

British Cleanings.

A GOOD AND BAD HARVEST.—An English paper says that "the difference between a good harvest and a bad one in the United Kingdom is equal in money value to some fifty or sixty millions sterling."

SINGULAR COMBAT.—A British exchange states that "a cat belonging to Mr. George Macadie, Hillhead, Wick, was attacked by a male and female partridge while she was out in search of game in a neighbouring field. After several vain attempts to repel her assailants, grimalkin had to give up the contest, and to run for it."

THE POTATO DISEASE.—A correspondent of the *Scottish Farmer*, writing from the south of England, states that the potato disease is very bad in some districts, and that more than one-half of the crop is already lost. Many districts of Sussex smell offensively of the decayed haulm, which some farmers are cutting and taking off the fields, in hopes thereby to retard the progress of the disease.

CATS IN BRUSSELS. We learn from the *London Field* that there is quite a rage for cats of the Angora breed in Brussels at the present time. "The demand being large and the supply limited, the dealers have resorted to strong measures to satisfy the market. The other night nearly all the Angora cats in one quarter of the city were stolen, to the astonishment and distress of their owners."

BEEF FOR GREAT BRITAIN.—A British exchange announces the purchase of six thousand barrels of beef in New York, for shipment to Great Britain. It says the dreadful cattle disease, which is now raging in Europe, will have an important influence upon American markets for cured meats, if they shall be so lucky as to escape the disease itself. A large advance in butter and cheese may be expected.

OTTER HUNT.—The *Carlisle Examiner* relates the following curious circumstance: On Friday the Carlisle pack were hunting near Penrith, and they drove out and killed a fine bitch otter. More curious to relate, however, a nest of young ones was found in a crevice close at hand, containing three of the brood. The pups, which were scarcely as large as new-born kittens, were carefully taken care of and brought to Carlisle. They may be seen any day in East Tower Street, where they are being suckled and tended by a cat. Pussy is a most considerate step-mother, and will no doubt rear them in more gentle ways than their unfortunate dam.

REPLACING A COW'S HORN.—The following paragraph appears in an editorial column of *Shorthorn Intelligence*, in a recent issue of *Bell's Messenger*:—"Did any of our readers ever try the experiment of replacing a horn which had been sloughed or cast? We did so the other day, and with complete success. On Saturday, the 22nd of July, a boy brought a horn to us which he had seen one of our cows lose by entangling it in a stile. A friend volunteered to put it carefully on again; and in the course of about twenty minutes from the time of the accident, the cow was once more in possession of a pair of horns. Twenty-three days have passed, and the horn seems as firm as any in the herd. No bandage or fastening was applied."

FISHING WITH THE ELECTRIC LIGHT.—A British exchange give the following interesting account of an experiment recently made at Belle-Isle, to fish at night by means of electric light:—"The light was produced by a powerful electro-magnetic machine constructed by M. Bazin, the well-known engineer. The experiment, which was conducted by M. Bazin on board the *Andalouse*, in the presence of 1500 persons assembled on the pier, was completely successful, and the quantity of fish taken very large. A person who was present states that nothing can be more exciting than fishing at sea by night with the aid of this light. As soon as the submarine lantern was immersed, shoals of fish of every description came to sport in the illuminated circle, while the fishermen outside spread their nets from their boats. The light illuminating the deep sea, the fish arriving in shoals, attracted by the fictitious sun, the boats at the edge of the lighted circle, the deep silence, interrupted only by the grating of the electro-magnetic machine, is described as an imposing sight."

PLANTS AND FLOWERS AMONG THE POOR.—Some of the English papers express pleasure, if not surprise, at the result of efforts which have recently been made to encourage the growth of plants and flowers by the lower classes of London. Exhibitions have been held, sometimes in the schoolrooms of the children, and small premiums awarded for the best display. One collection, brought down from the top of a house, comprised two hollyhocks, two dahlias, geraniums, &c. From another attic garden came a little box of *mignonette* in bloom, in the centre, with beans trained to sticks at the ends. A two-year old oak, grown from an acorn in a bottle, was the pride of one woman, while another, with a very humble display, said she had been trying to interest her husband in her window garden, with the hope that it might draw him away from the public house.

ENORMOUS PRICE FOR EGG-SHELLS.—We learn from a correspondent of the *London Field*, that four empty egg-shells of the Great Auk were recently sold by public auction, realizing the large sum of one hundred and twenty-two pounds sterling. Such of our readers as are not professed naturalists may probably enquire what were the peculiar circumstances that could give to these egg-shells such an enormous value. The *Alca impennis* of Linnæus, and all subsequent naturalists, the great auk of the books of our boyhood is a species which no longer exists. The last living specimen known was that secured in 1831, for Dr. Bartlett's collection. The great auk was a diving bird, closely related to the razor-bills and guillemots, although in size it considerably surpassed these species, its length being upwards of two feet. The egg specimens recently sold, were discovered with some others in one of the museums in London, when it was decided supernumerary ones should be parted with. They are about five inches in length by three in breadth, and of that peculiar pyriform or tapering shape characteristic of the eggs of so many sea-fowl. In colour they are very pale yellowish-white, blotched with irregular patches of dark and light brown.

COLOR IN SHORTHORNS.—A correspondent who has devoted considerable attention to this subject during many years breeding experience, writes to *Bell's Messenger*, as follows:—"I have known a roan cow breed to a white bull, and then to a red bull, and the calves were roans of very similar hue and shade, and both calves were pretty equal in amount of colouring. I think I could produce several instances of this. I have observed that when a roan cow and a white bull have been put together, the calf has very seldom come a mixture between the two, but has been either white or of a roan colour as dark as the mother's, or darker than hers. If the roan cow be put to a red bull, the offspring comes either roan, red, or red and white—not white; but often, if roan, lighter than the dam. Sometimes, however, a red roan, or mixture between sire and dam. Red and roan seem to mix better than white and roan. If the two colours refuse to mingle, the result is a lighter roan, or else red with more or less of white. When two colours are put together which don't mix very readily, it seems as if they didn't know what to do, and so, by way of settling the difficulty, they both yield their claims, and one of the original colours (red or white) comes out; or if there has been any distinct peculiar marking among the nearer ancestors, that perhaps crops out again."

MAKING UP THE AYRSHIRES.—The following amusing account of the manner in which those animals are prepared for exhibition is furnished by the *Mark Lane Express*:—"The show dodges of the Ayrshire men are inexhaustible, and not unattended with danger, as one man in his last twenty-four hours of a 'strong preparation' fairly burst his bull. A great deal depends upon the jockeying during that time. A cow is generally kept sharp set till four or five hours before the show. If she had been on too fine food, her paunch would be drawn up, and the vessel would lean forward, and the teats not in position; whereas if the paunch is gradually filled in these last few hours, first by giving her common food, and then by coaxing her into quantity by bettering it at every supply, she is filled to repletion, and the vessel hangs taut and square. She often gets her pound of salt at night, and between the two agencies she should be turned out quite the thing in the morning. Cows are also kept well up to 'tid' during the show season with gruel made of linseed-meal, oatmeal, and flour, diluted with their own milk, and sometimes as much as 3 lbs. of treacle in it. The shape of the vessel is

also as carefully looked to and adjusted as the Spanish cock's comb, which was, while the fashion set that way, kept up in pasteboard splints, till just before going into Bingley Hall. A board is put below the vessel with holes for the teats, and tied with strings round the cow's back, so as to keep it in position, and the vessel is laved with cold water all night, to make it fat and contracted and give it consistency. They are also washed over with butter-milk, and the finer lights put in with soap and gum. Sometimes the cow barbers use butter-milk for the legs, and take to hair-oil, and the horns are rubbed with charcoal or hawthorn ashes, in accordance with an old superstition. In short, the day and night before the show are, in many instances, quite as important as an artist's glazing-day at the Royal Academy. The judges are all well up to 'the little game,' which extends to scraping rams' horns almost to the quick, and then japanning them, and is on all fours with that artistic clipping to hide weak points, against which old Val Barford, K.C.B. (Knight of the Clipping Board), struggled so long, till the Royal English Society issued its ukase."

THE RIVAL OF JERKED BEEF.—The trade reporter to the *Irish Times* says:—"A report gains ground that beef can be kept fresh in cask and sent anywhere; if so, from present advanced prices, there is no doubt large imports will take place and supersede the sale of jerked beef at probably 3d. or 4d. per pound." Thereupon a correspondent of the *Grocer* comments on the announcement as follows:—"This, I suppose, is in allusion to the operations of the Fresh Meat Preserving Company, whose loathsome-looking 'preservations' sink and sweat under glass cases in one of the galleries of our Exhibition. I hear banquets are given by the company, who feast their guests upon the roast beef of old England, and then show them, through glass, preserved specimens of what they (the guests) have no opportunity of tasting. 'Potatoes and point' is the title of a tale often told, but seldom illustrated; but here we have an instance of how the wise scientific friends of the poor man judge of the good things sealed and set before them by a new limited (too limited in its prospects, I fear) joint stock company. Another interesting fact connected with this important discovery is that the closed vessels containing the meat are sometimes too small to hold the gaseous products introduced for the preservation of the contents. The consequence is the usual and very natural one; I am informed that the innocent attendants of some adjacent cases at the Exhibition were a few weeks since frightened from their propriety by the explosion of a tin canister containing a joint of doubtful-looking mutton that preferred corruption to confinement."

SMALL POX AMONG SHEEP.—In a recent communication to the *Morning Post*, Professor Gamgee invites the careful attention of flockmasters to the following important points, which cannot be overlooked with impunity wherever the disease appears:—"1. The flocks must be carefully watched, and the slightest evidence of sickness in any single animal should lead to instant separation, and the examination of those parts uncovered with wool. The early symptoms are slight fever, drooping ears, clapped wool, and a flea-bitten appearance on the inside of the arms and thighs. The red spots increase in size, and about the eighth or tenth day after the earliest symptoms each red papula becomes elevated and transparent. A clear limpid liquid accumulates, and soon becomes turbid. The pustule has a white and then a yellowish or brownish opaque appearance; the skin around it is pale. Each pustule is flattened, and has been compared by the French to the head of a nail. A certain amount of transudation of lymph occurs, and the pustule dries, so that in a few days a yellowish grey or brown seat is perfectly formed. The scabs then fall off, and leave red depressions in the skin. It is most important to watch and separate the mildest case, as it is the overlooking slight instances of sickness which so often leads to the disease taking deep root and exterminating a flock. 2. Inoculation must be strictly and unconditionally avoided. In Germany, where sheep are much horned, the operation may, under certain circumstances, be admissible, but here it never is. I appeal to our Wiltshire experiences in proof of this. The losses in the inoculated flocks amounted to 19.59 per cent., whereas amongst the non-inoculated they only amounted to 1.6 per cent. The disease was very virulent, but readily suppressed by separation. 3. I should advise the Sussex farmers to do as, on my recommendation, was done in 1862. They should club together, and pay for the first, viz., the smallest loss, and bury the sick sheep below ground. I do not wish them wantonly to destroy a whole flock, but the malady may be limited to very few if the plan of early slaughtering is resorted to."