

### The Bath and West of England Show.

From our own Correspondent.

The Bath and West of England Society has a history of over one hundred years, having been established in 1777. Two years ago its centennial anniversary was celebrated by a special exhibition, which was a grand success. The annual shows of this society are regarded as second in importance only to those of the Royal Agricultural Society, which, with a history of only fifty years, takes rank as the leading society of the kind in Britain, and its shows carry with them the greatest prestige. The fact of this being the semi-centennial year of the Royal Society, and its exhibition this year being located at Windsor, has evidently had the effect of weakening the show of the Bath and West of England Society, which was this year held at the city of Exeter, and which, though it was an excellent show, was generally considered to be below the average of the society's exhibitions. It is understood to be the usual practice of many of the breeders of fine stock, to withhold their choicest animals from the earlier shows of the season, in order that they may appear in the pink of condition at the great Royal show, as it is well known the travel and knocking about takes off much of the bloom and freshness of the stock as it appears under its home training, and at the outset. On account of the special importance of the Royal this year, the custom of holding back for the higher honors has been more generally adopted than is usual.

Another feature which has long been noticeable in the exhibitions of this society, is that the breeds of stock which predominate in, and are peculiar to, the district in which the show happens to be located for the year, are generally out in large numbers, while many of the breeds which are peculiar to other districts are very sparsely represented; while some do not put in an appearance at all. This fact no doubt accounts for the presence at the show of this year (the exhibition being held in Devonshire) of a very large entry of Devon cattle, and of Devon Long-wool sheep, both of which classes were full in every section of the list, with animals of extraordinary merit and excellence.

In the management and arrangement of an exhibition, our English friends set us an example which we in Canada would do well to copy in many respects, one of the most important of which is the preparation of a reliable catalogue of the entries, the systematic arrangement of the animals in the order of the catalogue, and the placing of numbers upon or over the animals to correspond with their number in the catalogue; a system, the complete success of which is here demonstrated.

Of course, to make a success of the catalogue, the rule fixing the date at which the entry books are to be closed must be rigidly enforced, and ample time given for the preparation of the catalogue. The date of the show under consideration was June 5th; the date for closing the entries, on payment of the usual fees, was April 18th. After that date, and up to April 25th, entries only to be received on payment of double fees, after which no entries will be received; leaving a space of six weeks' time in which to correspond with exhibitors, if necessary, in order to have all the facts supplied, all errors corrected, and the printer's proof carefully read before the publication of the official catalogue.

No one who has not experienced the satisfaction of viewing a stock show under such conditions, can duly appreciate the luxury of such an arrangement. The first thing a visitor seeking information does on entering an English show-yard, is to purchase the catalogue of entries, which usually contains a map or plan of the grounds, by which he can, without enquiry, find the department he is most interested in. Here he finds all the animals in a class, of a given age, ranged side by side, and by turning to his catalogue, finds the number of the entry corresponding with the number upon the animal, and reads the age, owner's name and address, breeder's name, name and herd-book number of sire and dam; so that if the owner is absent, or the attendant engaged, the visitor can get nearly all the information he requires without delay, and without the trouble of making enquiries; and, besides this, he carries away with him a repository of information which he can refer to at his leisure, and which gives him the address of a large number of breeders.

The judging, weather permitting, is invariably done on the opening day of the show. Exhibitors know it is their interest to have their stock placed and prepared before that day. The prize tickets are put on at once, as soon as the awards are made. The list of awards is printed in pamphlet form by the society on the evening of the first day; and on the morning of the second day a copy is given free to all who have purchased or may purchase a catalogue. This list gives only the number of the entry in each class to which prizes are awarded, and the grade of prize awarded; but here, again, the numbers correspond with the catalogue, and the connection is complete. At this show only two judges were appointed for each class, and where they disagreed, a third was called in from among the spectators by the attending steward, to decide.

With regard to the vexed question of judges and judging, it may be of interest to Canadians to know that even in England, the home of most of the pure breeds, where there is no scarcity of men acknowledged to be competent judges, to a by-stander there seems to be quite as many mistakes made as there are at our shows, quite as much grumbling done by exhibitors, and quite as sharp criticism indulged in by breeders around the ring. Moreover, to prove, if it is necessary to prove it, that men, even Englishmen, are not infallible, we need only refer to the well-known fact that at nearly every show in this country this year, decisions have been reversed by different judges where the same animals have come in competition; and it is so every year.

Another feature about this show that has impressed the mind of the writer is that, in this country at least, "a purely agricultural exhibition" can be made a success. At this show, prizes are offered only for "live stock, cheese, butter, cream, butter-making and horse shoeing." The prize list includes six classes of horses, seven of cattle, ten of sheep and five of pigs. The prizes are large. For horses, \$100, \$50 and \$25. For cattle, \$75, \$50 and \$20. For sheep, \$50 and \$20. For pigs, \$35 and \$15. The admission fee for the first two days is sixty cents; for the last two days, twenty-five cents. There are no special attractions; no side-shows, and no humbugs of any sort; yet the attendance for the first two days has been large, and the crowds are said to be very large on the cheap

days. The display of machinery and implements is immense, but this is all made by the manufacturers as an advertisement, and not for prizes.

The opinion which appears to be growing in Canada, that in order to be successful, an agricultural exhibition must be permanently located, and have permanent buildings, is here met by the unqualified success of this and the Royal Show, which are held in a different town or city every year, and always in temporary buildings. The sheds for stock are of the simplest kind, made with scantling posts and plates, and covered with strong canvass roofs, of uniform size and form, the implement sheds are of the same description, and the whole presents a neat and picturesque appearance, and furnishes ample and comfortable accommodation, even in a country far more liable to wet weather than ours.

#### THE STOCK.

It is not our purpose to enter into a detailed description of the stock exhibited at Exeter, as we shall certainly see a more full and representative collection of England's best stock at Windsor, and will endeavor to give in a later paper a description of that great competition.

The classes of Devon and Sussex cattle were remarkably strong, and included a large number of wonderfully grand animals. These two breeds so closely resemble each other, that a casual observer would hardly distinguish the difference, and one who has never seen them in their native home would be surprised and gratified with their size and smoothness.

Herefords were a very strong class, and presented a magnificent showing.

The Jerseys and Guernseys being near home, also made a splendid muster.

In all these classes we have never seen anything in America to compare with the show here, for real merit as well as numbers.

Shorthorns made a decidedly weak show, a show which would have been considered weak in Canada; but it is only fair to say that the friends of the breed claim that they are being held back for the Royal, and that a grand rally will be made at Windsor. Here there were only two in the class of bulls three years and over, both good ones, it is true, both bred in Scotland, and both having been prize-winners at several shows this year. Yet, it is doubtful, if either could win at the leading shows in Canada. Mr. Handley's McBeth was our favorite, and the favorite generally with those outside the ring; but the judges decided in favor of Mr. Willis's Rising Star, bred by Mr. Marr, of Upper Hill. The younger bulls were a very middling lot, without a single strong card, though several of them have been winning at many of the local shows on the circuit. In the class of cows, Mr. Brierly carried off first and second prizes with the roan Victoria, bred by Earl Spencer, and Waterloo Cherry 13th, bred by Mr. Grey, of Eastham, Cheshire. The first prize cow would be called a good show cow anywhere, but could not be placed in such company as Lady Isabel and Havering Nonpareil of the Bow Park Herd. The heifers were a fairly good lot all through, with no extraordinary cards, and the whole class was in a less blooming condition than we expected to see, none of them being overfed, or too fat for breeding purposes.

The sheep classes were not strongly filled, with the exception of that of the Devon long wools, a strong useful class, much of the same type as the Lincolns, though not so large; and while there were many very meritorious animals in all the