

# THE PRAIRIE FARMER

A WEEKLY JOURNAL OF THE FARM, ORCHARD AND FIRESIDE

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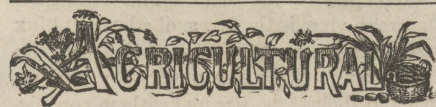
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## STATE AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY.

As the time draws near for the election of officers for the State Agricultural Society, who will do much to shape the actions of the association for the next two years, it should be the endeavor of the county societies to select men, as delegates to Decatur, who hold enlarged views on every subject pertaining to improved husbandry, and who will do their best to increase the usefulness of the society and thereby add to the development of our agricultural interests. As our State is the largest producer of several of the leading crops; as our soil is fertile almost beyond parallel; and as our population is largely made up of farmers, so our agricultural societies, both state and local, should take a conspicuous place among industrial associations of the land. Other states look to our grainaries for bread; to our herds for meat; to our dairies for butter and cheese, and why should they not look to the doings of our agricultural societies for information in the science and art of agriculture? Few states can boast of a larger number of educated farmers than the Prairie State. In no section of the country are there more machines and appliances for successful farming than here.

Considering the age of the state society, it has certainly accomplished much good. The fairs conducted under its management have awakened great interest wherever held; and every succeeding year has witnessed, not only more exhibitors and spectators, but a greater number and better quality of articles competing for premiums. The standard of excellence is now higher than in years before, and the competition is more animated. The volumes of transactions, albeit some of them are very tardy in their appearance, show the history of the society to be encouraging, and furnish much valuable information to the general reader and to persons seeking to be made acquainted with the resources of our state.

Having accomplished this much, shall the society content itself with holding an annual fair, and in issuing a biennial volume of transactions? Or shall it now seek to render itself useful in other directions? We think the latter should be the case. At one time it was necessary, perhaps, for the society to bend all its energies in the direction of holding a fair, to offer all the money it received from the state or derived from admission tickets, in the form of prizes. But that day we believe has passed. The state fair has become of so general interest, that though it requires management, it hardly needs to be petted. We believe that it is no longer necessary, in case the society gets several thousand dollars in its treasury, to add it to the sum that is to be awarded in premiums the next season. Sufficient unto the fair should be the receipts thereof; and unless a combination of adverse circumstances occur, they should be enough to pay such premiums as would bring out the best displays the state is capable of producing.

If the treasury still contains a balance, as often it does, and as it is more likely to do in the future, there are many ways in which it could be appropriated so as to result in great and general good. Scarcely a year passes that some disease, often a new one, makes its appearance in our stables, among our flocks or in our herds of swine and cattle. Few individuals have the means, and none have the disposition, to investigate the cause and to seek out the remedy for these. A scientific veterinary surgeon, whose services should be secured on the call of the officers of the society, could often do much to stop the spread of these diseases, and could suggest means for preventing their re-appearance.

Without any disparagement to its labors, it may be said that the agricultural society hardly compares with the horticultural society or the dairymen's association as a working society. These last named associations do very much in the matter of investigation and experiment that, it appears to us, the state agricultural society would do well to imitate. They lay out work to do and assign men to perform it. They hear of blight and mildew, or huffy cheese, and the case is investigated and remedies found out. They determine the localities best adapted to the production of fruit and dairy products, and give the result of their labors to the world. They are not content to be simply recorders of progress, but they help on the work of progression. They hold few fairs; but their meetings are for the purpose of comparing experience, drawing out discussion and settling on determined results. There is as much need of having the new varieties of corn and grain tested in different parts of

the state, and the result published, as there is in the case of new varieties of pears and blackberries, and on whom would the work so appropriately fall as the members of the state society?

There are many farmers in our state who have made themselves proficient in many branches of husbandry, who take little interest in fairs. While other men have been feeding cattle and swine, they have been studying the application of manures and the curing of grass. These men might contribute nothing to a fair, but in a farmer's convention, conducted like those recently held under the auspices of the Maine State Society, they would contribute facts that would be of immense advantage. Assemblages of this kind would serve to bring out talent that has heretofore been hidden, and would furnish the compiler of our reports with the most valuable materials for publication. The facts that were brought out at the Madison County Farmers' Convention last winter, and the interest that was attached to them, plainly show that great good would result if similar meetings could be held at accessible points under the management of the parent society. There certainly is nothing in the constitution of the society that limits it to the mere holding of fairs and the publishing of a report, but very wisely its declared object are "The promotion of agriculture, horticulture, manufactures, mechanics and household arts."

The advance of the society into new fields of work and experiment in the future will depend, as we intimated above, almost entirely on the character of the officers that shall in the future conduct its affairs.

A vice president is to be chosen for each congressional district, and a president, secretary and treasurer are to be elected. The vice presidents, who really constitute the majority of the 'State Board of Agriculture,' should be men of the most sterling worth, men of enterprise and ability. Of the needed high qualifications of the leading officers, we need speak. Among the candidates for president, we hear mentioned the names of J. H. Pickrell, Emory Cobb, David Brown. For secretary, D. W. Scott, of Galena, O. B. Galusha, of Morris, Judge A. M. Brown, of Villa Ridge, A. M. Garland, of Chatham, H. D. Emery of Chicago, and others. For treasurer, the name of the present incumbent, J. W. Bunn, is the only one we have heard suggested. How many of the above gentlemen have really the desire to enter the contest, we have no means of knowing, but only mention them as talked of for the positions. We believe the election will be a spirited one, and we trust will result in the choice of those best calculated to administer the affairs of the society. Let all the county societies elect their delegates that they may have a voice in the election. The entire State should be represented.

## MICHIGAN AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE.

Lecture by Dr. Miles.

Besides the special lectures to the different classes in their several departments, on nearly every Wednesday afternoon some one of the faculty gives a more general lecture to all of the students and professors. We were fortunate enough to be just in time to hear a lecture from Dr. M. Miles, the eminent professor of agriculture. He is a man whom all the students respect, as well as most of those acquainted with him—a man who has a vast amount of information upon a great variety of subjects, together with a tact of being able to put all this in practice.

As professor of agriculture, a man to be successful is required to possess great executive ability and practical skill. This is not enough; he must also be an educated, scientific man and an old teacher, to fill the place properly. It is a rare thing to find all these combined in one man. Those best acquainted with Dr. Miles believe him to be just such a man as needed for the place he now occupies. His lecture was upon "ANCIENT AGRICULTURE." This science had grown slowly because very imperfect records had been kept of the discoveries and experiments of the oldest farmers. There is a tendency in modern times, especially in the United States, to underrate the knowledge of the ancients. By not keeping and publishing full accounts of their labors, the same results have been reached many times over, by different persons in different times and countries. A few stories and snatches of poetry were appropriately interwoven with the rest. Machines patented and found worthless have been again and again invented in our own country. Much time and money have been spent upon these, because men have not read what was easily accessible to them. Hence the great necessity of constantly reading and thinking about what others have done in such a complex and extended subject as ag-



Three Year Old Heifer VICTORIA 5th, by Duke of Menard 3568, out of Victoria 4th by Chicago Duke. Property of J. H. SPEARS, Esq., Tallula, Menard County, Ills.

riculture. We should in this way profit by the experience of all. The earliest accounts on record are a good deal obscured by mythology and superstition. Cato, before Christ, had good views of plowing and manuring for successful farming. Columella and Virgil wrote considerable, and thought it the highest kind of a compliment to be called a farmer. Pliny the elder, speaks of plowing nine times, in some instances, to pulverize the soil thoroughly—a process which we should perform with a variety of apparatus. They taught by experience, and generally drew correct conclusions from careful observations. Pliny taught the necessity of a rotation of crops—that leguminous plants should follow corn; the great value of manure—that it should be increased by litter of forest leaves, sedges, turf, lupines, bean stalks, etc., about barns and stables. Before certain crops it was well to fold sheep by movable fences.

Pliny taught the propriety of spreading manure in winter—a practice now considered best, though a few years ago it would have been thought far out of the way. They dressed certain crops with dust from the aviary, which was a good substitute for our modern guano. Nearly two thousand years ago he described a machine for cutting off and collecting the heads of wheat, somewhat after the fashion of some modern machines on the western prairies. Surely after this we are almost inclined to believe with Solomon that there is nothing new under the sun.

Several senators were present from the Michigan legislature now in extra session. It is intended to follow this lecture with another one or more upon Early English Agriculture.

The tendency now among farm implements is to make the horses do most of the work; and of these machines a large number are so constructed that the driver can ride upon a spring seat. We notice, other things being nearly equal, the implements which have a seat for the driver find the greatest favor. We have seen one yet with a shade for warding off the hot sun. A few years ago, when a boy, three or four men abreast cut the grass with the scythe, and we did the hardest work of all behind them in carefully stirring and spreading the hay. We all turned in and raked it by hand. It was loaded and pitched off and mowed away, or stacked by the hardest kind of labor. Now the horses leisurely draw a mower as they fight the flies; the driver at ease can eclipse the scythes of a gang of men. The hay tedder follows, kicking the hay in every direction, as a boy rides it whistling or eating apples. He rides a buggy with spring teeth over the ground, and leaves the hay in large rows ready to stack or haul in. The hardest work about it is "pitching on." At the barn it is nothing but fun to see the harpoon or hay fork elevating a hundred or two at a time over the big beam. Down it tumbles into the mow ready for winter use. Don't the farmers have easy times now-a-days?

W. J. B.

## AGRICULTURE IN HUNGARY.

In my last I promised to write you after the "Grand Trial" at Grosswarden, (Najvarad,) of the 11th-13th inst., was over, and give you the result and its incidents. I should have done so sooner could I have had

time, but we left the day after its close and came on through Pest here, so that until now I have had no opportunity, and indeed it is very doubtful when this may reach you; as, while we were fighting one of the bloodless battles of peace, marshalling our forces and with the weapons of husbandry, sweeping down the golden grain upon the distant plains of Hungary, France and Prussia on diver purpose bent, had plunged Europe into such commotion and perturbation, to result no doubt in general war—that it is doubtful if this, my letter, will reach you in sufficient season, if at all. Through Germany the roads are in the hands of the military. Private telegraphic despatches are not allowed, and the mails are so uncertain that business is in a fearful state of confusion. I am about ready to go home and at present there is but one outlet: via, Trieste and the Mediterranean.

To go back again to our trial. The English for many years have had almost exclusively the machine trade of Hungary; during the last two or three years the Germans have been endeavoring to compete; and, quite lately, the first reaper manufacturing firm has been started in Hungary, at Pest. So when we brought in our machine, at the invitation of the ministry, an international trial was suggested and appointed, that the different machines might come together and make test of their qualities and claims to public favor. Judges were selected from the most intelligent of the agriculturists of the different sections of the country to attend and decide, and everything was arranged to make the trial thorough and interesting. Notice was served upon all the competitors to be at the place of trial, some two or three miles from the city, with their respective machines, on the morning of the 10th (Sunday), that the judges might examine, take dimensions and note the claims of each; so at the appointed hour we were on the grounds. There were, besides our Harvesters, six English machines of the firms of Hornsby & Co., and Brigham & Bickerton; two German machines manufactured at Magdebourg, and one Hungarian, of the manufactory above referred to; all were self-rakers or droppers, and were attended by "engineers" who manifested sufficient practical acquaintance with, and confidence in their respective machines; certainly they had better reason for confidence than I had for myself.

The grain which we were to cut was over-ripe, full of thistles, and the weather was awfully hot; besides, I had endeavored to train Hungarian binders and had signally failed—the rascals believing that all these machines were the devil's inventions designed to take their bread away—their hatred to ours being so unmistakable that we were wise in having it closely watched; however, I've kept a stiff upper lip and prepared for the contest.

The morning of the 11th was clear, hot and still. As we rode out towards the trial ground we passed numbers of little flags nailed at every corner, or available place, through the crooked, straggling streets of the ragged old city; and along the way many miserable Wallachs lay sleeping in their sheepskin coats besides the road, their shaggy coats, with ample pouches, affording them their only shelter and storage during the warmer seasons of the year. I doubted not they slept, sweetly breathing the fresh

air of the plains, which the miserable ventilation of Hungarian houses excludes and deprives from those who can afford to sleep therein. Already had sheds been erected and covered with green boughs; pure water was flowing from a "Norton" well sunk for the occasion; long lines of bottles of wine were arranged upon temporary tables in the shade, and a gipsy band was discoursing wild Hungarian music to the large crowd so early collected.

Everything indicated a pleasant time for those who came only to see, but for the judges and operators, a day of arduous and even dangerous toil in the hot sun of this southern climate. But little time was lost in organizing; much intelligence and system being displayed, so that at the early hour of nine o'clock of this fixed day, the machines were at their respective positions, each having its lot to cut, and ready for the word "go," (that was not the word however.) Starting in we cut two rounds, when we were signaled to stop, each machine being examined as to its manner of cutting and handling the grain, condition, etc. Again starting we finished our lot of a little over three quarters of an acre, which I bound, (with a Hungarian lout upon the machine with me, causing more bother than help,) however, in 28 minutes. The time was quick and the work well done, the horses showing less labor than those of any other machine. As for myself, with bruised hands, thistle-stung, and exhausted, I was glad enough to be through. My appearance was not particularly interesting, but we had got the crowd and I cared not. Another examination and the day's work for us was over. The other machines did good work, one making even quicker time than we did, but the binding was not done, and the poor devils, the peasants, were set to clean up this field, while we adjourned to meet at four o'clock next morning for dynamometer test. The heat was so great that this early hour was appointed so that we might get through before the sun had its full power. The ordinary manner of cutting and binding, in this country, is as follows: One cuts the grain with a clumsy scythe, having a stick fixed in the handle so as to operate as a sort of gatherer to the grain. A woman follows, and with her hand and a hook (like an old fashioned sickle) gathers the grain in bundles, another with a bunch of bands (which one made in the morning) placing them where required. Two men generally bind, placing the gathered grain upon the outspread band and tying with a clumsy knot. The process is extremely slow. I should calculate looking at them binding after the machines, that it would require twenty to follow a first class American reaper through the day. We were on hand at the time the next morning, but did not get started till six. After dynamometer test, which was very satisfactory to us, we received notice to prepare for another trial, each machine to start in on its second lot and not to stop till done. My Hungarian binder was good for nothing; so, having noticed that the Saxon game-keeper of the Bishop's estate, upon which our trial was being held, bound a few bundles the day before with some skill, I hunted him up and asked him to help me; the brave fellow came on and did me good service, finishing our lot in 36 minutes, doing splendid work and eliciting many "bravos" from the

crowd. Then into a piece of heavy rye, a few rounds, and the judges told us that we were through, and the trial was supposed to ended.

In the afternoon while I was sitting, bathing my suffering fingers, a carriage drove up and the coachman announced that he was sent after us to attend a banquet given by the agricultural society of the department. My friend had gone down town and I refused to go, as I understood not a word of their language and so few of them anything of mine. However no refusal was accepted, and we were at last gathered there. A most magnificent banquet was served; the wine circulated and toasts soon indicated who had gained the prize. Next morning the "Governors" of all the competing machines were summoned before the judges at the society's rooms, and I was presented with the grand prize—40 golden ducats and the society's first class diploma; the Hungarian ranking next, the English being beaten. Just then a telegram was received from the ministry, ordering that our machine should again be tried with one of the others, directing that careful notes should be taken of the results. It was now noon, and we were compelled to repair to the field at once, an English machine being chosen to compete. By three o'clock we were at it again; the heat was terrible; the Saxon helped me, and the lot was cut and bound in 35 minutes. My hands were in terrible condition; but I was determined the Englishman should get no advantage. He cut his lot in 31 minutes but six men were over an hour binding it up. This ended the affair at Grossarden, and next morning we were on our way to Pest, and thence here, in order to attend a trial of our machine before the agricultural ministry, which is to take place day after tomorrow, weather permitting. Of course my attention being exclusively given to our own machine, it was not possible that I should be able to be particular about the others. The trial was intelligently, and, I believe, fairly managed, and was very satisfactory to the people. My friend gave me every assistance, having to act as interpreter and manager; and while the machine, seeming to realize that the honor of our distant country rested upon our efforts, behaved admirably throughout, eliciting the highest eulogiums because of its simplicity and steadiness.

VIENNA, AUST., July 30th. E. W. MARSH.

## BOYS ON THE FARM.

The reason so many boys leave the farm is, I believe, this: The country boy sees his city cousins dressed fashionably, while he trudges along in his patched clothes. The latter is true, more especially when said boys are sons of what are termed "old fashioned farmers." Their income is limited, and therefore they are unable to clothe their children better. Perhaps the country boy sees a young man, with some education, clerking in a city store, and fancies how easy it would be to stand behind the counter and measure out cloth for a living! But little does he think of the hard training needed to make a good salesman.

Nothing is easier than to make a boy a farmer, by beginning soon enough; it is the duty of farmers, and all should do it. With few exceptions any one will make a good farmer. Get a few good tools, such as a saw, square, hammer, two or three augers, chisels and planes, etc., fix up some old out house for a work house, where the children can work on rainy days; it will not only amuse, but instruct the boys. A knowledge of the use of tools will be of more use to a young man than acres of land or droves of cattle.

Buy as many good books as your means will allow. Do not hoard up money for your children—it will pay better to invest it in good books. A single good book will be worth more to any one than the best acre of land you possess; besides, subscribe for the PRAIRIE FARMER—it will give the boys new ideas and set them to thinking. It will teach the boys to make experiments, which will be of value to them all their lives. After reading something in the paper, they will naturally ask questions concerning things they would never think of before.

Give them plots of land, seeds to plant, and tools to work with. Let them do all the work themselves, and they will try to excel each other in farming. Give each a blank book in which to keep their accounts, putting down crops raised, yield, cost of seed, value of increase, manure used, etc., etc. These books, if preserved, will interest the boys when they have become men. Some farmers have one of the boys to keep an account of all the work done on the farm.

Surely, with such advantages as these, which cost comparatively little, few boys will leave the farm. Keep the boys on the farm, and after they have grown up they will bless their fathers for thus keeping them at home.

J. H. H.