

English Letter, No. 10.

[FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.]

Liverpool, Jan. 5.

The depression which has so long beset all the leading British industries has, of course, had its effect upon the Christmas festivities; still there has been a large demand for good cheer, and in the effort to meet that demand Canada has waged a good fight. We have had Canadian beef and mutton, Canadian fish and fowl, and Canadian fruit and potatoes; and with some few exceptions they are all well spoken of and appreciated.

Before, however, I proceed to refer to these matters more in detail, the matter of the tenant farmers' delegates calls for notice. Those who went forward "to spy out the land" in September last have now, with one or two exceptions, returned, and the majority of them have addressed their constituents, and their official reports are, I understand, now being compiled by Mr. John Lowe, the Secretary of the Dominion Department of Agriculture, who is in this country, and will shortly be issued in pamphlet form. These reports are all of a very satisfactory character, far exceeding the most sanguine expectations of those who organized and promoted the experiment; but that they are not mere "gas," and are really well-considered, able and unbiased reports, is sufficiently attested by the Field, the leading farmer's and country gentleman's paper here, which in introducing a summary of some of them says:—

"Their reports will be read with interest and at least with profit, as it must be remembered that the delegates were not emigration agents. They are independent, intellectual, experienced men, who have no purpose to serve except to convey reliable information to their brother agriculturists at home." This is a graceful tribute, but it is every whit deserved.

At Stowe, Midlothian, on Friday last, three of the delegates, Messrs. Walter Elliott, of Hollybush; John Logan, of Legerwood, and John Snow, of Pirntaton (who were all sent out by Mr. Dyke, the agent at Liverpool), gave to a large meeting of farmers detailed accounts of their Canadian visit. They are all three farmers on an extensive scale in the southeast of Scotland. Mr. Elliott, who has paid more attention to the Province of Ontario than any of the other delegates, stated that fine crops of wheat and other grain were grown there without manure. He was astonished at the practice of burning stacks of straw. At one place he saw a newly-invented rotatory plough, which promised to come into extensive use, as a boy with a pair of light horses can plough with it five acres a day. The summers, he added, are hotter and the winters colder than in Britain, but the dry atmosphere prevents the extremes of temperature being so keenly felt as they otherwise would be. Mr. Elliott had not the slightest hesitation in advising his brother farmers to emigrate to Ontario or the Eastern Townships, for he was satisfied from what he saw that a man with moderate capital and energy can do better there than in this country. In Canada, he observes, a man may buy and stock a farm at little more cost than it takes to stock one alone here. Mr. Logan was strongly in favor of Manitoba; and Mr. Snow calculates that Manitoba has a great future before it in the breeding and rearing of good strains of young cattle, which can be fattened in Ontario and then shipped to Europe as beef. Mr. Cowan, of Wigtonshire, also related his experiences, and was much pleased with the style of farming in the district of Guelph. The buildings, he said, are good and tidy. Mr. Biggar, of Kirkcudbrightshire, advised men with considerable means and young

families to settle in Ontario. It may be remarked that this is, substantially, the opinion of all the delegates, so far as Ontario is concerned, though a majority of them also speak very glowingly of Manitoba.

I am glad to be able to report that the Durham heifer referred to in my last, which was bred and reared in the neighborhood of Guelph, took the first prize in her class at the Christmas fat stock show held at Edinburgh. This is very gratifying. If only a few years ago any one had hinted, especially in a company of English or Scotch farmers, that a Canadian beast could be found to take a prize in competition with English or Scotch bred cattle, he would have been voted a madman.

There is nothing very special to notice in the live stock trade from the Dominion. There is, however, one item worthy of note. On Monday last a lot of very fair though rather small sheep from Prince Edward Island were sold in the Liverpool market, and realized for their weight about the best price of the season for Canadian sheep. This is attributed mainly to the large proportion of wethers. Wether mutton is distinctly preferred here, and a flock of well-bred wethers will realize from 4 to 5 cents per pound more on this market than ewes and rams of a similar breed. Will your farmers, as Captain Cuttle advised, make a note of this?

There has been a good deal of fluctuation in the poultry trade from the Dominion this season. Some of the importers have got the idea that the trade has been overdone; but I strongly suspect that the real fact is that they had bought a lot of bad poultry, which, having to compete with superior article here, of course was nowhere, and severe loss was sustained. I cannot harp too much on the string that one quality and one quality only will do for this market, and that is the best. If your farmers cannot send the best of whatever they want to send, it is better not to send at all. Many a Canadian turkey offered for sale in Liverpool the past fortnight would have borne easily twice or thrice the weight of meat, and probably sold for half a crown, whereas if it had been in prime condition, at the cost of a few quarts more corn, it would have realized almost as many shillings as it did pence. The Christmas turkey is looked upon essentially as a luxury, and the ordinary most careful housewife will have naught but the best when the article wanted is her Xmas turkey. The same remark holds good when the dish preferred is a goose. He must be a good one. Will your poultry breeder take a note of this? As a contrast to the disappointment of less experienced importers, I understand that Mr. Dawson, of Brampton, Ontario, who has now been shipping poultry for three or four years, and is well up in his business, has done a good speculation. There is a practically unlimited market for good stuff, and Canada can if she will, by judicious management, develop a very large and profitable trade.

On the whole the past year has, I should say, been a most important and encouraging one in the history of the Dominion, and the auguries for the future are now very bright. There is a tide in the affairs of nations and communities as well as in those of men, and Canada has now entered upon the full current of that tide. I firmly believe that no field for emigration is at the present moment so prominently or so favorably before the eyes of Englishmen as Canada. Much now depends on your Government; and if it maintains actively and unstintingly the policy which it has so intelligently initiated of late, the Dominion will attain ere long a grasp on fortune which none of her competitors will ever be able to loosen.

Prickly Comfrey.

BY H. B. S., ST. LAMBERT, Q.

This forage plant does not seem to have met with much favor in this country. Very few farmers however, have given it a trial. It is called in Italian *orechio d'asino*, or "the ear of an ass," its botanical name being *Sympyrum aspernum*. I propose to give a few notes on its value for feeding purposes, and also on its mode of cultivation:

It is a native of the Caucasus and was introduced into England about the year 1810; it is hardy, a rapid grower and comes to a good size; it is a perennial, the flowers reddish blue. It may be cut three or four times in the season, thereby producing a large crop. The cultivation of it requires but little care; it is propagated from cuttings and is planted usually in drills two feet apart and fifteen inches apart in the drills. On account of the prickly leaves cattle do not like it at first, but for milking purposes are said to do about as well on it as on any other green food. It contains ninety per cent. of water, so that a larger quantity of milk may be obtained, though of a poorer quality. The same is true to a certain extent of all these excessive growers, such as lucerne, Italian rye grass, though as an aid to protect against drought and poor pasture these green crops are exceedingly valuable. In Ireland, about Dublin, it has been grown and is looked upon with favor. There is this to be said, that it is difficult to eradicate it after it has once well started. In my opinion, it is not to be compared with lucerne, with which every farmer who keeps any quantity of stock ought to have a portion of land planted in case of bad pasture; lucerne can be cut and cured the same as clover-hay in case too large a piece of land is planted, but I will defer further remarks about lucerne, which may form the subject of another article.

To continue with the comfrey. It has been grown in the United States, and has not, from the accounts that I have seen, been a success. It should not be condemned or pre-judged by a few unfavorable reports. It has been successful in Ireland, and if grown under similar conditions here ought to be useful. The yield from it has been exceedingly great, as much as eighty tons having been taken off an Irish acre.

It would be a serviceable plan for any farmer to try a few square feet of the comfrey and send the result of his trial for publication, giving full particulars as to soil, dry or wet spring, and so on, not omitting the least item; such a report is worth something. But for a man to write and say that he has tried it and found it useless, without giving any information, is not of any value when we know that it has succeeded under certain conditions. Farmers, as a rule, are not particular enough in giving particulars, and are rather apt to attribute their own want of success to some shortcoming or unsuitability of the plant.

Rapid Sawing.

Mr. Archibald Campbell, near Strathroy, recently purchased one of the Waterous Portable Sawing Machines. At a recent trial, at which many farmers were present, it cut nineteen boards 16 feet long, 22 inches wide and one inch thick, totaling up to a total of over 550 feet, in seven minutes. In a run of one hour it turned out from small logs 1,950 feet of inch lumber, and to use Mr. Campbell's words, "all cut perfectly true and smooth, the machinery running like clock-work." This, we presume, is the fastest sawing on record. The whole machine complete cost only \$1,500.