

Our Scottish Letter.

September has favored us with the best spell of weather we have had this year. When I last wrote, the outlook for harvest was dark to a degree. August had proved the month of heaviest rainfall known for many years. Not since 1872 had such a prolonged period of heavy rains been experienced in the first month of harvest. The condition of the crops a month ago was parlous to a degree. There had been heavy flooding in many parts, and acres upon acres of the most beautiful grain crops, ready for the sickle, were lying flat as a billiard table. It seemed hopeless to contemplate their ever being reaped by the self-binder, or even the reaping machine. The only hope of satisfactory harvesting seemed to lie in the employment of an army of Irish reapers wielding the primitive reaping-hook. Unfortunately, such an army is not now available. The use of the hook has become a lost art, and even men who can swing the scythe have become scarce. But Providence is kind, and man's ingenuity is great. By dint of patience and maneuvering of the lying crop, the knife-board was got in beneath, and a surprisingly good job has been made of the harvest, and September closes with the crop safely ingathered in all the lowland districts, and cutting completed, except in some of the very latest parts of the north country. The harvest of 1910, which opened so inauspiciously, seems likely to close as one of the best known in Scotland for a long time. Very little rain has fallen during the whole month. The air has been still or quiet enough, but during the past ten days we have had high drying winds from the north, and the grain was latterly housed in the very best condition. In the earlier part of the month, a good deal of stuff was stacked which would have been better left in the stook; but the drying winds of the past ten days have been most beneficial, and the outlook now is bright. Barley, in the circumstances, cannot be a bright sample, but wheat and oats are all right. Turnips are a first-rate crop, and the favorable outlook for roots has imparted liveliness to the lamb sales, the great bulk of the root crop, in many parts of Scotland, being consumed by sheep on the ground. This is a most successful method of farming, the droppings of the sheep greatly enriching the soil. Potatoes do not promise too well. The close, "muggy" weather experienced during some days in September being very favorable to the propagation of disease.

Cheese is not selling too well, and the average dairy is not making any more than just a paying price; a good many of them will hardly be making that. The opening Cheese Show of the season was held at Castle Douglas in the middle of the month. The quality was high, but irregular, and the complaint of the merchants was lack of uniformity. No doubt, this is the drawback to home cheese, as compared with the Canadian or New Zealand product. These latter brands can be purchased by sample, and buyers can depend on hundreds of boxes being uniform with the sample. This is the result of the factory system of manufacture. Here, every individual dairy has its own cheesemaker, and, while the good are very good, the indifferent are both numerous and regular in their failure to attain a high standard. However, we strive to "warstle" through, as the farmer puts it, and, on the whole, we fare not so badly.

AYRSHIRES AND MILK RECORDS.

The Ayrshire cow has been receiving much attention during the past few years. The Milk-record scheme has developed wonderfully, and the most sceptical are now realizing that the foreign and colonial buyer has reason on his side when he demands to know the milking pedigree of the animal he is seeking to purchase. A large number of Ayrshires have been exported during the past year, and in every case the buyers discard all theoretical merit, and purchase on the milk record of the dam and the sire's dam. This is the only rational method of building up a dairy herd. Form counts for something, constitution is indispensable, but, unless both form and constitution harmonize with milk production, and are in some means an index to it, they are not of much consequence. Rather a sensation has been caused in some quarters by the assault made upon our show-yard cow in milk by President Valentine from New York. Possibly the critic rather overdid his onslaught, but, on the whole, his ideas commend themselves to those who seek in form and constitution only an index to value at the pail. The merciless criticism to which the American subjected some of the prizewinning cows in the milk section at the Highland has rather spoiled the effect of his general criticism. He is an out-and-out patron of the Milk-record Ayrshire, and showed his practical appreciation of the work done by the societies for promoting records by leaving a handsome subscription for their support. It must not be forgotten by those who indulge in exaggerated criticisms of the showyard Ayrshire, that one of the best herds in Scotland, that of Charles M. Douglas, of Auchlochan, Lesmahagow, has been as distinguished in the show-ring as in the Milk-record Societies. There is no necessary antagonism between the two types, but, unfortunately,

nately, there are men in both camps who exaggerate what is best in all.

RAM SALES.

September is the great month for selling rams. In Scotland, the rams are put to the ewes in November, and, in order to have them acclimatized to their new surroundings, it is found necessary to have the sales of rams in September. That gives about two months to get the rams into working order, to free them of superfluous wool on the under part of the body, and generally insure them to the surroundings in which they are to find themselves. Trade in the main has been brisk, although, at Perth, the bottom went out of the trade at the finish of the day, because of the superabundance of shearling Blackface rams provided. The highest prices and averages this year in each of the principal breeds in Scotland have been these: Blackface rams sold up to the top figure of £170, which was paid at Perth for a shearling bred by Mr. McNaughton, Creegan, Strathlyre. This sheep was bought by another breeder, M. G. Hamilton, of Woolfords, Carnwath, who was himself realizing good prices. The highest average was £15 10s., realized, also, by Mr. McNaughton for eight head. Mr. Howatson, of Glenbuck, sold one ram at £160, and made an average of £32 8s. 6d. for 21. Five of the best of his sold for the astonishing average of £95 each. These five formed a first-prize group at Lanark, and the figure is unprecedented. It is noteworthy that the sire of the £160 sheep was a ram bred at Woolfords, which, at four years old, was bought at public auction for £90. He was thought dear when purchased, but he has proved a splendid investment. The highest prices made for Border-Leicester rams have been £160, £125, £105, and £100, and the highest average has been £29 15s. 2d., realized by Messrs. Templeton, Sanly-

land for crossing purposes. They are mated with Half-bred ewes, and the lambs come early to maturity. Hence, the use of Oxfords has rapidly extended throughout Scotland, and at Kelso, almost as many representatives of this breed are sold as there are of Border-Leicesters. The highest price paid for an Oxford Down ram this year was £30, and the highest average was £13 4s. 3d., for a small lot of seven from Mr. Usher, Courthill, Hawick. Cheviots are sold at Hawick, and are a popular breed. The rams of this breed are usually sold when two years old. This year, the highest price made by a Cheviot was £74, and the highest average was £20 15s. 8d., realized by Andrew Douglas, Riccalton, Hawick, for 15. The next best prices were £65, £57 and £34. The second best average was £18 6s. 8d., made by the celebrated Hindhope flock for 30. Shropshires have receded in popular favor in Scotland. The day was when many rams of this breed were sold at Kelso. This year, and for several years past, they have been unrepresented on the ground. The highest price made by a Shropshire ram in Scotland this year was 25 gs., the figure at which the first-prize shearling ram at the Highland was sold at Tom Buttar's sale at Corston, in August. Mr. Buttar does a big foreign trade, selling the larger number of his rams and surplus ewes for export purposes.

CLYDESDALE EXPORTATIONS.

Clydesdales have been exported in large numbers all through this year. The home trade has also been brisk. In the beginning of September there was a big auction sale of pedigree Clydesdales at Perth. The highest price was £168, for a two-year-old colt, and a like figure for a mare. Another mare made £157 10s., and 57 head made an average of £51 each. A filly foal sold for £105. She was got by Revelanta, a horse which

breeds very good stock. Stephen Mitchell sold four mares at an average price of £67 19s. 9d. Mr. Bonella, a Fifeshire farmer, who is retiring from his farm, sold seven, three good working mares and their followers, at an average of £50 5s. for the seven. These figures may help your readers to estimate current prices for good, well-bred commercial Clydesdales, not show stock.

PURE-BRED CATTLE SALES.

We have also had a series of autumn sales of Aberdeen-Angus cattle. W. S. Ferguson has dispersed his noted Kinochtry herd, one of the oldest. He got an average of £24 17s. 3d. for 83 head, comprising cows and heifers of all ages, including calves. At Inverness joint-sale of black cattle, 19 head made an average of £21 18s. 10d. These figures, again, will enable readers to gauge the market value of good sound, commercial black cattle. The Shorthorn sales will begin a fortnight hence. A notable figure will this year be missed, viz., George Rodger, of Bridgelands, Selkirk. He died a few days ago. He it was who largely "made" the great Uppermill dispersion sale, by his heavy purchases for the South-American market. He was an enthusiastic patron of the Clydesdale in other days, and twenty-five years ago, or more, bred some quite notable, high-class animals which won high honors at the principal shows. He was a Manchester merchant, and did a big business with South America. Hence his interest in the Shorthorn trade there.

"SCOTLAND YET."

The Value of Hog-cholera Serum.

A successful demonstration of the value of the new Government serum for preventing hog cholera has just been concluded at South Omaha, Nebr., by the Bureau of Animal Industry of the United States Department of Agriculture. The efficiency of the serum has been proved many times in the past, but, in order that its value might be brought more strikingly before the people of Nebraska, a demonstration was arranged for at the Union Stock-yards at South Omaha, in co-operation with the Union Stock-yards Company, of Omaha.

The Stock-yards Company purchased thirty pigs, weighing from 40 to 60 pounds each, from a farm which had been free from hog cholera for several years. These pigs were brought to the



Ben Wyvis =72869=.

Shorthorn bull. Third in two-year-old class, Toronto. First and champion, Western Fair, London. Bred and exhibited by Harry Smith, Hay, Ont.

knowe, Kelso, for 25. The Blackface is purely a home sheep; he is rarely purchased for exportation. Hence, his high value is in no way stimulated by foreign competition. It is otherwise with the Border-Leicester. He is our great crossing sheep, and is in demand for the New Zealand market. Several of the highest prices have in recent years been paid by colonial buyers. The highest price this year has been paid by the Right Hon. A. J. Balfour, M. P., the late Prime Minister. He farms extensively in East Lothian. A notable variety of sheep is the Half-bred. He is not exactly a pure-bred. He is the product of a Border-Leicester ram and a Cheviot ewe, and breeders are in the habit of going to the next cross, and putting the Half-bred ram to the Half-bred ewe, but the cross is never carried further. It is a debatable point whether, for the production of fat lambs, the first cross or the second is the more satisfactory. However the question be regarded, it is noteworthy that the Half-bred, the result of the Border-Leicester-Cheviot cross, sets all the Mendelian theories at defiance. That may be because the Border-Leicester and the Cheviot are not really distinct breeds. It is always a moot point how the modern Border-Leicester was evolved from the English Leicester. He has small resemblance to the latter to-day, and possibly the Cheviot, which is indigenous to his native hills, may have been an element in effecting the change of type. Be that as it may, the Half-bred, so called, is a most useful variety. He was sold in large numbers at Kelso. The highest price reached by a ram of this type was £37, and the highest average was £18 15s., for 20 sold by John Mark, Sunnyside, Prestonkirk.

Oxford Down rams are in high favor in Scot-