



Anneville Beauty, 2nd prize Guernsey cow, Royal Show, 1905.

Our English Letter

London, Jan. 27, 1906.

Wet and wind have been the distinguishing features of the weather during the past month and a very large proportion of the land has been waterlogged and quite unfit for the resumption of arable work. It is now evident that January sowings will be very rare, while any hopes of increasing our remarkably small wheat area have almost disappeared. To the average present day Englishman, I regret to say, this does not matter a jot, in fact he does not give the matter a thought for all his bread, or nearly all of it, is manufactured from wheat grown in countries thousands of miles away. At present there is little to complain of, so far as arrears of work are concerned, but a change to dry and frosty weather would be welcomed as well as beneficial to the land itself.

A Dorsetshire correspondent sends me a note upon the season and crops in his vicinity. He says: "The new year brought with it the much needed rainfall but a change to dry frosts would be very welcome. Owing to the fine autumn, all farm work is fairly forward. I do not consider the wheat plant at all strong; it is very different to last year, when we had one of the best plants and best wheat crops for several years. The lambing season commenced with the year. We are having a fair amount of twins, but the last few weeks of rough weather has not improved the appearance of the ewes, but as yet no ill effects are apparent. Cattle have wintered well, milk selling rather than making goods, finds favor in this neighborhood, but I am sorry to say the price is very low and the railway accommodation not good. There is a firmer tendency in the corn trade, especially with oats, which is no doubt to be accounted for by the very light crop last season."

The country is just now in the throes of a general election and this has put a stopper on most business. Fortunately, it has come at a time when there is little work in the country, which needs the urgent attention and absence from home to record the vote, produces a minimum of trouble. Never, perhaps, in the history of politics has the country thrown itself more fervently into the spirit of electioneering. The one absorbing topic of the hour is politics, and you cannot get

away from it. The budding politicians at the schools take their various sides and fight or play Liberal or Conservative as occasion demands. The commercial traveller uses politics as a handle to get an order, farmers and dealers do business and strike bargains during the intervals of political discussions; and how long it takes a waggoner to do a journey depends very much on whether he meets with a fellow teamster on the way who has a mind to discuss politics.

CHEESE IMPORTS

A glance at our imports of agricultural produce gives food for serious thought. To take one week only, the figures show that we imported 21,301 cwt. more of cheese than in the corresponding period a year ago. On the other hand, the butter is 2,485 cwt. less. At first sight it would appear as if more butter was being made in this country, and I hope that such is the case, but this view is not strengthened by the fact that there was an increase in the importation of margarine of 4,322 cwt. This suggests that the taste for margarine is either increasing, or else through the shortage of work or other causes the buying community have to fall back on the cheaper article. The increased importation of cheese is appalling and more than once I have expressed regret that this time-honored industry is going out of the country. The milk trade has increased, but in the end is the milk seller better off than the cheese maker; whereas the former sends everything away by rail, the latter has in addition to his cheese, by-products which are extremely valuable on any farm.

SHEEP OR MUTTON FOR THE ENGLISH MARKETS

The importation of live sheep into the United Kingdom has shown a notable decline during the past year. The actual number imported was 183,084 head, or over 50 per cent. less than in 1904. This large falling off in supply is a matter of satisfaction alike to the sheep breeder and the consumer, to the former because he has had his unfair competition to face, for the whole of these sheep are sold not as imported mutton but as "home killed," and to the latter because he has bought and paid for at English prices 50 per cent. less mutton than he did in 1904, which came from be-

yond the seas. The lessened quantity of mutton imported as live sheep, estimated at nearly 100,000 cwt., was, however, more than made up by the large increase in the mutton supply for this was 309,000 cwt. in excess of the quantity imported during the same period.

The most striking feature in relation to the mutton supply during the past year was the enormous increase in the supply sent from Australia. In 1904 we received from the Commonwealth 324,389 cwt., but during the past year the supply from the same source mounted up to 988,000 cwt., or some 630,000 cwt. more than in the year 1904, that is to say, before the effects of the drought were fully felt. The New Zealand supplies were 6 per cent. less than in 1904, while from the Argentine the increase was only about 3 per cent. A notable and rapid increase is, however, apparent in the Argentine import trade of 1905 and 1906, the quantity in the former year being over double that sent away ten years earlier.

A NEW USE FOR TURKEYS

A curious piece of information has been sent to the "Manchester Guardian" by a correspondent who states that in the suburbs of Rome, Italy, there are two farms where antique medals are produced in large quantities. A farm seems an odd place for the work, but the curious and ingenious method employed explains it. Turkeys are made to swallow coins or medals roughly stuck with the effigy of Tiberius or Caligula and these coins after remaining for some time in the bodies of these fowls become coated with "verdigris." This result could, of course, be obtained just as easily and quicker by the use of acetic acid, or dilute hydro-chloric acid as is done in the case of other fakes, but the turkey serves a dual function. The chemical action of the gastric juice is supplemented by the mechanical action of the stones which get taken into the gizzard by which the hardness of the features on the coin is toned down and the figures are partially effaced.

One would like to know whether the inventor of the process was a farmer who turned counterfeiter or a counterfeiter who turned farmer?

ITEMS

Business is dull and depressed all round in Covent Garden, complaints are numerous of bad trade, but the salesman told me himself that since the Christmas season he has been losing money every day. Canadian apples are a thing of the past now, Australians have not yet come upon the market as they are about a month later than usual.

The cheese market is quiet and there is but little of interest to record; butter meets a steady business, but the general election has had a chastening influence upon trade.

The spring horse show begins in London at the end of next month, and already I hear that prospects are promising. A draft from the Short-horn herd of His Majesty the King is to be sold early in February and this well tend to give a fillip to affairs which are very quiet just now.

A.W.S.

New Creamery

A new creamery has just been established in Stamford Township, Ont., by Mr. R. W. Brown. He says: "I am R. W. Brown, graduate of the O.A.C. Dairy School at Guelph, has undertaken the management of the creamery."