

## THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME MAGAZINE.

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DOMINION.

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### Give the Apple Orchard a Chance.

If there is one department of the Canadian farm that has been neglected more generally than another it is the orchard. The common practice in its care is an excellent example how it should not be done. A great many orchards are planted as though they had been intended for shelter-belts. Thirty-five to forty feet for Southern Ontario, thirty to thirty-five feet in Central Ontario, and twenty-five feet in the extreme North, are about the proper distance of the trees apart. Plenty of cases are to be seen where they are two to four times this thick. In such cases a radical thinning is the first thing to do. The owner may think it a pity to destroy the trees which have been so long growing, but if it is the means of getting more and better fruit, what folly to leave the surplus trees to cumber the ground!

The second essential is more and better pruning. The subject of pruning has been very fully covered in "The Farmer's Advocate" by Linus Woolverton, and our readers will do well to preserve those copies for future reference. One would think that a fair amount of information had been disseminated regarding this important art, yet the other day we noticed a boy butchering trees by cutting out every small limb within fifteen feet of the ground, leaving a little brush at the top. There is need for more object lessons in pruning.

Spraying is a neglected operation. There is, perhaps, some excuse on this score, for the task is an unpleasant one, comes at a busy time, and requires special apparatus and some knowledge to do it right. Still, as with most things else, it is not such a formidable job when one gets at it. The spray pump is less expensive than many other farm implements, and the expense for chemicals is small, compared to the increase in quantity and value of the crop. In most localities spraying is an absolute necessity to the growing of a profitable apple crop. Every orchard should be sprayed at least three times—once before blossom-

ing with Bordeaux mixture, and twice after with Bordeaux and Paris green. A fourth or even fifth spraying may be required. The Bordeaux is a preventive of fungous diseases. As such, it must be applied before sign of infection appears. The branches, leaves and fruit must be kept covered with it; otherwise, the spores of the fungus may fall upon an uncoated portion and infect the fruit or leaf. Particularly is this liable to happen during damp, muggy weather. Imperfect spraying may result in clean fruit, or it may not. To be sure we must be thorough. Unfortunately, spraying is not a reliable safeguard against the codling moth, but even here it is a help, and the striking instances that have been frequently given in this paper should convince everyone that spraying to prevent scab is an unmistakable success. Where the results have been unsatisfactory there is always a cause, such as poor materials, a poor pump, improper preparation of the spraying mixture, imperfect application, failure to spray at the right time, or some other reason which, while puzzling to the novice, is plain as day to the experienced orchardist. The sensible course, then, is not to discard spraying because of a failure or two, but to set to work to find out and remedy the defects. Until one has seen what his trees can do, thus protected from insects and fungi, he has no right to say that an orchard is poor property. The greatest benefit is the salability of the crop, due partly to the increased vigor of the trees, as the result of the present and previous seasons' protection of the leaves from fungus, and partly to the freedom of the fruit from blemishes. It is unlikely there will ever be a time when fruit from well-sprayed orchards will not sell at a fair price, if enterprise is exercised in marketing. There is big money in spraying.

To a professional orchardist, the cultivation given the average farm orchard is wretched. Plowed, perhaps, in May, left lying fallow for a time in the sun, and then worked up and planted to buckwheat or hoed crop, it is in an excellent condition to lose moisture right along. Frequently it is subjected to the usual system of field cropping. Until we can get rid of the persistent idea that an orchard is hardly worth the ground it occupies, there is little hope for the apple crop. There are two well-recognized systems of orchard culture. One is the sod mulch, leaving the grass to grow, to be cut and spread under the trees as a mulch. The other, and most widely favored way, is to cultivate lightly but frequently all through the early summer, keeping the ground loose and friable, as for a root crop. This conserves moisture, permits aeration, and results in setting free a generous share of plant food for the exclusive use of the trees. Along in July a cover crop is sown of vetches or crimson clover, to take up some of the moisture and plant food, tending thus to the ripening of the new growth of wood, to gather nitrogen from the atmosphere, and to serve as a winter protection against frost. This is plowed down the next spring, and the cultivation repeated. Under such a system, the application of light dressings of ashes and bone meal will build up soil fertility, induce vigorous growth, and, if the other requisites are attended to, heavy crops of first-class fruit.

We sometimes hear that the orchard is not worth looking after. It scarcely is worth looking after unless one is prepared to do better than the prevailing practice; but no field on the farm will respond so generously to intelligent care. Down in the Annapolis Valley, in Nova Scotia, where up-to-date fruit-growing methods are practiced, they value their bearing orchard at a thousand dollars an acre. Recently we were shown the statement—equalled by others with which we are acquainted—of a Valley orchardist who, in an average of seven years, after recouping himself for all expenses, including labor, had cleared a sum equal to an annual interest of 15 per cent. on a valuation of \$1,000 an acre. In Ontario we can hardly do so well as that, for we have not, perhaps, quite so good an apple country, and our growers have not, in the past, been accustomed to realize nearly so good prices. But the co-operative associations are practicing better methods of picking, grading, packing and selling, thus realizing most encouraging returns, and where one of these is established the orchard can be made the most profitable asset on the farm.

### A Broadening Public Opinion.

The outlook for the Canadian farmer is bright. We are leaving behind the chronic pessimism of the past, and, while not overlooking the economic evils of which we, as a class, are the victims, are divesting ourselves of the prejudice which formerly weakened agricultural public opinion, and are yearly becoming less prone to heed the rantings of the extremist. Just in proportion as agricultural opinion is informed, broadened and tempered, will it command respect and wield influence in the councils of the nation.

## HORSES.

### Moral of the Market Report.

The fortieth annual report, 1905, of the Union Stock-yards and Transit Co., Chicago, gives the following actual average of horse prices in the years 1902 to 1905:

|             | Draft horses. | Carriage pairs. | Drivers. | General use. | Busses and Trammers. | Saddlers. | Southern Chunks. |
|-------------|---------------|-----------------|----------|--------------|----------------------|-----------|------------------|
| Av. 1905... | \$186         | \$486           | \$156    | \$132        | \$145                | \$172     | \$70.50          |
| " 1904...   | 177           | 475             | 150      | 140          | 140                  | 160       | 64               |
| " 1903...   | 171           | 455             | 150      | 122          | 140                  | 156       | 62               |
| " 1902...   | 166           | 450             | 145      | 117          | 135                  | 151       | 57               |

Valuation of horses, 1905, \$18,133,125.

The above figures teach that the man who would make money must breed for a purpose. A glance at the table shows that the highest price, \$243, was obtained for the matched carriage horse, the normal products of the Hackney sire. The next highest, \$186, was realized on the drafter, a horse that farmers can raise to better advantage than any other. The third position, in point of value, is occupied by the saddler, a horse that most of us do well to leave alone. The respectable average of \$156 was paid for the drivers, which will long continue to hold a place in country as well as town. The lowest price of all is for the Southern chunks, and the next lowest average is for that general utility grade, classified general use. The most eloquent lesson is that the American farmer should make freer use of Clydesdale and other draft sires on good, strong-framed mares, and then feed the colts better, so as to put on them that extra hundred or two hundred pounds of weight which draws the extra twenty-five or fifty dollars from the buyer's pocket. There is money in raising a good draft horse.

The Company's report states that "The stability of the horse industry was never more signally emphasized than in the broader demand that has featured the trade from all quarters during the current (1905) season."

### The Claims of the Shire.

Breeders of Shire horses in England have been discussing the reasons why Shires do not commend themselves more strongly to the American public, and what can be done to create a market for Shires on this side the water. The breeders of Shires, being Englishmen, naturally think the trouble is all with the other fellow, and that the goods they have to offer cannot be improved upon at the present time at least. Americans have not been buying so extensively of Shires as of Percherons, and Canadians have bought more Clydesdales than Shires, but this does not prove that the Shire as a breed is not so good as the others.

Throughout the Englishmen's discussion of the question, there has prevailed a determination to stick to the type they are now producing, and we think they should. The Shire to-day is the largest and most powerfully-built of horses. He is also one of the most sound in body and bone, and for these characteristics he should be invaluable for use where greater size, bolder spirit and deeper body are required. Excessive size and hairy legs have been the two great objections to the Shire in America, but we are assured by an English breeder that with line breeding the Shire will eventually be as clean and fine in feather as the Clyde, as indeed some are now. He does not say there will be any reduction in size or shortening of rib with the lessening of feather, but if there is a probability of this being the case, we should be sorry to see line breeding carried very far with the English drafters.

But what the English breeders want is an immediate demand for their horses. To create and stimulate this, we could suggest nothing better than for them to make a display of draft geldings at Provincial and Dominion fairs in Canada, and at State fairs and the International Show at Chicago. At the latter show there is usually a very creditable display of stallions and a few mares, but the horse-breeding public want to see what the Shire breed produces in the way of draft geldings.

With live stock, as with men, the day has come when better pasture combs for much without the aid of the farmer's tools. The twentieth century has brought about the day's call.