

Subjects for Consideration.

The winter is the season for comparative rest for farmers. It is the time when all plans should be arranged for the coming season of active manual labor. Man cannot long endure hard mental work and hard manual labor from early dawn till late at night, as many of our farmers work from seed-time till the harvest is secured, without impairing his constitution. Farmers work too much in summer and too little in winter. Part of the time in winter should be employed in maturing the plans to be followed the coming season. Understand clearly what you are doing. You should ascertain what every crop has cost you, and the value of the crop raised. If, for instance, you take spring wheat, and receive interest of money or rent of land, cost of labor and seed, and value of crop raised per bushel, you will find in many sections the spring wheat has cost \$2 per bushel, and on some farms it has cost over \$3. Of course this has been a bad year for spring wheat in some parts of the country; there has not been a good year for spring wheat for the past twelve years in some sections. Reckon the average crop and the average price, and then see what the balance is. In this county it will show a heavy loss. Go over all your produce and estimate the profit or loss. You will find that beef, mutton and cheese have been profitable, and that poultry and fruit have paid.

When in Europe the past summer we went through some of the markets in England and France; also into shops where Canadian produce is sold. Our deduction from personal observations and conversation with others is that Canadian farmers need be under no alarm about over-stocking the European markets with any of the above-named products, and that much higher prices may yet be obtained by us for such; that they will always pay high prices, and that our safest and most profitable plan will be to devote our attention to supplying the European market. That market we can rely on, and the prices of fresh meat will probably never be lower. The opportunity of making them better is in our own hands. Our products do not command the highest prices because they are not equal in quality. By improving the quality we shall increase the prices we receive. Most of our produce passes into the consumers' hands under the name of American. We should at once try to establish a name for Canadian products. The value of our products has been very materially injured by dealers selling inferior articles as first-class goods. For instance, the Red Chaff wheat has been sold as the Canada Club; this has passed into consumers' hands and been found inferior. The price of our good flour has been reduced on that account to some extent. Inferior butter has been shipped for first-class, and been placed on the counters of retailers, till the name of Canadian butter has become a signification for anything disgusting to taste and smell. Slop-fed beef and pork have both reduced the value of our choice meats. These courses of procedure have given such a distaste to consumers that at the present time we cannot obtain as good a price for our good produce as we might for our inferior produce; either the farmers or dealers have had more for the latter than it is worth. It is our impression that at the present time much of our first-class beef is consumed unknowingly in England as English beef, but the manipulators have the profit. There is not a sufficient distinction made in the prices paid by purchasers, the slop-fed, stall fed and grass-fed being all sold for about the same price. To the wealthy judges and consumers of beef in England there is fully 50 per cent. difference in the value of well-flavored, good meat and the ill-flavored, slop-fed article. The Canadian farmers who raise really first-class meat are obliged to bear the loss,

because there is not a proper distinction made. Can no better system of grading products be adopted? Is there not room for dealers to establish a name for supplying really reliable, first-class products?

We must try to improve. It is by raising the best produce that our farms must pay. We may offend some of our readers by stating our opinion in regard to mutton, namely, that we never have tasted on this continent a mutton-chop or a leg of mutton that has been near equal in fine flavor to English mutton. Our Cotswolds, Leicesters and Lincolns will not produce such a fine flavor as the Oxfordshire, Shropshire or Southdown sheep, and as for the Merino mutton—well, it is no wonder the Yankees are thin and eat on the run.

We must have a greater infusion of black and grey-faced sheep among our flocks, if we want to make the best of the best market. They will tend to improve the quality of our mutton. The Oxford Downs are hardly known here, even by name. Not one was to be seen at our Exhibitions this year. You may depend on it that those who are first on the field with a good flock in Canada will make more than those who still hang on so tenaciously to their old breeds and their purse-strings.

The question has been asked us whether it would not be better to hold wheat now, the price is so low. In our September issue we advised all to sell as quick as it was threshed. Those who sold are satisfied, but those who withheld their grain now regret that they have not sold. If you owe any one any back account, you are not acting honestly in withholding your crop; your duty is to pay every debt punctually. Honesty is the best policy. If there is anything wanted for the education or comfort of your family, sell. If you are entirely free from debt and your family have no necessary or just demands, you may then please yourself in speculation. Withholding crops from market is a speculation. Sometimes it may pay, but nine out of ten times the farmer loses by not selling. Wheat is equal to money, and money brings interest. Farmers in withholding crops seldom or never receive any interest, nor recompense for loss or risks. The European market shows no symptoms of a rise. There are immense crops in many places, while there has been a scarcity in India and China, particularly in the latter country, where nearly double the number of our Canadian population have been starved to death. Perhaps something may be done to alleviate the sufferings in that kingdom, but as yet we see no prospects of it. It is strange that in this enlightened age and with abundance of sustenance on the earth, and despite the railroads and steamboats, that seven millions of people should have already perished for the lack of food.

Take care that your turnips are not too warm. There are far more turnips destroyed by being too hot than too cold; they will recover from freezing, but they will not recover from over-heating. Potatoes will be dear in the spring; take care and do not let the frost get at them.

To Produce Richer Milk.

In reply to the inquiry, Can you suggest any article or method that will produce richer milk? the *Country Gentleman* says: "Feed more corn-meal and linseed-meal, and less barley sprouts. Brewers' grains would increase the quantity, but at the expense of quality. Rich food makes rich milk."

Dame Rumor is bustling about in regard to the receipts at the Provincial Exhibition and at the Western Fair. The number of persons on the grounds and the sums received are said not to chime well. Perhaps some of the officials might explain.

The Vitality of Seed Wheat.

The great vitality of seed when carefully preserved from moisture is not unknown to our readers. In former numbers of the *ADVOCATE* we have referred to this important matter. We now have another instance mentioned in connection with Arctic travels. Dr. Schomburg says (in his report on the Adelaide Botanic Gardens) that he received a sample of wheat taken from a quantity left by the American Arctic Expedition ship 'Polaris,' in 1871, in north latitude 81 deg. 16 min. The wheat had been left on the beach exposed to the rigors of a temperature of 72° to 104° of frost for five years, and was found by Dr. Ninnis of H. H. ship 'Discovery' on the returning to England of the last Arctic Expedition. Of this wheat Dr. Schomburg sowed three hundred grains, and of these three hundred sixty germinated. The plants grew well, showed a healthful appearance, and reached a height of three to four feet. The ears contained about thirty grains each, small but plump. From this we may learn the extreme vitality of seed, and why it is that plants spring up in land on which we know that no such plants had grown for years. If we permit weeds to mature their seeds, let us then burn them, stem and seed, lest the seed, preserved in the dark recesses of the earth, grow up when exposed to heat and moisture.

Good Plowing.

The comparative advantages and disadvantages of deep and shallow plowing is still a subject of debate among agriculturists. That deep plowing is, under some circumstances, detrimental to the crops, all admit, but there are some who can only see those exceptional instances, and shut their eyes to the great profit that, as a general rule, is reaped by the farmer who does not merely skim the surface, but cultivates with the plow beneath the often-scratched surface, thereby giving access to air and moisture; they will bring in their descent the necessary stimulants, and the plants will obtain more food and consequently more vigorous growth. Professor Stockridge, in an essay on plowing read before a New England Board of Agriculture, gives in a few words sound advice how to plow. "There are," he says, "two kinds of soil on every man's farm, the agricultural soil and the subsoil. The agricultural soil may be two inches deep, or it may be nine, but it is not twenty feet. It is no deeper than the air can penetrate. If the agricultural soil is too shallow, it may be gradually deepened by lifting an inch of the subsoil at each plowing, bringing it up to the air and enriching it with manure. Our Agricultural Society committees, by their premiums for smooth, shiny, flat furrows, have done the community great harm. Such as oftentimes takes the premium is the very poorest kind of plowing. The soil is best plowed when it is most thoroughly crushed, twisted and broken with the sod well covered. On some kinds of soil I would have the furrows lapped an inch, as the Canadian farmers plow. Let the air and water have a chance to circulate beneath the surface. Light lands, however, should have a flat furrow; we wish to make such lands more compact."

Bran as a Fertilizer.

Our agricultural exchanges have been detailing the profits of using bran as a fertilizer. So much is said of its very beneficial effects on growing crops—root crops especially—that we think it worthy of a trial. Were some of our readers in different parts of the country to try it on a small scale, say a few rods each, they would be doing a good service to farmers generally. If it even fails in producing such crops as some who have made trial of it say it does, the loss will not be great. A Penn-