

THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE

AND HOME MAGAZINE.

THE LEADING AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL IN MANITOBA
AND N.-W. T.

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Canadian-Asiatic trade. The construction of this great road during the next five years will prove a very great stimulus to agriculture, and all the leading industries of the Dominion, the capabilities and resources of which are now understood and appreciated as they were not when our first great continental line, the C.P.R., was projected.

Exhibition Reform.

To the Editor "Farmer's Advocate":

A fairly exhaustive study of the Winnipeg Industrial Exhibition of 1903, a sincere desire for its prosperity, faith in the future of the city, and high hopes for the development of the natural resources of Western Canada—these are the excuses, if excuse be necessary, for the following remarks, leaving to others the discussion of matters which more directly concern the grower of grain or the breeder of stock, subjects which are in abler hands. Nevertheless, let it be put upon record that one of the greatest disappointments of the show was the display of grains, grasses, etc., which were shown along one side of a small building, mostly occupied by musicians and mechanico-musical instruments, with other things singularly out of keeping with the golden produce of the wheat-field of the world. Another section of the exhibition—the horticultural—however pleasing, was of meager proportions, and not what one expects at such a season, the small number of competitors seeming to indicate an indifference which can hardly be accounted for by the existence of a show in the city later on in the season.

It is always easy to praise, and ever a thankless task to criticise; but, for all that, a good, healthy grumble will, now and then, evolve a reformation from the very wrath of the criticised.

It will be a bad day for us all when we are so highly cultured that we cannot enjoy all the fun of the fair:

"A little laughter now and then
Is relished by the wisest men."

"An' what for no'?" as dear old Meg Dods would have said. Listen to this, from Mr. Drummond Black's "Life of the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava":

"In his peregrinations round St. Petersburg,

Lord Dufferin had sometimes to submit to the necessity of personal protection, a precautionary infliction from which the members of diverse British Governments, notably those of 1880-85, have not been exempt. An amusing incident was narrated to me apropos of one of these excursions. He had reached a Russian suburban village where a fair was in full swing, with its concomitant delights of 'roundabouts.' Lord Dufferin contemplated the scene of enjoyment with obvious relish till, all of a sudden, he could not stand it any longer, and, to the scandalized horror of his two attendant detectives, he sprang forward onto the back of one of the circumambient wooden steeds, and careered round and round to the inspiring tunes of the organ." One can quite sympathize with the mad impulse which seized the accomplished diplomat and courtier, bringing to the surface the true, boyish, Irish heart. Yes, a good merry-go-round is a capital thing, especially where there are large numbers of children. But if we are to have roundabouts, let us at least have them of the best, with up-to-date machinery, and if we must have music by machinery, for any sake give us the best that can be ground out of a mill. Certainly the merry-go-round, even with its hideous "music," was the least offensive of the so-called attractions of the 1903 show; but the general effect of this strange mixture of wisdom and buffoonery was like a plunge backward to the middle ages, when the learned "doctor" required the services of a "fool" or clown of some kind to attract the attention of the crowd to the learning of his master. The whole thing is so incongruous and out of tune with modern ideas of what an exhibition ought to be, that it is surprising it has gone on so long without palling on the public taste. Probably this is accounted for by the fact that the Winnipeg Industrial, being the only annual carnival of the kind on a large scale within reach, in this land of magnificent distances, it is bound to attract to it large numbers of people who have no choice of a better. The vast crowds who from morning to night flocked to the Glasgow exhibition, for instance, were just as ready to be amused with the ordinary attractions of a fair as the people of the Prairie Province could be, but side-shows of the character exhibited at the Winnipeg Industrial would have been fatal to the enterprise. The people came to be enlightened as well as amused, and even in their amusements they expected, and got, something very far above the level of a country fair. The "attractions," in fact, are distinctly below par, unworthy of a city with such a record for progress as Winnipeg has, and utterly beneath the dignity of the men who have devoted themselves to the Industrial, be it said, with so much self-sacrifice, for the general good. Whatever may have been the case ten or twelve years ago, when the fair was only on probation, circumstances are totally different now, and the exhibition has become an institution of vital importance, not only to the city, but to Western Canada, and, appealing as it does to the people from over the border, and indeed from all ends of the earth, it is surely time to weed out what is undesirable, and to make it such an advertisement of our resources and of the inducements to come and help to develop our vast possessions as will not be disregarded, but which will repay a thousandfold all the labor and all the money expended upon it. Until the buffoonery and trickery are banished from the exhibition, the title "industrial" is a misnomer. As for the blood-curdling "attractions" which are so persistently boomed, but which so often end in collapse of one kind or another, the people who engage and encourage such "industries" must judge for themselves how far they are responsible for the inevitable "accidents" which sooner or later overtake the misguided individuals who are foolish enough to risk their necks in such utterly useless efforts. When some poor heart and brain-sick wretch tries to get rest by leaving a weary world in an unorthodox fashion, he is promptly clapped in prison, while a "professor," or other highly endowed "artist," who makes a public show of his efforts to bring his career to an end, we reward with many dollars. It is a lamentable phase of our boasted culture that such looping lunatics and daredevil divers should be considered capable of administering to our pleasure.

The function of such exhibitions, either great or small, is, or ought to be, to present a series of object lessons illustrating the progress made from time to time in the arts and sciences, and in the manufacture of articles of all kinds, and this not merely by showing the finished articles, but by exhibiting and explaining the process or method of production, so as to convey the fullest amount of information to the spectator. The bulk of the exhibits in the Winnipeg exhibition are only attractively-got-up samples of the goods which, as a rule, could be much more conveniently and comfortably seen in the stores and warehouses on Main street and about the city. The main building is a mere pantechnicon, or departmental store, where one may purchase many things with a maximum of discomfort and without the advantages of delivery wagons. The complete exhibition of the production of a single article, or of the different processes through which it passes, from the raw state until it comes into the hands of the consumer, is of much greater interest and of infinitely greater value as a factor in our education than whole stores of finished goods. The only example which approached this standard was that of the preparation and weaving of wool, the actual weaving being done in the presence of the public, while samples of the material at various stages of manufacture were shown. The lively interest shown in this stall testified to its popularity; and, indeed, it is surprising how great is the fascination of moving machinery—of "wheels going round," in fact—with all classes, whether young or old. It was remarked at one of the early "great" exhibitions that the stand where common clay tobacco pipes were being made drew the crowds much better than many of the more-pretentious exhibits. But we want the illustrations to be as complete as possible, and of course such exhibits sometimes require considerable floor-space, as well as power. It is, therefore, necessary to give exhibitors the greatest encouragement in bringing them forward, but, with proper arrangements, the necessary power can be supplied to a number of exhibits at comparatively small cost. As it is obviously impossible for every exhibitor to adopt such a method of advertising, it follows that every succeeding exhibition may illustrate different subjects, thereby ensuring perennial sources of interest and attraction. That the accommodation in the main building for such displays is totally inadequate must be apparent to all.

In the matter of allocating the prize-money, attention has already been directed to the startling contrasts in the amounts offered in the different classes, and especially in the case of horse-racing, as distinguished from horse-breeding; the encouragement given to mere pot-hunters is the most remarkable feature of a great exhibition in the capital of the greatest cereal-growing territory on the face of the earth. If horse-racing is to absorb about one-half of the entire prize-money devoted to the live-stock part of an exhibition in the metropolis of the West, it would be more in keeping with strict truth to drop the designation "Industrial Exhibition" and frankly call it a Race Meeting. It is worth considering how far it would be advisable to abolish money awards and to substitute medals, diplomas, certificates or other permanent records of success, which would probably give greater satisfaction, and would surely be of more lasting value than the comparatively trifling sums of money given in the majority of cases. How many horse-owners would come forward if other than cash prizes were offered? The blue-ribbon of the turf itself would hardly "fetch" them!

It is a fatal mistake to award prizes, especially to young people, otherwise than for distinct merit; and in the art section especially there were some glaring examples of this error. There can be no kindness in making young people put a high value on their own efforts when we know that they are radically bad. When an artist, either professional or amateur, is quite satisfied with his own work his progress is at an end. Probably no work in the world is ever done so well that it could not be improved upon, and this is especially true of the labors of the real artist. While on the subject of art, it may be permitted to plead for a little better treatment for local amateurs regarding the manner of exhibiting their

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