

# THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE

AND HOME MAGAZINE

\* AGRICULTURE, STOCK, DAIRY, POULTRY. HORTICULTURE, VETERINARY, HOME CIRCLE.\*

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## Thanksgiving.

The recurrence of our annual national Thanksgiving Day brings with it reminders of the blessings of a beneficent Providence which in large measure have been realized by the Canadian people during the year. Peace and plenty are terms which have for so long a period characterized the condition of our people as a whole, that a comparison with the experience of many other lands in the same period easily leads to the acknowledgment that we have been a highly-favored people. It is true that the war cloud which a year ago had settled over South Africa, menacing the life and liberty of British subjects, and which later on broke in fury over that unhappy country, roused the patriotic spirit of our people and found a ready response to the call for volunteers to defend the honor of the nation, and that as a consequence there are some homes which are saddened by the loss of brave sons who laid down their lives for their country. The bereaved families have the sympathy of all, and the names and self-sacrifice of those who have fallen in the service of the empire will be honored and cherished by our common people. There is, however, great cause for congratulation that we as a Dominion are at peace with our neighbors, and that our country continues to enjoy immunity from the lamentable condition which inevitably comes to a land which is so unfortunate as to be the theatre of war.

The material prosperity which our people have enjoyed for the last few years gives promise of continuing. The farmers of this federation of Provinces have on the whole had a good year, the crops in all but one having been well up to the average of good years. Owing to exceptionally adverse weather conditions, the farms of the Province of Manitoba have not given the usual generous returns for the labor bestowed upon them, but this is a contingency that is liable to fall to the lot of any Province occasionally, and will not seriously check the progress of our Prairie Province, which is rich in its resourcefulness, nor the enterprise of its people, who have full faith in the future of the country and courage to demonstrate their confidence in its resources. Fortunately, a good proportion of its farmers have heeded the admonition to devote more attention to live stock, for which a good supply of feed is on hand, and which will serve a good purpose in this emergency in tiding over a trying year, and will furnish an experience from which lessons may be learned that will be helpful in ordering their future operations.

Live stock in nearly every line has been in active demand at good prices, the market for horses especially having greatly improved, while cattle of the beef breeds, as well as the dairy breeds, have sold readily at satisfactory figures. The dairy business has had one of the best years in its history, the pastures having in most sections kept unusually fresh throughout the summer season, producing a large and steady flow of milk, while prices for cheese and butter have kept at a higher average standard than for years. The demand for pork products suitable for the export trade has been uncommonly good during nearly the whole year, the prices for hogs ruling high almost continuously. As an adjunct to the dairy business, the raising of pigs has been one of the best-paying branches of farming, the by-products of the cheese factory, creamery and private dairy being largely used as food for pigs, and large numbers have been raised and prepared for market at a minimum cost and sold at paying prices.

As indicating the undoubted prosperity with which the country has been blessed, and the wonderful expansion in the export trade of the Dominion in agricultural products in the last few years, it is only necessary to compare the returns

from a few leading articles, showing that our sales of butter during the past year have amounted to over \$5,000,000, while in 1896 they were only \$1,000,000; of eggs, \$1,500,000, as against \$800,000; of cheese, \$20,000,000, as against \$13,000,000; bacon, hams and pork, \$12,800,000, as against \$4,450,000; wheat, \$11,500,000, as against \$5,000,000; poultry, \$2,000,000, as against \$18,000; and apples, \$2,500,000, as against \$1,500,000. Our export trade in live stock to the United States in the same time has grown by leaps and bounds, and while the volume of our exports of beef cattle and sheep to Great Britain (owing partially to unsatisfactory ocean freight rates) has not increased in as great a ratio as could be desired, yet prices during the last year to the feeder have been fairly satisfactory. Importations of pure-bred stock have been on a larger scale than for many years past, indicating an active demand, and while a large proportion of these have been sold to go out of the country, still a considerable number remain to be used as breeders to improve the home stock, and those sold have realized a fairly good profit to the importers.

The influx of population to our western provinces especially, has been a marked feature of the year; a very considerable area of agricultural land having been taken up, and largely by thrifty and industrious people, who are likely to make a success of farming.

We may well be thankful for the high stand taken by our agricultural products in the British market, and of our breeding stock in that of the United States. One of the strongest reasons in the present aspect of our affairs and in the outlook for encouragement is the decided intellectual activity aroused among the farming community, and which is steadily increasing. The farmer, his wife, his sons and daughters, are awake to the importance of true education—more in practical lines, a change which must inevitably come more and more into our educational system, from the primary and public schools up to our colleges and universities. The agricultural press, Farmers' Institutes, associations and conventions, all have their part in this uplifting to worthier ambitions, and as ours is largely an agricultural country, its prosperity is essentially dependent on the character of its agriculture. No country is more healthful for man or beast; no people more active or aggressive, more patient or plodding, more hopeful or self-reliant; and as no other class responds more readily to good times by spending their money freely than the farmers, so no other industry can stand the strain of adversity as well as can that of agriculture. The industrious farmers are the salvation of the country—the farmers feed us all—and their interests are worthy the most intelligent consideration and generous encouragement of those to whom especially the great national interests have been entrusted.

## Argentine Shuts Out British Breeding Cattle.

We have it on the authority of the *Live Stock Journal* (Eng.) that the Argentine Government has issued a decree prohibiting the further importation of animals from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. Shipments that were on the way when the decree was issued would be allowed to land, provided the animals were free from all traces of foot-and-mouth disease. The step is said to be the result of an outbreak of that disease having occurred among a cargo of fine stock imported to the Argentine from England on one of the steamers. While the cablegram bearing the news to England mentioned only cattle, it is presumed that sheep are also included in the prohibition. This decision on the part of the Argentine Government is felt by British owners of pure-bred herds and flocks to be an unfortunate occurrence, since Argentine has for many years been probably their best customer, especially for high-priced Short-

horns and Lincolns. While it is possible that the movement has something of retaliation in it for shutting out live animals from Argentine, still, at the same time, it is not likely to be rescinded until there is a real need felt for breeding stock from Britain. In view of the situation, then, it would seem an opportune time for our Dominion Shorthorn Breeders' Association to set about, as has been frequently urged, a movement to capture this market which Great Britain is so loath to see slip from her grasp. Canadian breeders have been importing liberally of late years from Great Britain to improve their herds and supply the increasing demands on the continent, so that with none going to the Argentine, they will now have a better choice and more favorable opportunities to buy from the Old Country herds.

## Judging at the Fairs.

Now that the leading fairs of the year are over, and the incidents of the showyard campaign are fresh in mind, a review of the judging of live stock, with a view to deducting lessons that may lead to improvement, may not be out of place. While recognizing the hopelessness of ever arriving at a period when the selection of judges can be made wholly satisfactory to all exhibitors, we are yet of the opinion that in no country, on the whole, is more satisfactory judging secured than at the leading Canadian exhibitions. This applies in the broad, general acceptance of competency, as well as of fairness and freedom from bias, and it is a pleasure to recognize and commend the wholesome sense of honor as a rule manifested by the men who accept the generally thankless duty of placing the awards on the score of merit. That mistakes are sometimes made is admitted, but that is only human, and, as no man is infallible, these may well be forgiven when it is evident that they are errors of judgment only, or arise from the accidental overlooking of a defect for the time being, or the failure to give sufficient consideration to some point or quality of merit at the time. Then, there is the question of difference of opinion to be reckoned with, and the possibility that what appears to one a mistake may in the opinion of another seem justifiable and proper. In this, as in regard to most undertakings, it is easier to criticize or to find fault than to do better work, as many a preacher and many a teacher, as well as many a judge of stock, firmly believes, and for this reason they doubtless think, as we are disposed to admit, that criticism might well be characterized by more charitableness than is usually evident on the part of the public and the press.

The question of the number of judges calculated to do the best work and give the most general satisfaction is one that has not been finally settled, and is a perennial subject of discussion and difference of opinion, though it has clearly come down to a question of one versus two, except in the case of two failing to agree, when, if each man holds out for his own opinion, as he should if he has any decided preference, a referee, who is practically a single judge, breaks the tie, though he does not thereby necessarily declare that his favorite in the field has been given premier place. That this is possible was plainly demonstrated at the Western Fair, where, under a single judge, a heifer which at Toronto was placed first by the two acting judges was relegated to fourth position at London, the competition being the same. The reasonable inference is that, if the two judges at Toronto had disagreed on the disposition of first and second honors, and the judge who acted at London had been called as referee, the heifer placed fourth at the latter place would have been second at the former, and we are not sure that even the owner of the two, who was the same in each case, would have said it was wrong, and yet it is clear she was