

EDITORIAL.

Our Frontispiece.

In our July 15th issue we gave a portrait of the "Royal" prize-winning Shorthorn bull, Nonsuch, and in the present number we accord the place of honor to the roan cow, Warfare, the property of Mr. Geo. Harrison, Lealholm, Yorkshire. She was bred by the late Mr. S. Campbell, Kinellar, Aberdeen; calved January 20th, 1891; sire First Consul, dam Roan Rosebud 2nd by Gravesend. She captured 1st in a class of eleven, being a fine specimen of the Scotch type. Last year at Cambridge she stood second to the Queen's champion heifer, Bouquet. "Her promotion was well-merited," observes the English Live Stock Journal, whose portrait we reproduce. She has also won many prizes in Scotland and Ireland.

The British Dairy Farmers' Association are considering a proposal to make their next official tour to Canada.

Mr. Walter Long, who has been in the British Parliament for fifteen years, has been appointed Chairman of the Board of Agriculture under the new Government, as successor to Hon. Mr. Gardner.

The Council of the British Dairy Farmers' Association have accepted the generous offer of Sir James Blyth to present £400 to be given as prizes for plans and models of dairies at the London Dairy Show.

An acre yielding seven tons of silage will last a cow 443 days, fed at the rate of 32 pounds per day. Fourteen tons per acre is not a large yield, which would feed one cow two years and 186 days. Need any one starve his cows or feed dear hay?

Advices have been received from the Belgian Government that they will permit experimental shipments of Canadian cattle to Belgian ports during October, November and December, and would remove the embargo altogether if no pleuro-pneumonia were found.

In view of the recent change of Government in England, the Ottawa authorities promise to again open negotiations with a view to having the embargo on Canadian cattle—which has been continued there under the past two administrations representing both sides of politics—removed.

In all probability the potato-patch will require another going over with Paris green. A severe trimming of the vines by insects is a great injury to the crop, even though the growth is fairly well advanced. Remember that potatoes are largely starch, which is formed in the leaves from the carbonic acid of the air; so to remove the green parts is to hinder the formation of starch—potatoes. Spraying is the best and most modern method, but an application along with plaster answers a good purpose, especially if applied when the tops are damp with dew or rain.

The American Fat Stock Show will be held at the Chicago Coliseum, November 6th to 16th. Included in the exhibition under the direction of the Illinois State Board of Agriculture will be poultry, dairy and horse shows, and an agricultural and horticultural display. The Coliseum, on the site of the Wild West Show, adjoining the World's Fair Grounds at Sixty-third street, is to be, it is said, the largest exhibition building in the world. The committee of the Board having these shows in charge—J. Irving Pearce and Irus Coy, of Chicago, and A. J. Lovejoy, of Roscoe,—is working hard. The horse show will be made the leading feature.

The bill in charge of Mr. McLennan, M.P., providing for the branding of Canadian cheese, has been deferred till next session of the House, in order that the Agricultural Department may consider it during recess, and also that further public discussion may take place. The measure was opposed by the Dairy Commissioner. While the bill was before the Agricultural Committee circulars were sent out inviting an expression of opinion on the subject by the dairymen of the country. Of the 778 replies received, 64 only were adverse to the proposal. It was originally intended that butter should also be subjected to the branding operation, but that feature of the bill was dropped. As it appeared before the House the bill provided that cheesemakers should register, and that each cheese should be numbered and branded with the date of manufacture and the word "Canada."

Wheat Prices and Wheat Supply.

An article by R. F. Crawford, in the Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England, presents in a summarized form the conclusions which appear to be justified from the result of an inquiry into circumstances attending the supply of our staple bread cereal during the last twenty-five years.

The fall in the price of wheat has not been confined to any one country, as a similar change has taken place in all grain markets accessible by the ordinary channels of communication. In countries where ports are free to wheat, the decline has been manifest. In protectionist countries its presence has been obscured by the repeated augmentation of the duties. The sources of wheat supply consumed in the United Kingdom may be summed up in: Home supply, America, Russia, India, and other foreign countries. A careful survey of a table of figures given by Mr. Crawford shows that, except in exceptional periods, there has not been a remarkable increase such as would induce one to say that the fall in wheat was due, in a noteworthy degree, to over supply. There was, however, an augmentation in the available supply in 1883-85, and also in 1890-93. This was brought about by improvements in production and in transport, and in connection with the latter by the introduction of fresh areas of cultivation, which can be profitably worked at an outlay inferior to that expended on the older centres of production.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

The harvests of 1879-81, in the European wheat-importing countries, were, perhaps, the poorest recorded during the century. The crops in the United States in the same period were extraordinarily abundant; the volume of grain shipped to Europe in the three years, 1878-81, amounted to nearly 500 million bushels, or more than double the greatest quantity exported in any triennial period prior to 1878-79. It is since these years that wheat prices have been on the down-grade in all the markets free to American grain. It is since these years that the shrinkage of the wheat acreage of the United Kingdom, the largest foreign consumer of American grain, has become more and more apparent. The development in the United States since 1882 has not been uniform. While the wheat-growing acreage in the Western States has developed, there has been a decided contraction in the Eastern States. It would seem evident that whatever else may have affected the prices of American grain in foreign markets in the first thirteen years to which this inquiry relates, there was a process of approximation going on between the prices of Eastern and Western markets, due to a diminution in the cost of transport. For one explanation of the fall since 1882 the exploitation of fresh areas of cultivation beyond the Mississippi had an important influence.

RUSSIA.

The wheat crop of Russia is grown, for the most part, in the south and south-east divisions of the Empire. The system of wheat cultivation in many portions is of a primitive nature. Cultivators in the Chernozom region depend almost entirely on the natural fertility of the black soil, which, under favorable climatic conditions, is said to yield abundant crops without the application of manure, and with very indifferent tillage. Notwithstanding the fall in prices, Russia has exported wheat in increasing quantities, owing, no doubt, largely to the low cost of production—lower even than on the best virgin soils of America, due to the existence of a belt of rich black earth which extends across the southern portion of the Empire.

INDIA.

The area devoted to the cultivation of wheat in British India is over 20,000,000 acres, in addition to which there is an estimated acreage in the native States of about 6,000,000 acres, making a total area of approximately 26,500,000; the average yield per acre being about ten bushels. Prior to 1880-81, the exports of wheat from India were comparatively insignificant in volume. Since that year they have ranged, with many fluctuations, from 14,000,000 bushels to 58,000,000 bushels in a single year. Estimates of the cost of production average about 2s. 4d. per bushel.

ARGENTINA.

Among other countries producing large quantities of wheat may be mentioned Argentina, which in the ten months ending October last sent about 20,000,000 bushels to England. Virgin soil and a low cost of production appear to be the principal factors in the rapid growth of her wheat industry. The average cost is put at about 1s. 5d. per bushel.

CANADA.

According to the Canadian census of 1890, the wheat crop of Canada amounted to over 42,000,000 bushels, an average of over fifteen bushels per acre. According to other estimates, the Canadian wheat product during the three subsequent years ranged from over 60,000,000 bushels to over 41,000,000; Ontario and Manitoba being the largest producers.

CONCLUSIONS.

The deductions drawn by Mr. Crawford are as follows:—

1. That the decline in the price of wheat has been more or less uniform in all European countries whose ports are free to grain.
2. That the fall is mainly the manifestation of a natural economic process, consisting in the settlement of new lands, and the consequent extension of the margin of cultivation to regions where the cost of production is much below that of the older centres of production.

3. That a review of the prices of the last quarter of a century would indicate that the fall has been more apparent since 1882 than in the earlier years.

4. That coincident with the fall of 1882 there has been an expansion of the wheat-growing area west of the Mississippi, particularly in Dakota.

5. That what is called the fall in price of wheat has consisted largely of an approximation of the prices in importing countries to those in the great exporting countries, owing to improvements in transport and reductions in the cost of carriage; that is to say, the fall has been, to a great extent, a fall in freights.

6. That one of the circumstances connected with the changes in the price of wheat between 1881-88 and since 1890, has been an increased quantity available (not an actual over-production) for consumption per head of the population.

By some advocates of bimetallicism, the "gold standard," with the "appreciation" of gold, has been the cause of the decline of wheat, but not long ago we witnessed a remarkable rise in the price without the aid of a bimetallic currency. We notice that Mr. Chas. W. Smith, author of an English work, entitled Commercial Gambling, has another explanation of it. He contends that the combination of commercial and financial gambling had been one of the principal causes of the depreciation of wheat prices, and that the values of "option" and "future" contracts of "fictitious" wheat were almost the sole regulators in fixing the price of actual produce. In other words, he blames the speculators, or gamblers of the grain exchanges, for the fluctuation in prices. A few of these men, on both sides of the Atlantic, are able, he contends, to manipulate the market to their own advantage, though obviously some of them must be losers. We still concur with Mr. Crawford, however, in thinking that natural economic processes of supply and demand exercise the major control. Like other forms, grain exchange gambling is essentially bad and disastrous, and many efforts are being made to suppress it by legislation. In the recent rise the farmer, as a rule, did not reap the advantage. The rise is said to have been based on the poor prospects for American winter wheat, together with the fact that wheat stocks on hand were many million bushels short compared with the year previous.

Winter Wheat Growing—Valuable New Varieties—Premiums.

The recent advance in the price of wheat, together with its more generally recognized utility as a stock food, has this season awakened more than usual interest in this staple cereal, and a very considerable area will no doubt be sown. We therefore feel warranted in devoting a large portion of our space in this issue to so important a subject. Besides the articles on "Wheat Prices and Wheat Supply," and "Profit or Loss in Wheat-growing?" we publish special reports from various parts of the country as to methods of cultivation and the varieties that have succeeded best. These reports are made by thoroughly practical and observant men. One of the most necessary steps towards success is the choice of the best available varieties. We take pleasure in directing the attention of our readers to the announcement on another page, where particulars are given regarding two heavy-yielding new varieties which have done remarkably well—Dawson's Golden Chaff and Early White Leader—a quantity of which (for seed) we have secured, and which may be easily obtained by getting new subscribers for the FARMER'S ADVOCATE. Read the Premium announcement carefully; it will pay you. The seed offered has been most carefully selected and cleaned.

European Harvest Prospects.

Farm prospects in England, says the Mark Lane Express, are very bad in many parts. The drought that visited a large portion of the country in 1893 seems to be repeating itself this season. Oats and barley are reported as being very short and backward; wheat, thin and short of straw; peas and beans stunted and thin; mangels, a bad plant and backward; swedes, gone in some parts; the hay crop is about half an average. The pastures are bare, and neither dairy or feeding cattle are "doing much good." Wherever lucerne is growing it defies the dry weather and grows on apace.

In France there are signs of growing uneasiness respecting the well-being of the wheat crop. Seasonable weather is necessary for the development of all cereals, and although complaints have not yet taken definite form, it is feared that with diminished area, patchy fields and inauspicious blooming period, the wheat crop will turn out only a poor average.

In Germany, changeable but, in the main, favorable weather has improved the outlook for spring corn and wheat.

Official returns indicate unsatisfactory crop conditions in Western and Central Russia, but in southwest, south and south-east governments, whence Black Sea and Azov ports chiefly draw supplies, the appearance of both winter and spring crops is stated to be considerably above the average, but harvest will be two or three weeks later than usual. In Odessa the harvest can be regarded as assured, but a few days' rain would be advantageous. The barley crop in Barbary is reported to be a good one.