

HORSES.

OUR SCOTTISH LETTER.

THE LONDON HORSE SHOWS.

Since I last wrote, many things have happened. For one thing, we have had very severe weather—what the Americans call samples of all kinds, and nothing for very long. The severity in some parts has been such as to awaken serious misgivings concerning the well-being of the sheep stocks. These naturally suffer most in a bad springtime. The lambing season approaches, and unless the ewes be kept thriving, there may be disaster to all concerned. A short crop of lambs, in spite of the enhanced prices for wool and mutton, made the year 1906 not so profitable for the sheep farmer as many supposed it would have been. Should 1907 bring a short crop, also, flockmasters will begin to think that there are many opponents of their interests, and that those who enter farms at current high rates will come off second best in the long run. However, there has been a distinct improvement in the weather of late, and spring work in the fields has been well advanced in connection therewith.

An extraordinary impetus has been given to spring work by the introduction of the American and Canadian chilled plows. By means of these, arrears of work can be very rapidly overtaken. They cultivate the ground in a manner altogether different from the ordinary British plow, and this renders necessary the use of the seed drill. In my boyish days such an implement was unknown in this country. All sowing was done by hand, and, in order to successful and uniform sowing, it was necessary to have regular and uniform plowing. The beautifully-packed furrows of the old-time sowing were worth seeing, and I believe those who have tried both ways of seeding would, if perfection of workmanship were the only thing to be considered, prefer the old plow and the old system of hand-sowing. The latter was a laborious task, yet it was always undertaken by the master or the headman on the farm. It was a decidedly nice job, clean, tidy, and full of dignity. There was even romance and poetry in it, and the long, swinging step of the sower was not more delightful to contemplate than his long, regular arm-cast of the precious seed. But in these later days the economic conditions have obliterated all the poetic harmonies. It is a case of F. S. D., or profit and loss, all the time. The chilled plow and the seed drill are prosaic, compared with the appearance of the old-time spring implements, just as the self-binder is not to be compared with the swing of the scythe and the music of the reapers in the old-time harvest field. The chilled plow, seed-drill and self-binder, however, enable the farmer to make a profit, where the other would assuredly have compelled him to enter a loss. It is what pays best that settles what is best to be done in the spring or harvest these days.

SALES AND SHOWS.

During the past four weeks we have had the spring sales of pure-bred bulls and the London Horse Shows. The sales of pure-bred stock have this year been more uniform than were those of last year. Prices for individual animals have not ruled as high, but, on the other hand, the demand has been steady. The averages generally for all pure-breds show a slight decrease, due almost entirely to the superfluity of inferior animals thrown upon the market for breeding purposes. This is one of the drawbacks to our present system. When there is a keen demand, breeders will keep too large a number of males for breeding purposes, and the issue is a collapse in prices. So far as Shorthorns are concerned, it is obvious that the shipment of inferior bulls to the Argentine has been overdone. In an address, delivered at Inverness to a large gathering of breeders assembled to do him honor, Mr. C. M. Cameron, Balnakyle, indicated this view. He has recently returned from the Argentine, where he acted as sole judge of Shorthorns at the great show there. He found the demand for second-class bulls very slow, and, from his description of the stock of the country, it does seem rather unnecessary to export inferior bulls. Argentina has deeply impressed Mr. Cameron, as it has done all others who have visited it, as a country of immense possibilities. But at the same time, he found little to discourage the home breeder of the best kind of Shorthorns. For a long time to come the Argentine will need the help of British blood, and so long as the best bulls are sent, a good trade will be got for them.

Mr. Cameron's account of the quarantine station at Buenos Ayres is not flattering to those in charge of affairs in the Argentine, and money must be very easily gathered there, when the very choicest bulls bred in this country are sacrificed under the test administered in conditions which are hopelessly impossible. I am not disposed to blame breeders here for neglect of the tuberculin test, but when one hears a plain, unvarnished account of the way in which the test is administered in Argentina, he can only hazard the guess that there are other reasons for the ruthless destruc-

tion of high-class stock abroad than those which appear on the surface. The idea of "protection" for home industries is deep-rooted in new countries, and possibly no one can blame those who give prominence to this view of things. But it would be far better to say openly, "We do not want the importation of foreign stock," than to open the gates to it under conditions which practically forbid its profitable importation.

At Birmingham, this week, a Shorthorn yearling bull has been sold for 1,000 gs., and the demand has been steady and remunerative. While the sales of Shorthorns in Scotland a fortnight ago revealed decreased averages, and the bottom seemed to go out of one of the sales altogether, those who put upon the market such animals as were really well fitted to improve the breed of cattle abroad, got remunerative prices. The anticipated advance in prizes of Aberdeen-Angus cattle did not come off. Ballindalloch was first, with a long lead, and the rest of the herds brought up the rear in a more or less conspicuous and satisfactory way. It is to be borne in mind that the Collynie young bulls are sold in the autumn, hence their figures are not included in the Spring Shorthorn averages, while the reverse holds good with A.-A. herds. Ballindalloch and all the rest of the herds offer their bull calves at the spring sales. The averages recorded for them, therefore, represent things as they are. In order to get the Shorthorn averages and totals, it is necessary to wait until the end of the year. Galloways and Highlanders have sold very much as they did a year ago. It does not appear that

the King bred Hackneys at Wolferton, his stud farm in Norfolk, but now he confines attention there to the Shire, which is in high favor with many of the titled people of England. Very few of the prizes at this show ten days ago went to tenant-farmers, but in both classes of yearlings they got a big share of the money. The Shire Horse Society also greatly encourages breeders by giving breeders' prizes in addition to those won by the exhibitor. The championship of the Show went to Lord Rothschild for his great horse, Birdsall Menestrel, which was bred by Lord Middleton, Birdsall, York. The champion female was a great mare named Stolen Duchess, owned by Messrs. Forshaw & Sons, Newark-on-Trent. The classes all through at the Shire Show were remarkably well filled, and the attendance was bucolic to a degree. In this respect I think the Shire Show now excels even the show of the Smithfield Club. The gate at the Shire Show is drawn almost exclusively from the country; at the Hackney Show it is different. The Londoner, and especially the West-end Londoner, likes to see a good driving horse. Certainly there was no lack of them this week in the Royal Agricultural Hall, but I question if there was very much trade. For one thing, in the breeding-stock classes, there were far too large a proportion of horses and mares with white legs up to the knees and hocks. In cart horses, color does not matter very much, but in driving horses it counts for a very great deal. There is nothing attractive in a pair of light chestnut driving horses with four white legs. Dark-colored horses are invaluable for driving purposes, and in the driving classes, especially among the ponies, colors were all right.

The championship in the breeding sections of the Hackney Show went to Mr. F. W. Buttle for his magnificent 15-year-old horse, Rosador 4964. This horse was bred by Mr. Buttle, whose residence is Kirkburn Manor, Driffield, Yorks. He was champion at this show in 1897 and 1899, and this year he is again champion. His daughters have been champion females at this show in 1900, 1901, 1902, 1903, 1904, 1905, 1906, and 1907—a truly marvellous record, never before, excelled. Not only has Rosador distinguished himself in this way, but to-day (March 8th) he won first and second for the produce group of females, with six magnificent mares, three in the first-prize lot being the cham-



Birdsall King (imp.) [478].

Shire stallion; black; foaled in 1904. Sire Birdsall Caliph (21128). First in class and champion, Canadian National Exhibition, 1906; first, Ontario Horse Show, Feb., 1907. Imported and exhibited by Hamilton & Hawthorne, Simcoe, Ont.

the area of influence of these breeds is extending. At most, they are but holding their own. Both breeds have their uses in districts, and under climatic conditions which would put both Shorthorns and Aberdeen-Angus out of the running. The latter can thrive and do well in a very cold climate, if it is dry, and Shorthorn crosses, especially the highly-profitable blue-gray, out of the Galloway cow, is one of the most profitable of feeding stock. These can thrive in any climate in which the pure-bred Galloway can make a living. The Galloway and the Highlander are, however, seen at their best under rigorous conditions, and, while responding to generous treatment, they best vindicate their title to special recognition under conditions before which other breeds would flinch.

THE HACKNEY SHOW.

But enough of sheep and cattle. Let us come to the horses. This year I have seen both the London Shire and Hackney Shows. The latter closed to-day, and, in spite of motor cars, I am bound to say that never before have I seen greater interest taken in the Hackney by the general public. Immense crowds have thronged the galleries of the Royal Agricultural Hall on the two society days of the show. Royalty does not now patronize the Hackney, but the Shire basks in the sunshine of Royal favor. In old days, His Majesty

pion mare of this show: Hawsker Rosina 15129, owned by Mr. A. W. Hickling, Adboltna, Nottingham; District Maid 15089, the champion mare of 1905, and her own sister, Boquhan Sunrise 16469, the champion mare of 1906. Another full sister, Boquhan Sunflower 16468, was in the second-prize group. Undoubtedly, such an event as this has never before been recorded at a London show. All the same, the best harness horses in the show were not got by Rosador; indeed, very few were. The Produce Championship for the best three horses in the harness classes got by one sire, was won by Mr. Whitworth's celebrated horse, Polonius 4981, and he and his uterine brother, Mathias 6478, were sires of quite a large number of very superior driving horses. The champion driving horse, and reserve champion driving horse of the show were, so far as breeding is concerned, rank outsiders. Mr. Winans, an American gentleman settled in England, took the championship with Coker's Rosador 7754, a nine-year-old bay Norfolk horse, with perfect manners, and altogether a lovely specimen of the Hackney driving horse. The reserve was Mr. Jack Dove's King of the West, a black five-year-old, bred in Wales, and a great goer, with speed as well as high action. He just lacked the perfect finish of Coker's Rosador. The second reserve was the lovely bay six-year-old cob mare, Vanity Fair, bred near Glasgow, and got by Hedon Sensation 6042, out of a mare by Gany-