

## English Letter, No. 22.

[FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.]

Liverpool January 4th.

My first and most pleasant duty is to wish you and all your readers a truly happy, and really prosperous new year; and I do so most heartily.

Here, at any rate, the new year is full of troubles, and fears of troubles to come. Commercially, there is a much healthier feeling than I have noticed for a long time past. When people, and commercial people especially, begin to talk with hope and confidence of a good time coming, the battle is more than half won; for they themselves are in the right mind for enterprise, which is the parent of success. People are so talking now, and freely: *ergo*, the good time is coming. In other respects, however, the lookout is not a pleasant one. The Irish trouble seems chronic; and if the present government succeed in curing it, they will be among the cleverest political doctors in history. Let us only hope that the process of cure will not involve any of the old-fashioned remedy known as blood-letting.

The Zulu war has been succeeded by a still more formidable trouble in the Transvaal; and the feeling here is that, unless the difficulty is handled with great delicacy, we shall have the whole of the South African tribes in revolt, aided by the Dutch Boers, who have already proved themselves formidable foes. The worst of it is that they seem rather to have justice on their side. Parliament meets this week, and a very brisk political season is anticipated.

But now to matters more immediately interesting to your readers. Scarcely one of them, I should imagine, has failed to hear of Mr. J. J. Mechi, of Tiptree Hall, Essex, who for many years has occupied a first rank among scientific agriculturists. Poor fellow, he has come to a sad ending. About twenty years ago he lost £30,000 by a bank failure; but was just pulling himself together again nicely, when the advent of co-operative societies, &c., &c., sapped his business in London, and compelled him some weeks ago, when at the age of 79, and in ill health, to place his affairs in the hands of his creditors. He did not long survive this sharp reverse, but died a few days before Christmas. He declared in a circular addressed to his creditors that his agricultural experiments in no way contributed to his failure, having been fairly successful, with the exception of the disastrous season of 1879. For many years past his experiments at Tiptree were watched with immense interest by the agricultural world; and many of them worked quite a revolution in some branches of farm work. In some things, however, he was rather chimerical, and his friends and neighbors had not always reason to be satisfied with the results when they followed in his footsteps. However, he is gone, and altogether, few men have so long occupied so prominent a place in agriculture.

One of our leading agricultural papers says there was not, perhaps, at the late great annual show at Smithfield, a more interesting exhibit than that of the Canadian produce to be seen at the stand of Messrs. Sutton & Sons. "In our opinion," says this journal, "it went further than volumes written by travellers and farmers' delegates towards indicating the capabilities of Canada and its newly acquired North-western territory. No better evidence could be adduced of the fertility of the soils of Manitoba and Ontario than this exhibition of their produce." Notices of these, and of the fruit exhibits which were sent by your Middlesex association and selected at the London Western Fair last autumn, have appeared in all the leading papers in this country, and it is to be hoped that the gentlemen who took the trouble to prepare and

send forward these exhibits will be satisfied with the result, and that next season similar specimens will be sent to this country.

Foot and mouth disease is now rampant through many counties in England. In fact, the Privy Council have scheduled two counties on this account within the past week. Devonshire and Buckinghamshire are the last counties reported. In the latter 101 animals are announced to be affected, 99 beasts and 2 pigs; and the Privy Council have been requested to declare the whole of the county an infected area. I understand that important purchases of cattle for export to Canada have recently been made, and it will therefore require increased vigilance on the part of your government officials in examining and quarantining these imports, so as to prevent a much dreaded disease entering the Dominion. Although not so insidious as pleuro-pneumonia, foot and mouth disease can be conveyed in trucks, fodder, and many different ways; indeed it has been proved that hares and rabbits have conveyed it from one farm to another.

As usual, a very large quantity of poultry—turkeys, geese and chickens—have been sent from Canada to this country for the Christmas markets. Whether owing to the cold in Canada, or to the riper experience of the shippers, the poultry has arrived in wonderfully good condition this season. No difficulty was experienced in disposing of turkeys at from eightpence to one shilling (25 cents) per pound, according to size and weight. The demand, indeed, far exceeded the supply. Mr. Dawson, of Brampton, near Toronto, was exceedingly fortunate with his shipment; but I must say that, having paid special attention to the requirements of this market, he has had no more than a fair reward for his trouble and enterprise.

The demand for Canadian fruit of good quality still continues, and fair prices are realized; but some recent consignments having been touched by frost, rather affected the sale of other shipments.

The "Mark Lane Express" has changed both its address and appearance. As it is one of the oldest and most conservative papers in the country, the fact that it has adopted as a "print" over its leader page the picture of a homestead with the motto, "Tenant Rights, Live and let Live," is, I suppose one of the signs of the times, although its Canadian correspondent, who used to be so bitter against everything Canadian, is dead; one of its editors keeps up the bias, and generally contrives to have something nasty to say about the Dominion.

At a recent meeting of the Farmer's Club several ill-natured remarks were made about the resources of the Dominion; but I am sure your readers will be pleased to learn that Mr. Thomas Duckham, farmer's Member of Parliament for Herefordshire, ably defended the fair name of Ontario and its agriculturists.

In conversation the other day with one of the largest London sheep salesmen, I found that a shipment of fine wether sheep had been sent from Quebec to Deptford, via Boston, in consequence, I presume, of their not being able to get space via Canadian ports. The sheep were of very fine quality and realized about 50s. a head. If, however, they had been allowed to pass alive into the country, at least 12s. a head more would have been realized. He informed me also that the States importers are using every effort to get the slaughtering clause abolished. He is confident that the loss sustained on Canadian sheep sent via States ports is at least 4s. per head, whilst on fat cattle it is not less than £4, and on store cattle even more.

We are having a remarkably mild winter—at least in this section of the country, and the farmers have been able to make up for lost time through excessive wet, &c., in the fall.

## From the United States.

[BY OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.]

Washington, D. C., Jan. 16, 1881.

The efforts of the Agricultural Department to introduce the culture and manufacture of tea in the United States will, when entirely successful, as it now gives fair promise, prove of vast importance and value to the agricultural and commercial interests of this country, and of great benefit to our neighbor Canada, in supplying her at cheaper rates with this Chinese commodity: 69,000 tea plants were distributed by the Agricultural Department in the Southern States during the last year, and a "government tea garden" established near Columbia, South Carolina, where the Chinese and Assam tea of India have been successfully cultivated and prepared by the Superintendent, a Scotch gentleman, who has had many years experience as the superintendent of a tea plantation, owned by an English Company in India.

The department have also distributed to agriculturists in different parts of the States during the past year, 28,000 strawberry plants, 9,748 grapevines, 13,921 plants of oranges, olive, fig and semi-tropical fruits and plants of various kinds; 5,000 plants of Japanese persimmons, and 70,000 scions of Russian apples. The commissioner of agriculture reports that the kaki, Spanish chestnut, English walnuts, olives and camphor trees, and other plants and vines distributed during the year, are uniformly reported upon as thriving and doing well.

The reports from farmers who were furnished with the red Brazilian artichoke, during the last season, show the immense yield, the wide range of soil and climate in which they will flourish, and their great value for stock-feeding. The reports from Michigan show that the average yield is 1,000 bushels per acre. An old farmer in Illinois reports: "My success with the red Brazilian Artichoke sent to me from your department was very satisfactory. Dug my artichokes about the 15th of April, making a yield of 1,600 bushels per acre. I find that eaten raw they are equal to turnips, and served up like new potatoes, they come in as such any time from November to the middle of May. Horses, cows, pigs and sheep eat them with a relish." The reports from thirteen different States place the average yield at 1,000 bushels to the acre, commend them highly for feeding cattle and hogs, and from Wisconsin it is reported that, "hogs prefer them to corn." It is said that an important element of their value for feeding swine is their availability, while the ground is not frozen, without any cost for harvesting.

The reports from farmers in the wheat growing States and territories east of the Rocky Mountains, show that Fultz is the favorite. In Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska and Montana, improved Fife and Clawson are highly spoken of in some sections, the yield in Custer Co., of Montana, being 38 bushels per acre of improved Fife. On the Pacific Slope the "mold wheats" do better, the yield in some parts of California being as high as 54 bushels per acre.

The reports on oats are almost universally in favor of "Board of Trade." In Genesee and Huron counties, Michigan, "Board of Trade" oats are reported as yielding full 15 per cent. better than Norway on same soil, and in New York State they report them at 38 to 40 lbs. to the bushel, and free from rust and damage by insects, while other varieties were both smutty and rusty.

The Department of Agriculture have received numerous letters from correspondents in Western States, giving information as to the poisonous action upon horses, cattle and sheep of various