

Our Scottish Letter.

July has been a very disappointing month to agriculturists almost everywhere. In the south and west of Scotland the rainfall has been excessive. A splendid hay crop alike in respect of bulk, and particularly of the wealth of clover, has in some districts been sadly spoiled. It would be too much to say that the hay crop has in these areas been ruined, but it is the bare truth that the feeding value of one of the best crops of hay seen in Great Britain for many years has been undoubtedly reduced. In the north of Scotland, around Inverness and in Easter Ross and Caithness there has been a great lack of moisture, consequently the crops are light and the bulk of straw promises to be rather deficient. The turnip crop everywhere promises to be much better than the crop of 1919. This root crop is in some respects the key of the rotation; without it the land could not be cleaned. The years of war have left their impress on agriculture in a legacy of foul land. Under pressure of food shortage the taking of two white crops in succession was largely resorted to, with the result that the land now has become unclean. This means excessive labor in connection with the succeeding green crop. In this way a war legacy has been entailed which will take years of close unremitting labor to liquidate.

Through the death of Lord Polwarth during the past month a notable figure has been removed. His Lordship belonged to a very old Scottish family, that of the Scots of Harden. The Polwarth peerage came into the family on the female side through marriage. The deceased baron was a notable stock breeder in his time. For many years he stood at the head of breeders of Border Leicester sheep. A Polwarth ram meant much in the pedigree of a Border Leicester. Unfortunately his lordship cherished the idea that his own stock could not be improved by any possible introduction of fresh blood from other flocks. He paid the penalty. His splendid flock deteriorated in value. The ewes became uncertain breeders; the rams offered, which were the choicest of the produce, became characterized by bare fleeces, especially beneath; and, to use a common phrase, the flock simply ran to seed. The upshot was a collapse in popular favor and when financial adversity came, the auction ring, which is the ultimate test, yielded results disappointing to a degree. A somewhat similar fate overtook his lordship's herd of Shorthorn cattle. The day was when representatives from Mertown, which was his lordship's seat, took the highest honors at the national shows. Lord Polwarth was an adherent of the Booth cult, and as with his Border Leicesters, cherished the notion that it was impossible to improve upon that. The consequence was that his Shorthorns deteriorated almost as completely as his Border Leicesters, and the fame of his herd vanished. The history of the Mertown herd and flock is a warning not to carry Bakewell's principles of selection and close inbreeding to an extreme. The introduction of a judicious out-cross into the Mertown Border Leicester flock might have prevented the extinction of one of the best flocks of sheep ever known in Great Britain. Even in their old age many of the ewes sold at the dispersion were conspicuous by reason of their handsome carriage and great scale.

A curious commentary on pedigree breeding has recently been furnished in a northern civil court. A breeder of Aberdeen-Angus cattle sold by public auction two heifers, the one belonged to the Jilt family, and the other to the Erica. The day was when an Erica, no matter how mean or scrubby looking, would have sold on her pedigree at a high price. That day would seem to have passed. Through the illness of the exposor of the heifers in question, and the action of those acting for him, the Jilt heifer was substituted for the Erica and made by far the lower price, although she was much the superior heifer. When the exposor discovered the mistake that had been made in his absence he sought the intervention of the court to reduce the sale because the heifer on her merits as

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