

STOCK.

How Easy for Farmers!

Sir,—Said a cattle nealer to me yesterday: "I am searching for a cross-bred dairy Shorthorn cow for a customer. I know exactly the type of cow he wants. He is willing to pay from £30 to £50, but, although I have travelled miles in search, I have hitherto been unsuccessful." "Why not try the pedigree herds?" I asked, and mentioned several where he could find what he wanted. "Yes, I know that, but it would not be a one and two ciphers that would buy the cow there."

And yet how easy the pedigree breeders have made it for the tenant farmers to breed the class of cattle referred to above, so that in place of a few in each parish, they should be general on each farm. They are just as easy to breed, cost less to keep, and return infinitely more money than the poor specimens which now form the majority on most farms. From the farthest parts of the globe customers come to us, and take back with them, at heavy cost of purchase and carriage, the male animals necessary for improvement, whilst some of our own farmers will not pick them up at their very doors, but keep on using mongrel bulls of the moderate type. These pedigree bulls from milking parents with good fleshing properties can be actually purchased at a price to return a profit "in addition to their services," for after being used so long as kinship will admit they can be sold to the butcher at an increase on the original purchase price, whilst the service fees from neighbors' cattle will pay the bull's keep. Again, the foreigners who come to us for males have a much more difficult task than have our farmers in the inferior class of their cows, requiring years to bring them up to excellence, whilst our farmers have rich material at hand, both male and female, and all that is required on their part is simply judgment to blend the materials. With such advantages at the doors of our farmers, foreign visitors will naturally expect to see the highest types of live stock on all our farms, but they don't always find them, as is proved by the confession which opens my letter. Surely this must be another addition to the old axiom that the easier and cheaper the means to an end the less they are valued. With the facilities now at the door of every British farmer, there is no reason why there should be a middling beast on any of our farms, yet there are to-day hundreds and thousands of farms on which you find animals that are a disgrace to the twentieth century, and in the hands, too, of men who own snug bank balances, men who by the exercise of judgment, and without dipping into those balances, might quadruple the value of their live stock. Whence, then, the apathy to improvement at a time when, grain-growing being no longer profitable, our very agricultural life and prosperity depend upon our live stock? It has been said to be a characteristic of the Briton that he is ill at ease under prosperity, and that all his best points come to the top in adversity.

Has improvement in cattle-breeding been made too easy? If so, it is more than probable that if those of our farmer who have not already done so, as many have done, do not throw off their carelessness in this respect, the days of adversity are not far distant, the days when foreign flesh meat will be equal in quality to our best, and, as a consequence, prices for such will fall to the same level. Then, and then only, will those British farmers who have neglected live-stock breeding have to prove their grit under adversity, in the effort to win back the lost superiority.

But how much easier would it be to retain it, and go on with the work of improvement in place of sleeping at our posts.

In the present position of British live stock, the greatest improvement must come through the males, and well it is for the nation that we have these in superabundance and cheap. The duty of every farmer, to himself and to the nation, is thus clear—not a few farmers here and there, but every farmer in the United Kingdom—to bring in to active operation such skill and judgment in the selection and mating of his male animals that every year will show progressive improvement in his females. The duty is the more imperative, seeing that not only our prosperity as a nation, but our very existence as individuals, is threatened, and both can only be retained by our farmers keeping in the forefront of their foreign competitors in the breeding of the best animals and the production of the best flesh meat. Why wait until we are overwhelmed ere we begin the universal improvement? The effort will have to be made, and a start in a race is much more favorable to the one in front than from behind scratch.

This is a matter of such national importance that it should be rubbed in by the Board of Agriculture, by chambers of agriculture, by farmers' clubs and societies, at agricultural show luncheons and, in fact, wherever farmers congregate. We are under a cloud in respect to one description of horse breeding, but it would be a much greater calamity if the same happened as regards our cattle breeding.—[Samson, in Live-stock Journal.

Our Scottish Letter.

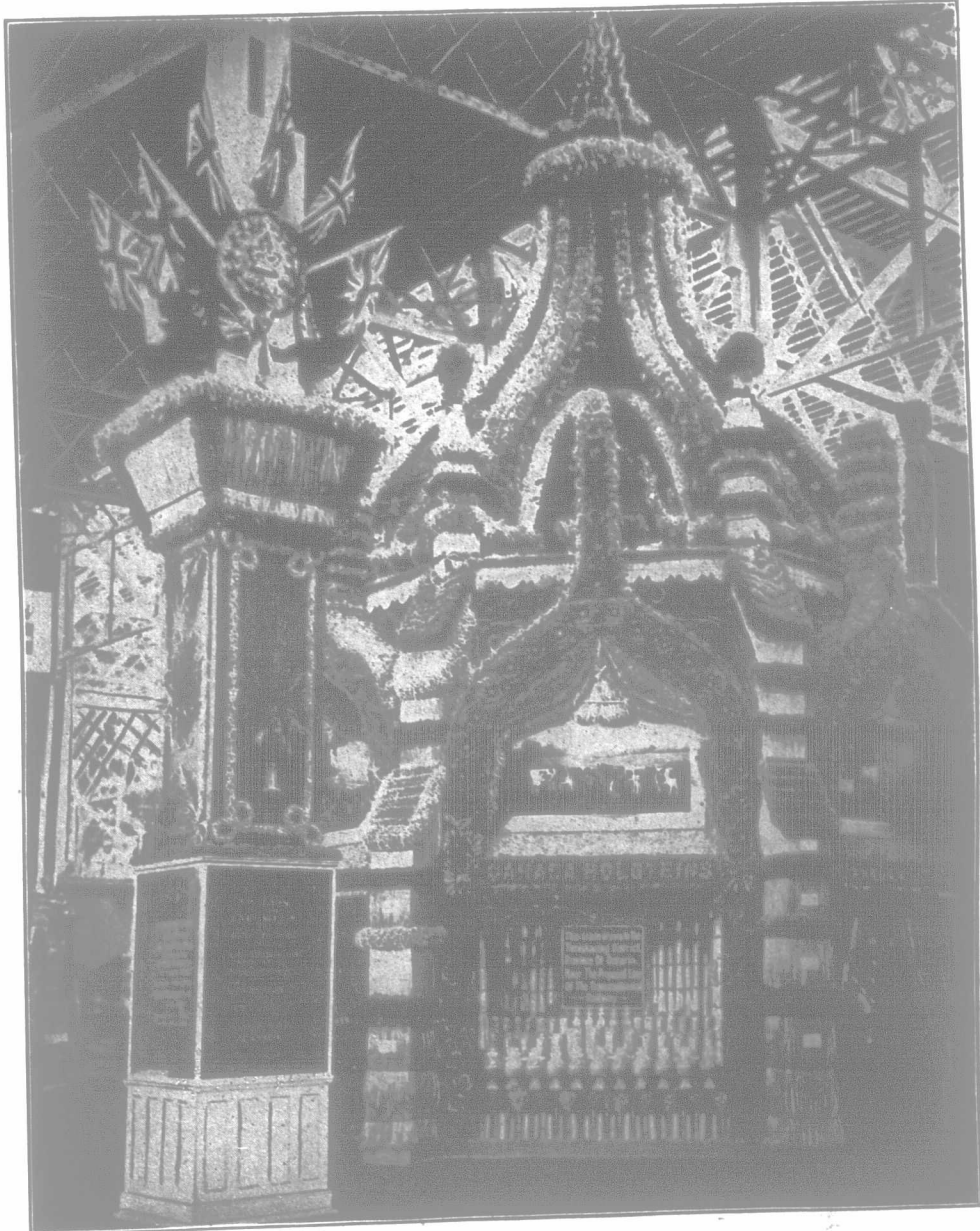
The chief topic of interest for stock breeders here at the moment, is the report of the extraordinary sale of Mr. Bell's Shorthorns at Cabana del Rincon, in South America. Mr. Bell is a Liverpool gentleman, and the manager of his estancia is Mr. James McCulloch, a native of the parish of Glenluce, Wigtownshire. Naturally we feel proud of our fellow-countryman, as it is long since such a sale was recorded. It lasted over two days, and something like £50,000 worth of stock was passed through hands in that time. The Scots-bred bull, Newton Stone, from Aberdeenshire, made £2,625, or as nearly as may be, \$13,125. This, as a calf, was one of the best animals ever bred in Aberdeenshire. His breeder, Mr. A. M. Gordon, has a notable herd. Another British-bred bull, Baron Gainford, made £1,375, which may be converted into dollars by multiplying by five. Fifty-two cows made an average of £129, twenty-six calves an average of £112, and twenty-four heifers an average of £100. The boom in Shorthorns is holding out in Argentina better than some anticipated. Still it must be borne in mind that prices for commercial cattle there are receding, and the pedigree market is very sensitive to a fact of this kind. An interesting enquiry is at present being held concerning the prevalence of tuberculosis in stock. There

likely that the bill in question will become law. Its effect would be to paralyze efforts to control the ravages of this dread disease.

Principal McFadyen has expressed the opinion that after all abortion may be the worst disease with which stockowners in this country have to contend. No doubt there is truth in the statement. The extent to which this disease prevails is only being realized. It is becoming evident that many cows which come in season at the ninth week may have really aborted, and there is a growing conviction that the disease may be due to a germ. The puzzle is to know how it is contagious, and by what media it passes from one of its victims to another. The Board of Agriculture is being pressed to deal with the subject, and Lord Onslow has promised to do so as soon as he gets some of the other enquiries out of the way. His Lordship rightly observes that investigation will be much more useful than the taking of evidence. The facts about abortion are pretty well known. What is wanted is a working explanation of the facts. The distribution of cattle which have aborted must be a fruitful source of spreading the disease. Frequently the occult reason for the dispersion of a herd is the prevalence of abortion. One of the proposals before the Board of Agriculture is that outbreaks should be notified. As a counsel of perfection this is admirable, but nothing more need be said about it. How is it possible to enforce notification of so insidious a disease?

Denmark of late has been attracting unusual attention here. A large number of prominent agriculturists have just returned from a ten-days' tour through the land. The exact object of their visit has not transpired. It is generally supposed to be part of a Chamberlain-check-mating movement. Certainly Denmark is an object lesson in the success of a policy of open ports for foodstuffs for man and beast. Denmark saw that she could never compete with the great western continent in the production of food or beef. She therefore resolved to intensify her agriculture, to carry a large herd of dairy cattle, import food from abroad, and manufacture, all the dairy produce possible. In this aim she has wonderfully succeeded. In 1875 the exports from Denmark amounted in value to £5,162,000; in 1887 they had fallen to £5,012,000; but in 1902 they were £16,100,000. Sweden began relatively even, but Sweden adopted a protective policy, putting a duty on foreign foodstuffs. Result: Swedish exports in 1875, £1,382,000; in 1887, £1,748,000; in 1902, nil. By an expenditure of about £3,800,000 on maize and other foods for man and beast, Denmark, in 1902 produced dairy manufactures, which she exported, to the value of £16,100,000. She gave employment in agriculture to the great mass of her population, and to many thousands of Germans as well. They find Denmark a better country to live in than their own. She exported 23,016 horses in the same year, and of that large number, in spite of a protective tariff, Germany took over 21,000. The value of land in Denmark has, under this enlightened policy, risen from £16,150,000 in 1875, to 23,220,000 in 1902. The deposits in her savings banks amounted in 1862 to four millions; in 1901 they stood at over thirty-seven millions. It is obvious that open ports for foodstuffs is a policy which suits Denmark.

Sir Walter Gilbey is one of the most eager devotees of horse-breeding in this country. He has done his level best to make the industry popular, but he is now pessimistic. He is sorry so much is said about the prevalence of disease in this country. Glanders is, unfortunately, very prevalent in the city of London, but there is very little equine disease in the country at large. There is abundant room for improvement in the quality of harness horses here, and it is a strange thing that the business of rearing such animals does not pay better than it does here. The high value of land must have something to do with the price of horses; possibly, also, the high price of living, and



Central Figure, Canadian Agricultural Exhibit, World's Fair, St. Louis.