

English Letter, No. 17.

[FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.]

Liverpool, Aug. 2.

The principal event here since my last letter has been the annual show of the Royal Agricultural Society, which was held July 10th to 16th, at Carlisle. At the opening everything was in its favor. A better site for a show ground could hardly have been found the world over—an extensive stretch of meadow occupying a bend of the River Eden, to the north-west of the town, close adjoining a railway siding to which no fewer than eight railway systems had direct access; a close wiry turf covering a sandy loam, in its turn overlying a thick bed of gravel which gave ready drainage; and a surrounding population which, if not so vast as that within easy reach of many other centres, is excelled by none in its devotion to the interests of agriculture. Again, the show itself, though considerably curtailed in extent owing to the practically prohibitive rates charged for space for non-agricultural exhibits, appeared to have gained in excellence what it had lost in extent; and in all departments, the live stock especially, there was a high, and in many classes, an exceptional degree of merit. But the Royal seems to have been inaugurated when the sun was under the influence of "the man that holds the watering pot," which, I suppose, is a free rendering of the classical "Aquarius," for the amount of patronage which that distinguished character bestows upon its shows is something quite phenomenal. At Liverpool, in 1877, the latter days of the show—that is, the popular days—were one continuous deluge; and some low lying parts of the show ground were almost drowned out. In 1878, at Bristol, there was a little improvement, though it was still very wet; and in 1879, at Kilburn, you know the dismal story. It was impossible, owing to the nature of the soil, that the Carlisle ground could ever become such a perfect slough of despond as that at Kilburn, but, alas, so far as actual comfort went, there was little to choose. Saturday, the implement day, and Monday, the first full day, up to about 3 p.m., were all that could be desired; but on Monday afternoon a long and heavy shower inaugurated a spell of wet which for weight and duration is not often equalled even in an English summer. The most provoking part of the business was that this spell of rain came with a high and rising barometer, and was only local in its character, the midland and southern counties being troubled with only a few light showers. It rained heavily throughout Tuesday, but the hardy northerners are indifferent to rain, much or little, and some 10,000 of them during that day began to convert the fair green sward into a brown ooze. During Tuesday night the rain fell very heavily, so much indeed that the Eden, and a small tributary which runs direct through the centre of the show ground, became bank full, and at one time it was feared that the whole ground would be inundated, and arrangements were made for a general exodus. Happily this fear was not realized; but the backing up of the water in the drains would not allow the surface water to pass off, and in the course of Wednesday another 12,000 pairs of feet converted every avenue and pathway into puddles. The ground was, however, of a light sandy nature, and did not make the havoc with the ladies' dresses that the clay of Kilburn did. Hundreds of tons of planks, ashes, sawdust and straw were laid down along the principal avenues; but when Thursday came, and with it for some hours heavier rain than ever, mingled with the tramp of nearly 50,000 people, everything in the nature of pathway disappeared in one brown chaos, and it really required an effort of will to face a journey round the show. The ladies, how-

ever, were conspicuous for their bravery; and many a fair dame who under any other conceivable conditions would have shuddered at a shower, was seen plunging boldly through depths unknown, and facing perils undreamt of before. I have thus endeavored once more to picture an English show yard in our summer month. How do you like the picture? Has Manitoba aught to surpass it?

And now to business. I don't suppose you care for any very elaborate analysis of the merits of either stock or implements. It will probably suffice to say that the horses were conspicuous for their excellence in almost every class, the hunters and ponies being especially admired, as also the Clydesdales in the heavier classes. In horned cattle there was great variety and a generally high average of excellence, dairy cows being about the weakest in the show. Sheep, notwithstanding the rot which has created so much havoc of late, were both numerous and good. Shropshire Downs were a large and excellent class. Pigs were without exception the best show ever seen in this country. The Earl of Ellesmere carried away the honors in almost every class. The implements included several new inventions, including a patent steam digger, which is designed to dig 20 feet broad at once, and to do excellent spade work. It acquitted itself sufficiently well to earn a silver medal; but as it is very massive, and is priced (at present) at \$5,000, it is not likely to come into very general use just yet. The Oshawa Manufacturing Company had an excellent show of their lighter farm implements, and Mr. Brown, of Ingersoll, Ontario, through his agent, Mr. Wm. Glassey, of Liverpool, exhibited specimens of shafts for agricultural machinery, and I understand that he is opening out a very good connection. Buyers for Canadian horses were moving freely amongst the live stock classes, and I hear that a number of valuable purchases were made, especially of Clydesdale stallions, and Cotswolds, Shropshire Downs and other classes of sheep. So high a sum as 50 guineas was paid for a Shropshire Down, and 350 guineas for a Clydesdale stallion, both for Canada. Amongst the largest purchasers that I heard of for Canadian principals were Mr. Simon Beattie, of Annan, Scotland; Mr. Jeffery, of Whitley, Ontario; Messrs. Hendrie & Douglas, Jackson & Son, of Brampton, Ontario; Messrs. James Main & Co., Trafalgar, Ontario; W. Ross, of Hamilton, Ontario, etc., etc.

I was particularly struck with the great interest which the unpretending little exhibition of the Canadian Government—which was under the direction of Mr. Dyke, the Liverpool agent, and under the immediate superintendence of Mr. Graham, the Carlisle agent—excited throughout the show. Every time I went near it—and it was most accessibly placed, just in the centre of the show ground—I found it thronged with visitors, who carefully inspected the specimens of Dominion products, prominent amongst them being those of Ontario, and readily accepted the literature which was placed at their disposal. The moderate sum which this valuable little exhibition cost could scarcely have been spent to more advantage in making known to the farming classes of the north of England and the south of Scotland the resources and attractions of your great country.

Owing to the almost incessant rains of July and part of June, the hay harvest has been anything but satisfactory, and in the north is not yet completed. According to all accounts, however, the corn has suffered very little, and potatoes and root crops generally look well. As I write the weather inclines to be more settled, and a week without rain will work wonders.

Great efforts are being made to induce the Government to relax the restrictions which are now

placed on the importation of foreign cattle. I observe that a deputation waited recently on Earl Spencer on the subject; and one mathematical gentleman said that whilst the cattle plague outbreak in 1865-6 cost this country only £8,000,000, the restrictions on the import of foreign cattle were costing us £16,000,000 a year, and therefore, he argued, all restrictions should be abolished. I was glad to see, however, that little hope of any immediate relaxation was held out. I should much like to know how the sixteen millions was arrived at. I fancy I could plead what the lawyers call a "set-off" big enough to swallow the sixteen millions and leave something to spare. I know this at least—I live in Cheshire, and though the cattle plague is now a thing of 15 years ago, I have still to pay a cattle-plague rate which is no small addition to my annual burthens.

With respect to the Canadian cattle, it is greatly to be desired that some system of regulating shipments should be inaugurated. At present there is some weeks a glut, and consequent smart fall in prices; whilst other weeks scarcely any arrive, and there is a wholly deceptive rise in prices. A few dollars spent in telegrams on some comprehensive system by which the whole trade could benefit by them, would be money well spent. Regularity is a virtue to be aimed at in all trades, and especially in such an one as this.

Very few horses are now arriving from your side; in fact the export trade from the States may be said to have ceased, and Dahlman, of New York, has withdrawn several of his agents from this side.

The Democrat Wheat.

During the Western Fair held in this city last year a stout, intelligent German, named Naff, from Ohio, U.S., called at our office. During the talk regarding exhibitions the conversation turned to the crops, then to wheat. He informed us that in his locality they had a wheat that surpassed any other variety in hardiness, in yield, in early maturity and in the quality of its flour. He kindly consented to send us a little for trial. We had a little sown in several localities, and the results have been most satisfactory, so much so that we felt satisfied the wheat would be of great advantage to us, and deemed it proper to go and ascertain all we could regarding it, as we did not know the wheat, neither did any of the farmers or seedsmen. We found Mr. Naff's account to be correct regarding the superiority of the wheat, its yield, etc. His account of the origin of the wheat was as follows: A few heads were first discovered by a person named Smith, who resided in Pennsylvania, U.S.; they were growing in a field of Mediterranean wheat. Mr. Smith propagated from the heads for several years. Its superiority became known, and it was eagerly sought after. Mr. S. being a strong Democrat, they named it the "Democrat Wheat." It is a light amber, nearly a white wheat, is bearded and looks very much like the Treadwell, but it is claimed to be superior in quality, hardiness, and earlier in maturing. W. Rennie, seedsman, of Toronto, Ont., thought it partook more of the nature of the Mediterranean, but it is much whiter in color than that variety. There will be a much better test made this year, as the only lot brought in last year came by mail. This year a few hundred bushels will be imported, and if it answers as well as it has done this year, there will be a demand for it next year.

The grain crops in several parts of Russia have been almost ruined by immense swarms of insects.