

CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. Massey's Antipodean Letter.

THE following letter on Victorian railways was received at the office of the Massey Press on Nov. 1st, showing remarkably quick transmission:—

To the Editor of MASSEY'S ILLUSTRATED.

SIR,—I have read Mr. Massey's letters giving an account of his travels in Australia etc., some twenty months ago, and as a whole they show a keen insight which few, even of professed letter men, have shown. However, I think his deductions on our railway policy are not quite right. For one thing our population is not sufficient to warrant more than one line to one locality. If our lines belonged to a private company, in the absence of competition the chief aim of the management would be to make as much profit as possible to meet the periodical dividend. We had our South Suburban lines constructed and managed by a private company, when little attention was paid to the comfort of the traveller, and the fares were nigh 50 per cent higher than they have been under the government. As it is, whilst the railway commissioners strive at making the concern pay working expenses and sufficient to meet the yearly interest on the capital spent in the construction, there is no doubt some lines have been constructed through political log-rolling, but in the management there is no doubt we are better off as it is under government control than if the property was managed by a company. Now the population, who constitute the shareholders, have the control and a voice through parliament whose members have to face the electorate at least once every three years.

A VICTORIAN.

Melbourne, 30th Sept., 1889.

Clipping Horses in Cold Weather.

WHY are horses clipped in winter? Why does the shrewd horse-owner divest the animal of the protection nature designed for its protection?

Horses are clipped for various reasons. In Europe high-bred carriage horses, and not infrequently hunters, are denuded of a portion of their heavier winter coatings of hair. This change is made to check profuse perspiration and frequently to facilitate the work of the groom. Where horses live under a wise system of stable economy the singeing lamp and not the shears is used. As soon as the chill autumn winds are felt, the best cared for horses show signs of moulting; their coats become dull and look wiry; the summer growth immediately takes its place. During the season of moulting, fever, more or less, is present. Horses become languid, the appetite is morbid; and the ability to work is much lessened. These symptoms seldom continue for more than a few days. Under good care, which comprises a change of diet, warm drinks and mashes with moderate work, horses come out all right in from fifteen to twenty days. If a horse on recovering his spirit and showing himself equal to his usual work grows a heavy coat of hair, the safest way is early in November to reduce its length one-half; then in the middle of January again pass the singeing lamp over the horse and reduce the growth to one-half its natural length. After the first singeing a stout woollen blanket should be put on the horse; then if the weather is severe in January, as it usually is, a light under-blanket should be added. But how are

horses generally clipped? The defenceless creatures are shorn close to their hides early or late as their senseless owners take the whim. Then they are either left to shiver and contract lung or throat diseases, or they are thrust into close, hot stables where there is no proper ventilation and blood poisoning ensues. Early in spring the horse-owner finds his horses complaining with cracked heels, chippy feet, sore eyes or troublesome coughs. He vows never again to have a horse of his clipped. It was not the taking off of the animal's winter growth of hair that produced these woes; it was the want of proper care afterwards that brought about these bad symptoms. When old horses are clipped and a good stable treatment is not observed, the animal may preserve his appearance of good health, that is, he may appear cheerful and work well up to his best form, but his coat will look rusty, feel harsh, and should anything go amiss danger will be close at hand.

When farmers decide to clip their horses, let them first provide due protection; at least one thin and one heavy blanket for stable wear, one water-proof quarter blanket and one water-proof chest protector. These covers can most profitably be made at home. Coarse unbleached cotton sheeting, if oiled and allowed to dry, then oiled again, will be water-proof. These can be readily cut to fit the individual horses for which they are needed; then lined with old blankets or even under the pressure of economy with old pieces of carpeting; the sole requisite is that the linings be of wool. A quarter-cloth should fit snugly and go over the harness pad with holes cut in it for the terrets, and when that obnoxious engine of cruelty, a check-rein, is used, room must be provided for the hook. When a quarter-cloth is placed under the back pad galled backs result, as the pressure is severe. All outside clothing should be fitted over the horses, as such protection is needed against rain, snow and sharp winds, so as not to superinduce increased perspiration. There are many of our farm horses whose lives could be made less irksome were they shorn of one-half of their winter's growth of hair, and then judiciously cared for.

Let no person suppose, however, that should he decide to clip his horses, there will then be no need to dry the weary beasts—thus his care will be less. Better let him bear in mind that a clipped horse stands in absolute need of greater care, and that the benefits to be obtained are an improved condition and better ability to endure fatigue, also a trimness of look pleasing to some. The head and ears of a horse require the most skilful manipulation, as very little hair should be removed; the legs from the knees down should also be most lightly treated. What is necessary is to wash off mud; then rub the legs, and especially the heels, very dry. A wet or very cold day is precisely the extreme of weather in which no careful groom will clip or singe a horse. A fine bright or (if wet to be waited for) a moderate and a dry day is the weather to select for the operation in which the horse's health and comfort are risked.

Manitoba Crop Bulletin.

THE crop Bulletin of the Manitoba Department of Agriculture has been issued. The returns bear date October 1. The average yield of wheat per acre for the province is now placed at 12.4 bushels, oats 16.8, barley 13.6, potatoes 119. The average yield of wheat per acre from 1883 to 1887 was 20.6. The present season is the most unfavourable as regards weather in the history of the province.

THE American Humane Association, at its annual meeting in Louisville, Kentucky, on September 27th, adopted resolutions requesting every State or Local Society in the Union to endeavor to obtain from its Legislature a law making it a penal offence to dehorn cattle, to dock the tails of horses, or to shoot pigeons and other birds from traps. Our Humane Societies should take similar action.



A Summary of News for the Past Month.

- 1st.—Destructive prairie fire ravages a large section of Minnesota.
- 2nd.—Between thirty and forty vessels wrecked and many lives lost by a cyclone on the coast of Campeachy, Mexico. . . . First day's session of the International American Congress, at Washington.
- 3rd.—The First National Guards of Connecticut visit Montreal. . . . Steamship *Geographique* of the French Boatswain line, sunk off St Pierre Miquelon by colliding with a barque while on a voyage from Montreal to Antwerp; four lives lost.
- 4th.—An entire block burned in Kincardine Ont, loss about \$20,000. . . . Diabolical plot to poison three clergymen and their families in St John, N.B. by gum drops containing strychnine sent them through the post; the wife of Rev Dr McCrae ate one of the gum drops and died in great agony.
- 5th.—Wm McDonald, clerk in a wholesale drug store, St John N.B. arrested on a charge of sending the poisoned candies to the families of the three clergymen. . . . Pierre selected as the capital of South Dakota.
- 6th.—Fall of snow to the depth of nearly six inches at Lookport N.Y.
- 7th.—Death of The O'Donoghue late M.P. for Tralee, Ireland. . . . Large number of shipwrecks and loss of life caused by a terrific gale along the coasts of Great Britain and Ireland.
- 8th.—Knights Templar parade in Washington, 20,000 men in line. . . . Mass meeting of citizens under the auspices of the Equal Rights Association held in Montreal.
- 9th.—Death of Mr Thomas Workman, one of Montreal's most prominent citizens.
- 10th.—The Bank of Toronto block, Barrie, Ont destroyed by fire, loss \$10,000. . . . Mass meeting of the Equal Rights Association, in Toronto.
- 11th.—The Czar of Russia visits Emperor William at Berlin. . . . Donald Morrison, the Megantic outlaw, sentenced to eighteen years imprisonment for killing the constable sent to arrest him. . . . Judge Olivier of Prescott county, while attending a banquet, in Ottawa taken suddenly ill and died within an hour.
- 12th.—Conspiracy discovered in Chicago to bribe the Cronin jury in the interests of the prisoners; several arrests made. . . . Village of Serpent River, Ont. destroyed by fire loss estimated at \$800,000.
- 13th.—The famous Brooklyn tabernacle, of which Rev. Dr. Talmage is pastor, destroyed by fire, loss \$250,000.
- 14th.—The Italian Government declare a protectorate over Abyssinia.
- 15th.—Death of Sir Daniel Gooch, the eminent English engineer. . . . A car on an inclined railway at Cincinnati rushes down to the bottom through the steel cable breaking, and is smashed into atoms; three passengers instantly killed and five seriously wounded.
- 16th.—Sixty miners lose their lives by an explosion in the Bentilee colliery, Langton, County Stafford, England. . . . About fifty persons injured through a collision between two passenger trains on the Burlington and Missouri River railway near Omaha, Neb.
- 17th.—Opening of the North-West Legislative Assembly at Regina. . . . Small-pox epidemic reported at Pelee Island, Lake Erie.
- 18th.—In the Dominion election for Richelieu, Que, Mr. Massue, the ministerial candidate, elected by 334 majority.
- 19th.—Death of the King of Portugal aged 51. . . . News received that 1200 persons lost their lives and 2000 houses washed away by a tidal wave in Japan on Sept. 11th.
- 20th.—Destructive fire in Ottawa, Ont. loss \$12,000. . . . Prairie fires in North Dakota entirely sweep away the village of Menoken, twelve miles from Bismarck.
- 21st.—Reported that owing to a terrible drought in Western Montana thousands of cattle on the ranches have starved to death. . . . The Canadian Atlantic cable project reported to have taken definite shape and that the laying of the line will be commenced shortly.
- 22nd.—Deaths of the Earl of Leven and Melville and of the Earl of Orkney. . . . Close of the Baptist convention at Ottawa. . . . Seven thousand deaths reported to have taken place during the past three months from cholera which is raging in the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates.
- 23rd.—Steamer *Quinte*, of Deseronto, Ont., burnt while nearing that port, and four lives lost.
- 24th.—One man killed, several people severely injured and much property damaged by an explosion of dynamite in St. Jean Baptiste street, Montreal. . . . Re-opening of the Parnell Commission.
- 25th.—Two men killed and two seriously injured at Salt-coats, N. W. T. by the boiler of a threshing machine bursting.
- 26th.—Destructive fire in Paisley, Ont., loss about \$50,000.
- 27th.—Marriage of Princess Sophie, sister of the Emperor of Germany, to the Duke of Sparta, eldest son of the King of Greece.
- 28th.—Miss Clara Huntington, daughter of the American railroad millionaire, married in London, England, to Prince Hatzfeldt, of Schonstein, Germany. . . . Death of Hon. Alexander Morris, Q.C. at his residence, Toronto.
- 29th.—Reported that the Prince of Wales is a victim to Brights Disease.
- 30th.—Reported that 20,000 families are destitute in North Dakota owing to crop failures.