

English Letter, No. 7.

[FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.]

Liverpool, Oct. 4.

It is said that rats leave a sinking ship; but it would appear that, for some good reason or other, the literary rat, whose squeaks from Toronto find their way so regularly into the pages of the *Mark Lane Express* and some other English papers, clings still to the country which, if he is to be believed, is the most unmitigated failure in the shape of a country and a field for emigration, of monied or other classes, under the sun. It would be too bad to suggest that it pays, and yet there might be something in such an idea. There may be here and there a journal with an eye to originality, and a desire to be out of the general run of things, which gives him the benefit of its pages, and doubtless even goes to the length of paying him! Unfortunately he has got the ear of a really influential paper; and as he hesitates at nothing that can injure Canada in the popular estimation here, I confess that I should like to see him dressed down a little in the columns of that same paper. I am sorry to see that he has taken unfair advantage of your Manitoba articles. I will venture to say he will carefully abstain from quoting any of those which you promise on the brighter side of the question.

The tenant-farmer delegates will now be busy amongst you, and their reports will be awaited with intense interest. Should they be at all generally favorable—and in all honesty I cannot see how they can be otherwise—a great movement westward may be looked for in the spring. Every day seems to be deepening the gloom settling over the agricultural interest in this country, and so far the outlook seems altogether hopeless. The Agricultural Commissioners, Messrs. Clare, Sewell, Read and Pell, I see, have got as far as Winnipeg. From what I heard before they left I think it is a feather in the cap of somebody in your Administration to have got them so far into the heart of the Dominion.

The trade in Canadian horses of superior quality has somewhat improved during the last few weeks, and indeed has been brighter in Liverpool than it has been for some months past, a large number of sales having been effected at remunerative prices. I may remark that two Torontonians, Messrs. Eccles and Douglas, who arrived here recently with a very fine selection of Canadian horses, have met with fair success, sufficient at all events, as I understand, to warrant their return to this country with another lot. You will probably have seen announced in the press before this that the English Government has contracted for upwards of one thousand cavalry horses from Hungary. These are being sent on to this country, via Rotterdam, in drafts of 120 each, and the first instalment has now arrived. As to the reasons why the British Government, or rather their contractors, have gone to Hungary—the first probably is that the principal contractors are Austrian Jews, domiciled in London, and these have connections throughout Austria and Hungary. Another reason, and probably a yet more important one, is that the Austrian horses have more blood than the Canadian. I noticed recently in perusing the Canadian papers that a meeting of horse-breeders and others interested had been held at Toronto, at which it was suggested that the Government should give some patronage to the breeding of better class horses. I may here state that the reason why the Austrian horses have so much more quality than the Canadian is that for many years past the Austrian Government has imported English thoroughbreds and had them located in the horse-breeding centres of Austria and Hungary, where their services have

been available at merely nominal charges. Thus not only has the Austrian army been supplied with some of the finest horses in the world, but there is a surplus of first-class stock for export, and it has thus become a source of national wealth. I have taken a great interest in the importation of Canadian horses, and notice that with few exceptions there is a sore lack of quality. "Slaves," it is true, you have in any number. In conversation with the Managing Director of the Liverpool Omnibus and Tramway Company, I learned that there was no fault whatever to be found with our Canadian horses of the class required by their company. After a little rest they were found to have grand constitutions and good legs, and if there was a fault it was the flat foot. I have also conversed with many dealers who have purchased horses in Canada, Canadians interested in the trade, and others, and I am fain to believe that this defect is to be attributed to the too extensive introduction of Clydesdale stallions of inferior quality. No doubt, with the ordinary Canadian mares, substance was wanted, but the Clydesdale leaves the impression of coarseness—both before and behind, which it will take generations to obliterate. I myself cannot see how half-bred Clydesdales with all their weight could have also the lightness and activity so essential to general purpose horses of the Dominion which are always on the trot. Again Canada being so near to this country, any farmer can come across here and buy a horse, but he lacks means to buy a first-class one. The consequence is that culls have been introduced to the Dominion. The word "imported" on the "visiting card" would appear to have been a sufficient introduction to any district. These culls are invariably second and third class Clydesdales, and have been cast or sold at a low figure in this country in consequence of some defect—flat feet or some more serious detriment. Of course I am aware that there are many meritorious exceptions to this rule, as Canada has a few of the finest Clydesdales in the world. Still I am of opinion that the horse for America is the good old-fashioned up-standing Cleveland Bay stallion, which possesses the size, as well as quality. Since the introduction of Victorias and other light carriages, which brought into use the horse of 15.3 for park and other purposes in this country, the Cleveland Bays have come into disfavor, and may be difficult to find in the country. Yet I believe that if a few good self-colored horses, instead of the variegated wretches—sorrels and others—a description of which I read of at your shows, could be introduced by the Government or Agricultural Societies or County authorities, a most beneficial turn would be given to this important industry—so easily to be made a source of great national wealth; for it has become patent in this country that it does not pay the British farmer to breed carriage horses or hunters. It thus becomes a question whether in the immediate future Canada and the States, or continental countries, shall supply the increasing English demand. Already our requirements, beyond our home supply, amount to some 40,000 head per annum.

The past few weeks have been an anxious time to all concerned in the live stock trade at this port. Last week a cargo of sheep, ex the Bulgarian, from Boston, U.S., was ordered to be slaughtered on the quays in consequence of foot and mouth disease being found amongst them, and on Monday last the live stock ex the S.S. Quebec, from Quebec, was detained because Mr. Moore, the inspector for the Privy Council, fancied that he had detected the same much-dreaded disease amongst the pigs on board. The Canadian Government Agent here at once took up the matter, and Prof. Dugleid was sent down by the Privy Council from London. He

made a thorough inspection of the whole cargo, and could find no trace whatever of disease, though a few of the pigs had abrasions on their hoofs, caused by a rough passage, or, more probably, by travel on a macadamised road before being put on board. This is not the first time that Mr. Moore has stopped Canadian live stock on account of disease which has been found to be non-existent; and it is more than probable that, were it not for the fact that the Dominion Agent here is constantly on the qui-vive, and insists on a thorough investigation of each case, Canadian stock would now be in the same category as the States' importations—a state of things which would give huge delight to certain people here and elsewhere. It seems monstrous that a man who cannot distinguish between foot and mouth disease and accidental foot abrasions should have a trade of such enormous proportions at his mercy.

The condition of the Canadian cattle and sheep which have recently come to hand in this country has been simply wretched. When will farmers and exporters come to realize the fact that it will not do to send grass fed beasts to this country? They may have been very fair beef when they started, but they shrink away at a tremendous rate on the passage, and even after arrival here. As to sheep, the breeding and quality leave little to be desired, but they are sent forward in an unfinished state, and the consequence is that they have to be disposed of as stores. I was taken by a gentleman in the neighborhood of Liverpool to look at 100 Canadian sheep which had arrived some months ago. They had a few score of the choicest English sheep with them. They had all been put on some splendid keep, and it was utterly impossible to distinguish between them till they were caught and their brands examined.

The weather, according to localities, has varied here of late. In some parts of Ireland and Scotland we have had a period of fine weather, which has tended to somewhat improve the condition of the cereal and hay crops; but the long-continued wet season has made the potatoes a complete failure throughout the British Isles. This country, as you are aware, is already a large importer of potatoes, and the trade must now be largely increased. Last year the amount of money spent on potatoes imported was close on twelve millions of dollars; this year, unless we do without potatoes, which is hardly likely, it may be assumed that we shall have to send twenty millions of dollars out of the country in order to keep up our supply. Will not Canada take her share of this? The earlier potatoes have come mainly from the Channel Islands, and Malta, Spain and Portugal, and the main crop from Germany—particularly Pomerania, Holland, Belgium and France. But this year those regions have been sufferers also, and the surplus for export will be internally diminished. I notice by the Board of Trade returns that Canadians are alive to the position, and several consignments have arrived here. I understand that the first shipment realized eight shillings per cwt, which would be about \$40 per ton. It is difficult, of course, to say whether this price will be maintained, but it is probable, from present prospects, that it will be exceeded. I would like to remark to intending exporters that it is the same with potatoes as with horse-flesh, cattle, sheep, pigs, butter, cheese, and everything else—unless it pays to ship the best they have it is better to leave the business alone; for any man who ships inferior stuff to this market will be sure to get his fingers burnt. In respect to potatoes care must be taken to send only such as are white and floury boilers. Coarse, yellow, soapy potatoes could not be disposed of here at any price. They would simply have to leave them on the dock quays to rot, and get fined for creating a nuisance.