

English Letter, No. 8.

[FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.]

Liverpool, Nov. 3.

We have just emerged from the throes of the annual municipal elections, which, in Liverpool and Birkenhead, are fought with all the political keenness of a parliamentary struggle. The same remark applies to many other towns. In Liverpool and Birkenhead the Liberals for the first time for many years have had it all their own way, and the knowing ones say it is a sure indication of how the general election, which cannot now much longer be postponed, will go. The farmers, too, are getting more independent in their tone, and cannot be relied upon to follow their landlords, especially if they are not amongst the rent-reducers, quite as faithfully as of yore. Of course this tendency cuts two ways, but all things considered, though I am not a strong politician either way, I do not think I can be far wrong in prophesying that the next general election will bring about as signal a change in the constitution of our House of Commons as did the memorable one of 1874.

Of matters specially interesting to your journal, this month's items are rather bare.

The London Dairy Show, held about the middle of the month, is highly spoken of by the agricultural press. It is worthy of note that according to figures given this country spends ten million pounds sterling a year in foreign and colonial tub butter; but as the whole of the United States and Canadian import is valued only at £1,300,000, it is evident what an ascendancy French, German and Dutch butters have in this country. It is stated to be due to the superior manipulation of the foreign dairies. The sensitiveness of milk and cream to any odors which may be in the air, and their consequent effect on the quality and flavor of the butter, is a point of which a note should be made by all producers of butter. If you want a first-class article, all bad smells in or near your dairies must be carefully avoided. The same remarks apply, in a less degree, to cheese-making. I regret to find that the Canadian display was not so prominent as it undoubtedly should have been. Perhaps this was owing to some extent to its being too early in the season for the finer qualities of cheese to be safely sent forward. Canadian producers should miss no possible opportunity of presenting their very best wares to the eyes of the consumers here.

I notice that a large quantity of Canadian potatoes are coming forward. English buyers are now busy in North Germany. A London salesman advertises that he shipped on the 18th ult. 1,000 barrels of potatoes from New York, and that upon their arrival at the London docks he will be prepared to sell them at 22s. per barrel of 160 odd pounds; 21s. per barrel for 20 barrels, or 20s. per barrel for 100 barrels. This will be some little guide to your farmers. There can be no doubt that the market here for really good potatoes this winter will be good.

A large quantity of fresh salmon has arrived here from Canada. As to its condition and quality I may state that a quantity was sent to Birmingham, where the retailers, forgetful of the fact that the close time had commenced here, tried to sell it as English or Scotch fish. The result was that the whole was seized, and an explanation effected with difficulty. If fish can be transported across the Atlantic as fresh as this, it is hard to say what perishable goods may not successfully be brought over. I notice a report that a Swiss chemist has perfected a method of keeping milk perfectly fresh for any period in reason. The object is to supply Paris, and even London, with the surplus of the

Swiss pasturages. Perhaps some enterprising Canadian may think it worth while to look it up.

Shippers of apples have been much pleased with the prices realized, and I hear of extraordinary quantities being shipped from the United States. If I may be permitted to venture an opinion, I should advise any intending shipper of any class of produce to this country to begin modestly, and to extend his operations with the growth of his experience. There is such a thing as glutting the market. A heavy shipment then results in loss, whereas a smaller operation would have yielded a fair profit.

The price of stock continues miserably low. This is no doubt largely, if not wholly, owing to the fact that many English breeders are being forced into the market in order to raise money. This, however, I anticipate, will result to the advantage of the Canadian shippers next spring, as certainly the store stock is being largely encroached upon through these necessities. Sheep have dropped 12s. to 15s. per head, notwithstanding that numbers are dying from rot and other diseases, largely due to the wet and cold season.

Throughout the country reductions of rents are taking place. Some landlords and their agents are trying to console the tenants in strange ways. At one meeting the extraordinary statement was made by an agent that, as prosperity was returning to the United States, freights were rising and shipments of grain to this country had ceased. This, as you may imagine, was received with loud cries of "No, no." I am glad to say that there are some signs of a return to prosperity in some branches of industry. This naturally means an increased demand for your beef, cattle, wheat, and everything you export.

The emigration agents are keenly competitive just now. Friend Kingsbury, of Texan fame, is very active, and seems to have unlimited supplies of money. He has had some rude rebuffs, but still plods on. New Zealand is also very busy. If Canada is to hold her own, the Dominion and Provincial Governments must keep going ahead, and not be afraid of spending a little money, for now is the golden opportunity of getting the right class of men.

Trade, Farming and the Professions.

The Monetary Times, in referring to the indiscriminate rush of young men from their fathers' farms to the cities, esteeming a mercantile or professional life the best means of making a fortune, and overlooking entirely the opportunity that a farmer's life affords for that purpose, says:

"To these we commend the early career of Mr. Henry Lasseter, who settled with his young wife in the bush in the township of Franklin in Northern Ontario five years ago. He had but \$4.50 in his pocket, and passed several weeks without being able to purchase glass for his shanty window. Today he has a fine farm of two hundred acres, thirty-five cleared; a good team, two cows and young cattle, a dwelling, a granary, and a barn 28x50; vegetable and flower garden; and in his barn and granary 110 bushels wheat, 100 of oats, 80 of peas, 150 of potatoes, 100 of turnips, and five tons of hay, besides Indian corn and vegetables. He is worth to-day \$4,000 as the result of the five years' thrift and industry of himself and wife, and in five more years he is likely to be worth \$10,000 and so on increasingly with the natural growth of the capital and value of real estate. Doubtless this couple worked hard; so must any one who would excel as a merchant or a lawyer. It is to the hardest workers that success most often comes. But the point we wish to urge is that for one who is willing to work, intelligently and assiduously, there is no need of joining the crowded ranks of the mercantile or professional classes.

Reports of Experiments at the Ontario Model Farm.

In the advance report to the Hon. F. C. Wood, Commissioner of Agriculture for Ontario, we have some scientific and practical facts on the production of grain, beef, and mutton at the Experimental Farm. Sec. V, page 25—"How much should be paid for steers to fatten?" gives us the report of an experiment designed to answer this very important question. One of the primary conditions of success in the case of not having any from your own breeding is to know the highest price it is safe to give for the particular animal, independently of the indispensable knack of choosing the best for the purpose.

To ascertain this there were purchased for the Experimental Farm fourteen head of two-and-a-half-year-old steers and two three-year-old heifers. They cost when delivered \$728, or an average of 4 1-7 cents per lb. They had had a month's feeding, were mostly Durham grades, and were in medium condition.

The estimated value of food which they consumed during five months, the time of the experimental feeding, from December to May, was \$569; the cost of attendance and bedding was \$69.50—total expenditure, \$638.50. The expenditure added to the price paid amounted to \$1,364.50. They were disposed of for \$974.80, or 4 2-5 cents per lb. live weight. In the five months they increased in weight 4,593 lbs.

This report does not speak very favorably of the profit to be realized from fattening stock. So far we see an actual loss in the five months' feeding of \$390.50. The only item of credit to meet this deficit is the manure made. There is submitted in the report a valuation of the manure, and of the materials used in food in this instance, according to the chemical money standards established by Dr. Lawes, of England, amounting to \$269. This valuation every practical man will at once condemn. Manure has its real value as well as other commodities, and no chemical standard can make it worth more. The old rule will be found in practice to bring a truer answer than any chemical valuation to the problem. One steer will give about one load per month, so that we cannot calculate upon more than one hundred tons at 75c each, or say \$75 in all. No practical farmer will value it higher. So that we see there is still a deficit of over \$300.

It appears, then, that after debiting and crediting every possible item, it does not pay to purchase steers at 4 1-7 cents per lb., feed them on some of the very best materials, and at the end of five months dispose of them at 4 2-5 cents per lb., live weight. Extra expenses were incurred in purchasing them, and the animals had to be sold at a time when the market was unusually low; the ordinary market value at purchasing being 3½ cents, and but for the falling market they would at sale have brought 5½ cents. As a rule, in present times it is a poor steer that will not pay to be bought in at 3 cents per lb., live weight, but can any one say that a superior one will do so at 4 cents?

We must look upon the result of this experiment as very detrimental to the interest of agriculture in Ontario. To the often asked question, "Does farming pay?" it is a direct answer in the negative. Farmers seeing the authoritative statement that store cattle purchased and fed on the Ontario Experimental Farm, to prove conclusively that there is a profit in fattening steers, see that under very favorable circumstances the fattening entails a dead loss. They will conclude that the less there is of stock-feeding the less loss will there be on the farm; and the result must be fewer live stock, less manure, and a more rapid exhaustion of the fertility of the soil. Nor will this be the only evil