lightning strokes from occurring, while nearly all the violent discharges that do strike downwards toward a rodged building are led quietly by the rods to damp earth below. It is only a rare bolt that is too terrifically violent to be attracted by the rod and conducted harmlessly earthward in this way.

Grubs and wireworms necessitate the breaking of many old pieces of pasture land. In such turfs the May beetle likes to lay her eggs, and here the grub can develop almost unmolested. New-ground pastures are often found fairly alive with them. They hold the grass back, and, come a drouth in midsummer, they will eat the roots off clean, so that large patches of thin turf may be rolled up like fleeces of wool.

A Toronto Winter Live Stock and Dairy Exhibition, promoted by the City of Toronto, with agriculturists, dairymen and live-stock men co-operating by invitation, is scarcely the idea which found so much favor among the stockmen at the last annual meetings. An exhibition organized and promoted by stockmen and dairymen, founded on broad lines and aspiring to national or international proportions, was the original conception.

Seed Men and Seed Supplies.

Those who have again sown and planted will, ere long, be realizing the results of their recent seed buying. It will be highly desirable to ask the question: Has it been satisfactory? Has the crop come true to variety and type? Is it pure of the kind purchased? Was it free from weed seeds? Did it germinate and grow vigorous plants? If a new variety or if it was procured from a distance, is it going to be any improvement on home-grown or neighboring stocks? Did you order a certain variety and receive, perhaps, an indifferent sample or something else? These questions cannot all be answered until harvest tells the tale, but if "The Farmer's Advocate" can judge by personal representations and correspondence received, the replies will be far from satisfactory in some cases; and a day of reckoning is assuredly in store for individuals and dealers who are more solicitous for the volume than the nature of their business transactions.

One reader procured from a local seed firm a quantity of a much-vaunted new oat which did not germinate at all, and the ground had to be resown with seed of an old, standard sort procured at home. Another advises us that when he went to look up supplies of seed corn he was shown what had every appearance of being bagged out of a car lot of feed corn, and tagged as a given variety to be sold at fancy seed prices. He went elsewhere. In several cases, seed of cereals has been found freely mixed with grain of other sorts, and, in other instances, proved very low in point of germination. Progressive farmers do not object to paying a fair price for improved seed of a variety that has demonstrated its merit or gives reasonable promise of doing well with them, but they most seriously object to being humbugged. From correspondence in the possession of "The Farmer's Advocate", the accuracy of which we have substantial reasons to credit, the word "robbery" would very accurately describe practices going on—let us hope to a very circumscribed extent—in the seed business. This has come to our knowledge partly by reason of qualms of conscience and partly because of a desire, on the part of one who had lately been actually "through the mill," to put farmers upon their guard, and bring about a better state of affairs in the seed trade.

What is one to conclude when in a given store stand bags of labelled seed—one "Canadian grown No. 1," the other "American grown No. 1" but both from precisely the self-same lot, and no matter which the prospective customer wrote or asked for, he received exactly the same?

Does a farmer, who sends his good money or express order for a certain kind of clover, wish to be served with a common brand that would, perhaps, make hundreds of dollars difference in the crop on a ten-acre field next season, because the "house" had neither the decency nor the courage to own up to the facts concerning their stock?

What is to be thought of the directions being given, no matter what variety of oats were asked for, to label those shipped so and so, and to substitute one variety of potatoes for another when they happened to look enough alike?

Age may improve some things, but could we expect to revive the mummies of Egypt by mixing them in new packages with modern people, or pasting fresh labels over them?

If a house chances to be out of a certain highly nutritive plant food, is it likely to put heart into the soil, to stimulate faith in fertilizers or put returns in the purchaser's pocket, to be sent under a misrepresentative label some cheap and worthless imitation?

Now, the seedsman plays an important part in relation to farming and gardening operations in this country, and it is far from an agreeable duty on our part to find it necessary to call attention to such things. Every reader of this paper should know what his experience has been, and he certainly would be wise to keep close tab on it this season and govern his future orders accordingly. "The Farmer's Advocate" is disposed to believe that, as a class, the seedsman trading in Canada are aiming to do a reputable business, and are no more likely to deceive people in the back townships than any other important class of business men. But evidently there are seed houses and seed houses, and between now and the next heavy run of orders it would be highly desirable, not only from the standpoint of those who plant seed but of the dealers themselves, to remember and put into practice that time-worn adage, "Honesty is the best Policy." As a matter of fact the unscrupulous dealer is certain gradually to strangle himself with his own crooked rope, and there is good reason to believe that the business of houses "making good" their claims of honorable dealings with all customers has multiplied three and four fold, while that of others, if report be true, has remained stationary or dwindled almost to the vanishing point.

It may not be practicable to make men moral by act of parliament, but it is due, to an industry like that of the farmer, beset with so many difficulties, to so adjust conditions that it may be conducted with a reasonable chance of producing at a fair profit, adequate supplies of food for the people. Clean seed that will grow is important and is a consideration that must never be obscured, but variety and the genuineness of stock purchased for planting or sowing will be demanded with an increasing insistence that the prudent seedsman must be prepared to meet. This is the time of domestic house cleaning, and if the foregoing complaints apply to any particular seed establishment, now is the accepted time to put these houses in order. If not, something is liable to drop.

Two Functions of the Agricultural Press.

A contributed article in this issue, belaboring a certain Toronto newspaper for publishing an editorial arguing that the people of America would have to endure high beef prices for several years, also chastises the agricultural press for failing to "attack" such articles. Why should we? What is the use or need? Were we to chase up and expose the folly of every bit of editorial vamping how would we find time or space to present instructive and constructive ideas? So far as the article in question is concerned, we do not recollect that there was so very much wrong with it. To state that consumers will have to endure high prices, is not, stating or necessarily implying that these could or should be lower. Our correspondent's zeal for economic argument is liable to lead him to an obsession as it has led others.

There are two main lines of effort open to the agricultural press, neither of which should be al-