

The Question of Importing American Stock Cattle into Canada.

This is not a new question, though it now demands more attentive consideration from the fact that it has been brought more prominently before the farmers of the country in the Address of the President of the Board of Agriculture and Arts, at the Exhibition at Ottawa. Great advantages, he held, would have resulted to Canada had she the opportunity of purchasing, in the great cattle market in the West, cattle raised and grazed cheaply on the Western prairies for the purpose of being fed in Canada on roots and coarse grains. He added: "As a sufficient number of cattle are not raised in Canada to consume our roots and coarse grains, our own Government may be induced to repeal the duty imposed on American stock cattle coming into Canada."

To such a measure as is here proposed for the Government to take up there are, we hold, very serious objections. That "the feeding of large numbers of cattle would furnish the cheapest and best of all kinds of manure, that of the barnyard, and would tend more than anything else could to the recuperation of impoverished soils," is true, there can be no doubt. Our own experience for some years has proved to us, were proof necessary, that the profits to be realized by the feeding of a large number of stock on roots and coarse grains, with hay, straw, chaff, and other dry provender, are very great. The stock, if judiciously purchased, are always sure to pay well when fattened for their keeping, and there is now a better demand for Canadian meat than ever heretofore. The prices of beef and mutton have advanced within the last decade more than fifty per cent. in this market. And the manure made is of as great value as the profits often realized by the sale of the fattened stock. So fully assured are English farmers of the great value of the manure, that they consider it a sufficient remuneration for all the feed used and the labor of attending to the stock, even were there no immediate cash profits from the sale of the animals.

As to the great advantages accruing from the feeding of cattle in much larger numbers than has been heretofore done by Canadian farmers, we entirely agree with the opinions expressed; but any one must, we think, have given the subject but partial consideration when he proposes the importation of Western cattle into Canada for the purpose. The great probability is that such a measure would introduce into the country that destructive disease known throughout the United States as the Texas Cattle Fever. Were this to be the case, the inevitable consequence would be a loss to the country incomparably greater than any profit we could hope to make from feeding the imported stock, even were the additional inducement realized of attaining a ready market for our fat cattle in the Eastern States. Let us cautiously survey the danger to which we would render our own stock liable.

The Texas Cattle Fever is a fatal and very contagious disease. It is communicated to all the cattle in a neighborhood where it makes its appearance with alarming rapidity. It spreads from town to town, from county to county, and it can only be stamped out by at once slaughtering every beast infected or likely to be infected. Every year the farmers in the Eastern and Middle States are in dread of the time when the drovers from the Western prairies drive their herds through the country seeking purchasers. This season we hear of its appearance along their route as usual. In Cheshire County, Massachusetts, we are told, the communication of the disease is attributed to the passage of a lot of Texas cattle which were purchased at Albany and driven through those towns

and peddled out to the butchers. The consequence has been as might have been expected—there has been great mortality among the farmers' herds everywhere around, and so great is the alarm that but little beef, we are informed, is sold in that neighborhood at the present time. This is but one instance of a wide spread calamity.

From the Massachusetts *Ploughman* we extract the following bearing on this subject: "Many of the readers of the *Ploughman* will remember the excitement caused by the prevalence of this disease in 1867, which resulted in calling a convention, which assembled in Springfield, Ill. After a thorough examination of the subject, the convention recommended the enactment of a law prohibiting the entrance of Texas cattle into the Western States between the months of March and November. Since that time nothing has been heard of the disease until last year, when it was evident that cattle were forwarded direct from the plains of Texas."

Are we willing to import Western cattle at the risk of introducing into our country this contagious cattle fever? Instead of regretting that there is a duty levied on imported cattle by our Legislature, let us rather rejoice that the dividing line has so far at least kept the disease from entering our land and ravaging our herds. Let us, instead of incurring so great a risk, endeavor by rearing our own young stock to increase our herds and flocks. The number of calves and lambs sold to the butchers is quite too large for the interest of the farmers. From the live stock at present in Canada enough cattle might be had to consume all the roots and coarse grains that will be grown in the country.

The land owners and farmers of England are now calling for an enactment to prevent the importation of live stock into that country, that they may be enabled to stamp out the Foot and Mouth Disease that has decimated their cattle, and they say that as long as the importation of live stock is permitted they cannot stamp it out, as they would soon do otherwise. The west of the European continent is never free from that disease, as the western prairies of America are always subject to the Texas fever, and with the importation of cattle the disease is continually reintroduced to the country, causing to the landowners and householders a loss that seems almost incredible. We may well dread any measure that might be a means of communicating to our cattle any of those contagious diseases.

We add as a note of warning this brief item from the *London Farmer*:—"The number of cases for the quarter ending the 16th of October, was as follows: In Somersetshire, 83,000; in Cheshire, 50,000; in Dorsetshire, 48,000; in Gloucestershire, 44,000; in Oxfordshire, 39,000; in Warwickshire, 32,000; in Norfolk, 31,000; in Cumberland, 23,000. Throughout England and Wales there were for the same time over 500,000 cases. The money damage is estimated at \$1,000,000."

Shall we Cultivate our Orchards or Keep Them in Grass?

There are in every science some questions on which the professors seem never to arrive at a final decision. A question that has led to great strife of words may, after the lapse of time, seem to be no longer the vexed question that it had been, when some occurrence, merely temporary it may be, and proceeding from some extraordinary circumstance such as may not happen again in half a century, disturbs the apparent calm and we find the question has not been decided. Of this class the question—"Shall we keep our Orchards in Grass?" is one.

There seemed to be a pretty general consent among the writers on fruit cultivation that orchards should be cultivated. True, some held the opposite opinion, but they were the few. There is now to be an entire change in this matter. Change is the order of the day. Some who had till now been in favor of the cultivation of the soil around fruit trees, declare themselves converts to the opposite system. An American writer on fruit growing asserts his change of opinion; then the President of the Fruit Growers' Association of Ontario says the experience of the last season has led him to change the opinion he formerly held on the subject. Trees around which the ground was well cultivated were winter killed, while those growing in the unbroken grass plot were uninjured. Others reason in like manner. In short, all the advocates of this theory take the same ground; in the winter and spring of 1874 their observations convinced them that there is less danger of trees being killed on grass ground than if the ground were cultivated. While admitting the correctness of their observations as far as they extend, we cannot agree with them that they have proved their case. They only show that where no mulch has been applied as a protection to the young trees they are more liable to be frost killed in the grass ground—in other words, that the turf being in itself compact, and closely interwoven with the roots of the grasses, the frost cannot penetrate so easily and do so much injury to the tender roots. This is the sum of the pleadings. Now, hear the other side.

The preservation of the roots from the injurious effects of frost is the benefit to be derived from their growing in the unbroken grass plot, while the benefits from cultivating the soil around them are wanting. The very great advantages derived from cultivating the soil are admitted by all conversant with its tillage. For the healthiness and the very life of plants, it is necessary that heat, light and air have ready access to their roots. The opening of the soil around them by cultivation, whenever it becomes compact in the several seasons, admits the warmth, light and air; the roots in consequence expand and acquire strength and development more freely, and the health and vigor of the tree are continually promoted. We have invariably known such cultivation to be of great service to all trees, whether for shade or fruit. We know them to grow better stems, roots and branches, than trees growing in the grass. The more thorough the cultivation the stronger are the plants, let the crop be what it may. Not only can the roots obtain food from the soil more readily and from a wider area, but also the trees are enabled thereby to draw supplies of nutriment more directly from the atmosphere, and the soil to be enriched from the same source, the cultivated soil attracting ammonia in a greater measure than if untilled.

The same influences of light and heat and air that are so serviceable to the health and consequent luxuriant growth of the tree, must also be very beneficial to the fruit. We know that cultivation by these means improves the size and flavor of fruit, and that, on the contrary, they become deteriorated by neglect.

Now, if we could so treat our fruit trees that they have all the benefits of cultivation, while we at the same time guard them safely from being winter or spring killed, would we not be acting more judiciously than to have them in unbroken grass plots; to preserve them from the frost, and not avail ourselves of the very great benefits they would obtain from cultivation? And this we can do by keeping the soil well tilled and properly mulched. Trees in soil that is cultivated, when not mulched, are liable to be killed by the severity

of our winters. them applies to ground around the using an ev have fruit trees be neither so he be by other trees.

It is not enough to bear some fruit and bear without there is an or grafted. They of any kind, and is tilled as ot they put forth quire more than fruit as can be tion, and prote winter and spr mer droughts.

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