

English Letter, No. 16.

[FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.]

Liverpool, July 5.

I have just returned from a few days' ramble in the Midlands, and I must say I have never seen the farmers in better heart. No doubt this is to some extent the natural reaction from the depression of the last few years. Their jubilation, however, is certainly justified by the appearance of things. The crops are all in brilliant promise. The rains of the early part of June and the subsequently timely showers have given the grass a body and a heart which promises an abundant crop of excellent hay. The same moisture has placed all the grain crops beyond fear of drought, and they are everywhere looking superb. The rain also came in the nick of time to save the turnips from the fly, and to give peas, beans and all garden crops a substantial turn for the better. The reports about the fruit crops are contradictory; but from what I saw, I should say there will be a good market for all you will have to spare. The very cold and excessively dry flowering and setting time was not favorable for fruits of any kind, and generally they will be thin.

Another cause why the English farmers smile again is the evident disposition of the new Government to help them. My farming friends in the Midlands are in a strictly preserved district, and they complain bitterly of the depredations of hares and rabbits, which are as plentiful as blackberries. There seems to be some doubt about how the Act giving farmers an equal right with their landlords in the four-footed game will work; but it is clear that if landlords are to preserve to themselves and friends the right of killing hares and rabbits, they will have to pay their tenants a substantial consideration. The malt tax abolition will enable farmers to malt their inferior barley for feeding purposes, and to very many this will be a substantial gain. One of my first professional experiences—more years ago than I care to reckon up—was the attending meetings of farmers to agitate for the repeal of the malt tax. If the benefit the repeal does them is at all proportionate to the trouble they have had in getting it, their gain will be substantial.

It is a somewhat singular commentary on the trade depression in this country that the bankrupt returns for the past half-year show that failures are only about half, in proportion, to what they were last year, and very few farmers figure in the list. There seems to be a general impression amongst Canadians and Americans that the old country is getting used up. It would be well for them to remember that she will take a great deal of using up, and that she has resources and reserves of wealth which place her far away from that verge of prostration and starvation which so many people on the other side of the Atlantic seem to think is her immediate fate.

I notice that several of your prominent cattle importers are here, noticeable among them being Messrs. Wisser, of Prescott, and Walker, of Windsor, Ontario. The latter gentleman, I understand, is busy seeing what can be done here to improve the market for Canadian malt and barley. It may be remarked that Messrs. Walker, who do their cattle shipping business direct through Messrs. George Roddick and J. Gibbons, cattle salesmen, of this town, have studied thoroughly the kind and condition of cattle required in this market, and, as a result, their consignments always meet a ready sale and good prices.

A few lots of Canadian horses have arrived here, but the majority of these have been despatched to Paris; and I understand that a contract has been made to deliver from 12 to 20 first-class Canadian

carriage horses in Paris, weekly, during the season.

A number of tenant farmers' delegates, including Mr. Booth, the celebrated Short-horn breeder, leave this port on the 22nd of this month for a tour through the Dominion. I learn that several of the delegates who went forward last year have purchased large tracts of land in Manitoba; and Messrs. Cowan and Gordon, in particular, accompanied by their wives, will pay a visit to the Prairie Province during the autumn.

I intend spending a few days at the Royal Agricultural Show at Carlisle, which opens on the 10th inst., and I shall keep a weather eye open for anything that may be of interest for your readers. At any rate, I hope to find material for both a longer and more interesting letter next month. The Dominion, I understand, is to be represented by an exhibit of products forwarded by Mr. J. R. Craig, Secretary of the Ontario Agricultural Association, and also of grain, grasses, soil, &c., &c., from Manitoba. Provision will also be made for a liberal distribution of printed matter relating to the Dominion and its resources. Too much cannot be done in this way; for your competitors over the boundary spare no efforts. During my late trip to the Midlands, I found people busy distributing pamphlets and cards relating to States lands in the markets and other places where farmers most do congregate.

Bad State of Affairs in Kansas.

A Kansas correspondent of the Chicago Inter-Ocean says there will not be half a crop of small grain in that State, while much of the corn moulded in the ground, as there was not moisture enough to sprout it. On the 5th inst., the thermometer ranged from 102° to 107° in the shade, and the hot wind from the south, which lasted over five hours, burnt the top blades of all the corn to a crisp. Grasshoppers, potato beetles and chinch bugs swarm all over the State. The correspondent adds:—

"I was in Orleans, and saw over thirty teams with families going east, to find some place where they could get something for themselves and their stock to eat. They were the saddest looking lot of human beings that I ever saw, and had the poorest lot of horses. My heart ached for these poor women and children. Many of them, no doubt, left comfortable homes to come into this railroad and land-shark gloriously reported paradise—the last place on earth for a man to go and make a living by agriculture. They have spent their hard-earned money, and now return worse than paupers, for starvation has made its mark on many of them.

The above extract we think well deserving a space. From personal observation in Kansas and in many of the other too highly lauded localities that agents and deceivers advertise in printed and colored pamphlets, we would advise our readers to remain on their farms in Canada. Thousands have regretted the change, and thousands of Canadians have died from starvation, from disease and from broken spirits. Many have committed suicide when they have found their means of existence deceitfully taken from them. Do not be too hasty to leave the fine, healthy, productive soils of Canada, where you can at all times, and in all places, procure good water, a meal and a fire.

SALT THE OLD PASTURES.—A few years since I had an old pasture that had almost run out, covered with weeds and patched with moss. I mixed a few barrels of salt and wood ashes, and applied about two barrels of the mixture per acre, covering about half the lot. The result surprised me. Before fall the moss had nearly all disappeared, and the weeds were rapidly following suit, while the grass came in thick, assuming a dark green color, and made fine pasturage. The balance of the lot remained unproductive as before, but the following year was salted with like results.—[Ex.

Manuring Fruit Trees.

Many of the orchards through the country present a very unthrifty appearance, especially the older ones. In many cases the trees are infested with bark lice, and have the appearance of not being trimmed in any way for some time. This certainly is very unprofitable, especially where the land is valuable. The trees will not bear to any extent, and what little they do produce is of a very poor quality. Fruit trees, like everything else, are more or less profitable according to their treatment. To show the truth of this we give the experience of a farmer who writes to the Elmira Farmers' Club as follows:

"For the past twelve years my orchard has been pastured with sheep, and it has been their habit to resort to one place during the hot weather. The trees which the sheep have lain under and given more than their share of manure, have invariably borne good crops. It is evident that some trees are too highly manured, as the fruit rots and the foliage is too rank. Trees of 20 years' growth, where the sheep have lain, average 4 barrels, and those not manured 1 barrel; but there are some kinds, as the Twenty-oz. Newton Pippin and russets, that bear better without manure than any others. I think that the King, Baldwin and Holland Pippins require more feed than some others."

The members of the Club agreed with the following comments:

"I have practised manuring my orchard with barn-yard manure two years in succession, and then in the succeeding year I have applied lime and ashes. There may be better treatment, but I have found good results from this. I get good fruit, and at least fair crops."

"Liberal application of manure shows surprisingly in the improvement of old orchards. I have tried it, spreading the manure under the trees over a space as broad as the top cover, and the fruit has improved materially. It will do no hurt to spread manure all over the land, but it is important that it should be applied as far from the trunk as the roots extend, and that will certainly be as far as the branches reach."

"If we were restricted to any one kind of fertilizer for orchards, we would use unleached ashes. Whatever kind of manure is good to enrich land is good for trees, and if they are old enough to bear freely, it will increase their yield."

Authorities on the subject generally consider it a bad plan to allow an orchard to continue in grass for any lengthened period of time. No stock, with the exception of hogs, should be allowed to run in an orchard when in fruit. We have repeatedly lost sheep from this cause, as after a heavy wind or any cause which would shake the apples to the ground, they will eat too many, which will frequently prove fatal. A better plan is to pick up all valueless windfalls, etc., and feed in proper quantities to stock. To be profitable and handsome, as much careful attention must be given to an orchard as to any other portion of the farm.

The advantages arising from mulching fruit trees have been so often told that they need hardly be told again. It is generally known that fruit trees do not like the earth around them to become too hot, and that mulching, which is the placing of some material around the base of the tree, keeps the roots cool. A correspondent of the American Cultivator gives a remarkable instance of the benefits of mulching. He says, upon a dry and rocky hillside, in the town of Shrewsbury, Mass., stood an orchard. The trees were old and had not given a good crop of apples for several years. The owner having a large quantity of swale hay, drew it from the field and placed it around the trees to the depth of twelve inches, covering the whole ground occupied by the trees, omitting every alternate row. This was done in the month of July. The next year every tree, where the mulch was applied, was loaded with large and fair apples, while the trees had made a great growth of wood, and the leaves had a beautiful green and spring-like appearance, while those without the mulch bore no fruit at all. The varieties were the same.