

THE AMERICAN SYSTEM OF AGRICULTURAL EXHIBITIONS.

THE SARATOGA FAIR OF 1866.

Farmers in the Northern States take more interest in Agricultural Fairs than do the farmers of Nova Scotia. They have been long accustomed to look forward to them with interest, and when a farmer does not himself attend the Fair, he is yet able, from the reports, to seize the real points of interest; did he not do so he would feel that he was behind hand in his business, that he was "really a day after the fair."

In most of the Agricultural States there is a regular system of Annual Exhibitions, which are held alternately at different points in the State. We have just received the Journal of the *New York State Agricultural Society*, for November, containing a report of the State Fair held at Saratoga Springs on 11th, 12th, 13th and 14th September. These State Fairs began at Rochester in 1851, on which occasion there was a very large number of cattle, sheep and swine from numerous exhibitors. Of late years the quality of the animals has very much improved, but their numbers are fewer, and the competitions are confined to a few leading exhibitors. In Devons especially the show at Rochester fifteen years ago was far better than at many of the later fairs. In Herefords there has been a great falling off. Ayrshires then, as now, were confined to few exhibitors. Of Jerseys, not a single specimen was shown in 1851; but later Fairs have called out a very creditable show. As regards sheep, in 1851 the French Merinos were attracting considerable attention, and finer specimens of these, as well as of Saxons were shown. Now a Saxon sheep is seldom seen, and the French Merinos have disappeared. The "American Merino," so called, having thrown its old competitors for the time being, into the back ground. The Siberian Merinos are yearly attracting more attention. There has been a marked improvement on South Down. Shropshire Down were shown for the first time at the State Fair in Elmira in 1860, and since then have attracted the attention of some leading breeders both in the States and Canada. Long Wools (Leicester and Cotswold) were well represented in 1851, and have received increased attention within the last few years. In everything that relates to implements for harvesting crops there has been a marked improvement.

The Saratoga Fair of 1866, like the Canadian one, opened on a gloomy rainy day, but that did not damp the farmers' spirits. "It was something to see the splendid specimens of cattle and sheep, but it was more to meet the owners and breeders." This meeting of old friends is one of the pleasantest and most profit-

able features of the annual fairs. Then there were the evening discussions; the subject selected for the first evening was a very suitable one, but it might surely have been expressed in a neater title, for a farmer does not necessarily drive to a fair in a lumber-waggon drawn by four team of oxen. He is the subject:—"Dairy farming; City milk farms; Butter and Cheese making in families as compared with factories; the advantages of both systems—Butter and Cheese making combined in one factory; the profits of dairy farming compared with other systems in all their bearings."

It would be incongruous for a small journal like ours to attempt to give a full report of the Saratoga Fair, and we shall therefore merely skim off some of the thickest cream from the report. The dairy discussion brought out the candid statement that it is not necessary to have a strictly clean cheese in order to bring a good price. "The more there is in it, the more there is of it." But, says another, it makes "clean money." The whole tenor of the discussion goes to dispel the illusion of a "churn as white as ivory and butter as yellow as the purest gold." Mr. Whitman urges strongly the importance of cleanliness, or as it is expressed, "neatness," which we suppose is an American euphemism. The barn should have platforms for the cows to stand and lie upon, another for the milkers to walk upon, nicely littered with sawdust; there should be pails in readiness with water to wash the udder, and towels for wiping the udder of the cow and the hands of the milkers. One man thought after what had been said he would give up eating cheese; he always washed the teats of his cows, but this carrying a towel around was new to him. The best weather for making cheese and butter is when the temperature is about 60°. If the cream is warmer, cool it by placing ice around, but never *in* the cream; it is injurious.

Of POULTRY, some of the specimens shown were very poor, others remarkably fine, especially the Dorkings. One hen was of the venerable age of 17 years, and a majestic gobbler could bear up a 35 lb. weight on the scales. Some of the Brahmas, five months old, could "eat corn from the top of a barrel."

In PIGS, the show consisted chiefly of Cheshires, sometimes shown as Yorkshires; they are not a pure breed: "Pure white in colour, with fine stand-up ears, thin hair, great length, square backs, full hams and shoulders, round full bodies, handsome heads, full cheeks, and *very fat*." The Chester whites (a totally different breed) showed very poorly.

In CATTLE, the best stock came from the western part of the State. Fat cattle and grade classes were not very well filled, "It is a well known fact that

grade Short Horns will fatten on good feed at least a year earlier than ordinary cattle." A pair of six year old fat oxen of this kind weighed 6000 lb. The reporter asserts that Herefords are declining, but their beef is of excellent quality. There was a good show of Devons. Many dairy farmers are purchasing thoroughbred Devon bulls to cross with their cows. There were splendid Ayrshires, such as "have never been surpassed." Of Jerseys (Alderneys) there was a good show of this "gentleman's breed," which is rapidly increasing in the Eastern parts of the State. It is just the breed for domestic use, but for general dairy purposes they are not thought so profitable as the larger breeds. The trouble with these cattle is that the calves are mostly bulls. Mr. Moore two years ago removed one of the testes of his bull, and last season all his calves were heifers. The Short Horns were the grand feature of the show. "The first prize was awarded to James O. Sheldon, for Mazurka 13th, a beautiful white cow bred by R. A. Alexander of Kentucky; she was in high condition, and a very showy animal, and popular opinion outside the ring sustained the award."

Some remarks on the sheep exhibited we had marked for extract, but must defer them till a future opportunity. Meantime we have to thank Mr. P. B. Johnson for his kindness in continuing to send us his valuable and interesting "Journal of the New York State Society," which we would more frequently notice if our limited space permitted.

FISHES AND FISHERIES OF NOVA SCOTIA.

Mr. Thomas F. Knight has prepared a "descriptive catalogue of the fishes of Nova Scotia," as the first of a series of papers "on the fisheries of Nova Scotia in all their aspects, historical, economical, commercial and political." Fifty-one fishes proper are enumerated, with specific descriptions of most of them, and indications of their distribution and habits. Ten sea mammals are likewise described, two crustacea and a number of the more common edible mollusca. From Mr. Knight's work we learn that the skate is found everywhere and of large size on the coasts of Nova Scotia, but is not esteemed as in England; the Norway haddock appears to be rare; the perch abounds in the fresh waters of Nova Scotia as elsewhere in British America; in 1865 exported mackerel realized probably \$1,000,000. We cannot agree with our author that the angler (*Lophius Americanus*) has "a very disgusting appearance." "There's beauty all around our path, if but our watchful eyes would trace it in familiar things, and in their lowliest guise." The common haddock abounds