

**English Letter, No. 2.**

[FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.]

Liverpool, May 10, 1879.

As the weeks pass on the gloom and despondency affecting all branches of trade in this country seem to increase and intensify. The farmers, as a class, are proverbially grumblers. It is always too wet or too dry—too hot or too cold, and crops too heavy or too light. But there can be no question that now they are suffering severely. With the burdens that they have to bear, it seems utterly hopeless for them to attempt to compete in the open market with their trans-Atlantic rivals, and unless the people of this country are content to see its agricultural interests utterly ruined, some radical change in our trade policy will have to be effected. The party in favor of a system of reciprocity is growing in numbers and weight, notwithstanding that the other night in the House of Lords a motion in its favor was negatived without a division. It seems more probable, however, that should our authorities realize the necessity of a change, it will take the form of a commercial federation with the colonies. At present the colonies have no advantage afforded them in our markets; and we cannot expect them to give us any advantage in theirs. But, if we were prepared to admit Canadian products of all kinds, for example, free into our markets, whilst we inflicted an import duty of say 20 per cent. on all foreign supplies, there can be little doubt that the Dominion would gladly afford equal advantages to our manufactures. Our devotees of Free Trade fondly imagine that we have only to stick to it long enough, and all the rest of the world will come to our way of thinking. This is hardly to be expected when the United States, for instance, reap all the advantages of a free market with us, and are allowed to protect their own industries as they choose. It is easy to imagine what a stampede a 20 per cent. handicap in favor of Canada would create throughout the States. It is, however, only what they richly deserve, and moreover, a little castigation which, in my humble opinion, it would pay British interests all round enormously well to inflict. It would substantially benefit Canada, so often described as our most loyal and flourishing colony; it would be a concession to farming interests at home; it would be in some degree a source of revenue; and it would not perceptibly increase the cost of food to the consumer. The fact is that the working classes here are now less able to pay 4d. a pound for bacon or cheese, than they were to pay double the money five years ago; and anything which tended to open markets for our manufactures, and so increase work and wages, would amply compensate them for any slight addition they might have to pay for their food. Depend upon it that, unless a change comes, and that speedily, the days of that Free Trade which is Free Trade on one side of the bargain only, are numbered.

A few days ago I visited the landings and arrangements for slaughtering cattle landed from New York and Boston, which, since the United States has been scheduled as an infected country, must be kept in strict quarantine and slaughtered within ten days of their being landed. The system is now in full operation at the Wallasey Dock, Birkenhead; further facilities are in course of preparation both at Birkenhead and at the Huskisson Dock on the Liverpool side. At Wallasey Dock there is now accommodation for 1,000 head, and these can be slaughtered at the rate of 80 to 100 head per diem. It is doubtful, however, whether even the extended accommodation, when the whole is completed, will be adequate to the demands of the trade during its height in the hot months, when the dead meat trade falls off. As

many as 3,000 head arrived in one week—equal to 4,500 in ten days—last year; and the numbers are likely to increase rather than to fall off. It is hard to see, therefore, how, even with slaughtering facilities double what they are at present, the animals can be disposed of as fast as they arrive. The ten days' limit has already played considerably into the hands of the speculators and wholesale butchers here, and to the loss of the importers. There are only a few men who can buy for cash as many as 200 to 300 head of cattle at a time, and these men, having put their heads and purses together, are enabled to get whole cargoes at pretty much their own price. Seeing that much of the meat which is bought at 5½d. to 6d. a pound in bulk, is sold retail in the London and other markets at 8d. to 1s. per pound, and seeing also that the offal pays all expenses, the middlemen are clearing heavy profits, and if there comes a glut in the supply, these men may have it still more their own way.

Canadian cattle have, of course, a great advantage in being allowed to be sent into the country alive; and this advantage will be manifestly greater should the anticipated glut be realised, because, in place of being compulsorily slaughtered within ten days of landing, they may be kept an indefinite time to await a better market.

The Spring Show of the Royal Dublin Agricultural Society has just been held. There was a fair sale for the better classes of young bulls, but at a reduction of 30 per cent. at least from the prices of previous years. For inferior animals there was no demand.

A consular report has just been published which shows that the districts in Southern Russia—from which the Mennonites hail—are not in a flourishing condition, owing, amongst other causes, to a succession of bad seasons. This appears to be more particularly the case in the District of Odessa. It appears that land there is rented at 12 to 50 cents the acre, but the taxes fall very heavily on the peasant cultivators. In some parts of the country the condition of the peasantry is stated to be so reduced that many families have not clothing sufficient for all their members, and therefore wear their garments by turns.

Much excitement was caused a few days ago in Tonnin, one of the German ports, by the arrival of the steamer Schleswig with a third consignment of lean store stock from Canada. This consisted of about 500 oxen and 390 pigs. The journals are unanimous as to the excellent condition of the stock and the remunerative nature of the undertaking. These cattle are intended for the grazing districts of Schleswig-Holstein.

At the last live-stock market at La Villette, Paris, there were 107 beasts on offer from Germany and 32 from Italy. Germany also sent 10,170 sheep to this market.

There is stated to be a marked improvement in the class of emigrants now proceeding to the Dominion, the majority of them being possessed of some means. I see it announced that Mr. Donald Shearer of London, Eng., a native of the North of Scotland, has just bought an extensive estate in Canada said to be worth £80,000.

The annual show of cart-horses took place here on the 1st instant. The streets, with the gaily caparisoned horses in long processions, neatly attired drivers, newly painted carts full of boys and girls, and crowds of sightseers, had all the appearance of a carnival. Probably no town in the world has such a magnificent display of heavy horseflesh as Liverpool. Many of the animals were real pictures. A few Canadians figured in the ranks, notably a chesnut (owned I believe by the Liverpool Corporation) which was bred in the neighborhood of Ancaster, Ont. Many of the ani-

mals were worth over £100, and some few could not have been bought for less than £150. It may, therefore, be a question with some of the Ontario farmers whether it would not pay them to breed this class of horses for the heavy work in the British and other commercial centres. These animals are always in active demand at high figures. A span of draught horses was, I understand, recently purchased here for shipment to a mercantile firm in Boston, the price paid being over \$1,000.

Several important shipments of pedigree stock have recently gone forward to Canada, the particulars of which you have no doubt already received. I am informed that other lots of Short-horns, horses, sheep and pigs, purchased in all parts of these islands from the leading stock-raisers, are to go forward the next few weeks. The furor of buyers seems to be turned mainly towards Herefords, not only for Canada but for the States. A stock-raiser from Nevada was making arrangements for the purchase and shipment of 50 of the best Hereford bulls in the country when his operations were cut short by the order of the U. S. Government prohibiting the entry of live-stock from Great Britain into the Union.

As showing the effect of the Canadian and American meat and live-stock imports on our markets, I may state that last Monday at Newcastle-on-Tyne prices receded six cents a stone for meat; at Nottingham the market ruled slow and at declined prices; less money had to be taken at Edinburgh, and a clearance could not be effected; at Birmingham the beef trade was very quiet; at Bristol trade was slow; and at London, the greatest market of all, though the supply of beasts was much shorter than the week before, the market was the worst that has been known for many years. It is anticipated, by those who are in a position to know, that very little improvement can be hoped for until the stocks which were held over last winter, in the hope of an advance in prices, have passed off; and this will of course depend upon the extent to which supplies come in from other sources, though it is expected it will have been effected by the middle of June.

Complaints are very rife in Liverpool as to the inferior quality of Canadian butter now arriving here. Dealers state that they are tired of meeting with losses on these consignments, and are determined to take such steps as will secure them from similar losses to those experienced during the past two or three years on the "grease" which has been shipped from Canada. It is a pity that the efforts of your valuable journal in warning Canadian farmers of the danger which threatens their export butter trade through the slovenly way they have of preparing the article for this country have proved futile. Perhaps the steps about to be taken by the importers to protect themselves will have a better effect.

Much loss has no doubt arisen through there not being proper places of storage for good Canadian butter on its arrival here, so that in hot weather it has gone soft. Mr. W. J. Stevenson of the Canadian Agency, Victoria-st., Liverpool, has established a very elaborate system of refrigerating chambers for the reception of butter and other perishable goods. They are rapidly approaching completion, and as they are the first enterprise of the kind—that is, letting cold storage for hire—which has been started in this country, I hope to be able to send you in my next letter a description of the place in full operation.

It is said that the wheat crop in England has been more than doubled since attention has been generally given to underdraining.