

## Notes from England.

Dullness and depression are the characteristics of the cattle trade at the present time. Last week the primest English breeds made but 4s. 8d., and Canadians 4s. per 8 lbs. Stores were even worse, for there is no demand at all for them. But while the prices for cattle are low, those for sheep are still worse. At Lewes fair, where 19,000 sheep and lambs were exposed, prices ranged only from 20s. to 43s. for sheep, and 18s. 6d. to 35s. for lambs, showing a fall in two years of 20s. to 22s. in sheep, and of 9s. to 10s. 6d. for lambs. In Scotland values are even ruinous, and a leading agricultural paper records an instance of a consignment of poultry and one of lambs to Kingussie, a popular summer resort in Scotland, where the lambs brought several pence less per head than did the fowls, which realized 2s. 6d. This is probably an extreme case, still reports from the Scotch sales record the sale of cheviot lambs as low as 4s. a head.

The recent heavy rains have done much harm to the grain that is still out, especially in the north of England, and even as far south as North Lincolnshire, as well as the oats in the Highlands; but, fortunately, the large proportion of the crops was out of harm's way. Blight, too, has been very prevalent among the wheat, and disease is rapidly spreading among the potatoes.

The low price of wheat has induced farmers to abandon the cultivation of that cereal, and to turn their attention to grazing. This is indicated by the agricultural returns, which show that the wheat area is reduced by 87,438 acres, or 3.8 per cent. less than last year, or 7 per cent. as against the average of 1890.

The reduction in wheat is followed, as might be anticipated, by an increase in the live stock of the country. According to the returns of the Board of Agriculture, the number of cattle this year is 6,944,783, as against 6,852,821 last year; the increase being entirely confined to those of two years old and upwards. These butchers' beasts have made the large gain of 162,057, and naturally tend to keep down prices. Pigs, however, have lost ground, and show a reduction of 26.0 per cent on 1891.

In conjunction with the increase in the live stock of the country, the increased and constantly increasing imports of cattle and sheep from the United States, Canada and South America, not to mention the dead million which is arriving from New Zealand, which, last reports say, has swamped the rising trade in lambs from Canada, render the prospects of the English farmers anything but rose colored. The low prices realized for the harvest produce, and with little prospect of a rise in view during the winter, do little towards encouraging them to invest in stores, notwithstanding the extremely low prices at which they can be purchased.

The announcement made by Secretary Rusk that the United States is free from pleuropneumonia is looked upon as only a prelude to an attack upon our parliament for the unrestricted admission of American cattle, and, with the bars once down, we shall doubtless see our markets crowded with American stores. The free introduction of American stores, it is felt, will seriously endanger cattle breeding, which has been one of the props of the agriculturist in the United Kingdom. Dairying will also suffer, for the profit of the annual calf will be lost, as no one will rear a calf when three-year-old American steers can be bought at what it will cost to raise a home-bred yearling.

From the serious aspect of the present outlook it is gratifying that a somewhat better condition exists in pedigreed stock. Shires have sold well, and a good market is found for Hackneys of the best type, while the tops of the best herds and flocks have fetched good prices. The Earl of Ellesmere has recently sold a Shire filly by R. R. for 300 guineas, and at Mr. Chandos' Pole Gells sale, forty-two head realized £2,420 5s., an average of £57 12s. 6d. a piece; the four-year-old mare by Bar None being bought for H. R. H. the Prince of Wales for 170 guineas. At Mr. C. E. Cooke's sale of Hackneys the bidding was brisk, especially for the

fillies got by Cadet, who had previously been sold to Mr. A. J. Cassatt, Pennsylvania, for £3,000; 14 brood mares, including ponies, made an average of £78; 13 foals at foot averaged £50 17s. 8d., and 11 yearling fillies averaged £110 14s. 6d.

We have had several American as well as Canadian buyers over here, and on the 10th September a valuable lot of both horses and sheep left on the Lake Superior, among the shippers being Mr. J. Y. Ormsby, who has been purchasing several excellent improved Large Yorkshires, one of them a first prize winner at the Royal. Mr. J. D. McGregor, Brandon, Man., has also been making large purchases of horses; his lot, 22 in number, comprised Shires, Cleveland Bays, Hackneys and Thoroughbreds, one of the best being the 1st prize Royal winning Shire stallion Nailstone Standard, who should be heard of again. Shropshire sales from well known flocks have gone off fairly well. At the annual draft sale of the Onibury flock shearing rams averaged £10, and at Mr. J. E. Farmer's sale the satisfactory average of £12 7s. was obtained. Lord Polwarth's sale of Border Leicesters made an average of £36 1s. 4d., the highest priced lot, a shearing, fetching £150, and exceeding the highest price last year by £20; another brought £120, and the next highest £103.

## Shropshires at W. S. Hawkshaw's.

It is always a pleasing sight to view a pure-bred herd or flock, but when either is composed of a lot of superior individuals it is doubly interesting. Such is the Shropshire flock of Mr. Hawkshaw, which, in point of numbers, is one of the largest, while in uniformity of character and individual excellence in the sheep it contains is at least equal, if not superior, to any flock of this breed we have yet seen. At the time of our visit the breeding flock was composed of eighty imported ewes, which were divided into two flocks.

The first point that attracts attention on coming into the flock is the large size of the sheep, with which quality is combined in a high degree. It is a well known fact that it is comparatively easy to get either one of these points developed singly, but to get sheep that unite both large size and undoubted quality means considerable trouble in selection and a higher outlay than many are willing to pay. It has, however, been Mr. Hawkshaw's aim in all his importations that he has selected to buy nothing but the very best specimens obtainable, and these have, so far, been entirely confined to store or field sheep.

Of the eighty ewes before mentioned, fifty were being bred to the three-shear ram Wool Merchant, that has proved a most impressive sire, as the two wonderfully uniform crops of lambs that have already been obtained through his use demonstrate. One hundred and seventy-five dollars was refused for this ram in his shearing form immediately after he arrived with the summer importation of 1890, and he has necked so well with this flock of ewes the last two seasons that his owner estimates that he has already realized this money several times. The remaining thirty are mated with the wonderfully good shearing ram imported this season, and if one can judge of the results that may be expected from his use on the flock by his individual appearance, this choice should be followed by some extra fine lambs next season. The ewes have been mated early to both rams, and if there is not a good turn-out of show lambs for next season's trade we shall certainly be disappointed.

This season's importation consisted of the shearing ram just mentioned and a lot of shearing ewes, which are all of much the same type, as they combine large size with wonderfully dense fleeces of extra fine wool. These sheep are of the low down type, with abundance of bone and well woolled down the legs, and the lot presents a very fine appearance, which doubtless is partly to be accounted for by the frequent use of the very convenient dipping apparatus that we were afterwards shown. We were informed that the flock was dipped three times during the past season, the trouble of dipping being much more than repaid by the well doing of the flock. In breeding lines these sheep have

been drawn from six English flocks, in order to obtain sheep of the high order required. A goodly number are from the Loughcrew flock of Mr. Napper, Old Castle, Ireland, which has been so successfully shown at the Royal and other English shows of late years, and which was first founded and has yearly been recruited by specimens of the best English flocks. These sheep were remarkably large and fine. The old Onibury flock of Messrs. F. Bach & Sons also is well represented, this flock being long noted for its winnings at the principal English shows. The balance of Mr. Hawkshaw's sheep were selected from equally good flocks, which we have not space to mention here.

One advantage for the intending purchaser in visiting this flock is that none are reserved, the first customer always having the choice. This accounts for the amount of business that has already been done the present season, as Mr. Hawkshaw informed us that he had sold 134 sheep of his own breeding or importing during 1892.

## Banish the Scrub Sire.

Experience and observation in the realm of beef production alike teach that the use of pure-bred sires of the desired type cannot be too often nor too strenuously insisted upon. At the risk of repeating an old story, it must be "line upon line and precept upon precept." From the great marts of the world comes with ever renewed emphasis the demand for quality, quality, quality. The narrowing margins of profit also drive home the conclusion with irresistible logic that the day of the high-backed, raw-boned, slab-sided, five-year-old steer is done. He costs too much and is not wanted. Take for example the opinion of Mr. John McMillan, M. P. of South Huron, Ontario, who for two score years or more has been engaged in the breeding and feeding of stock, and also for seven years past in exporting fat cattle to Great Britain. In this work his sons are actively associated with him. They have on several occasions visited Manitoba and the Northwest Territories picking up stockers in the fall. These they ship to Ontario, stall feed over winter, and then take forward to the Old Country the following spring, realizing, we doubt not, a satisfactory profit upon them. During the past summer Mr. McMillan himself made a tour of observation all through Manitoba and the Northwest, and, in conversation with the Editor of the FARMER'S ADVOCATE, had no hesitation in declaring upon a conservative estimate that there was a difference of at least \$10 per head (others have put it as high as \$15) in favor of steers bred from a pure-blooded bull, of the right sort, in comparison with those from scrubs, or even grades, whose progeny reverts back, having, as they do, a diminishing quantity of pure blood in their veins and of prepotency. The extra cost of securing the service of a pure-bred sire is but a trifle compared with the aggregate of that \$10 per head on the progeny, which farmers cannot afford to lose. The sum and substance of it is, that the scrub bull tagging about with so many herds of the country, as he yet does, is a nuisance and a financial damage, and the sooner he is banished the better. Mr. McMillan prefers a steer that will be ready for the market at two and a-half or three years old, low set fellows, with straight top and bottom lines, well sprung ribs, full behind the shoulder, and also meated down close to the gambrel joint. A good, heavy weight is not objectionable; in fact, the heavy ones were rather in most favor last season. The point is to have a steer with quality well-finished. Mr. McMillan is fully satisfied that there has been a great loss in the excessive feeding of large quantities of grain—that is to say, more than the animals could properly assimilate—through the mistaken idea of the feeders in attempting to hurry the process of stall fattening. This position accords with the views of others who have carefully experimented along that line. He expresses the conviction also that hurried fattening is undesirable, in that it does not produce so good a quality of meat. Coming from a man of such long and successful experience, these points are deserving of most careful consideration, especially by those who are embarking in the rearing of cattle for beef.