

Impressions of the Old Land

(By Herbert Spencer, Dole, Alta.)

The first thing that impresses a Westerner is the discipline that exists on board ship, the orderliness and precision with which everything is done, probably because these virtues are more often than not conspicuous by their absence in the West. Much as we like the West, the homeland has a great attraction for her sons always. On stepping ashore our first impression was the solidity of everything. Wood is replaced by stone and brick. All dock fittings appeared to be made to last centuries, instead of a life time. As we passed through the city and noticed the huge business houses everywhere, we could not help but think the old country was good for a long time yet. The thing we missed, was that fine, breezy, fresh prairie air; and we were distinctly struck by the gulf between rich and poor. Taking an express to the Midlands, we had the pleasant surprise of paying two cents a mile instead of three; and although we thought our Grand Trunk service and accommodation was good they can still be improved. On the other hand, England might copy with advantage the baggage checking system of Canada. As we moved southwards we could not but notice the intense beauty of the country. It is a veritable garden.

The English Farmer

The life of the English farmer is upon a considerably higher plane than that of the Westerner, and naturally so, considering that for generations he has been a recognized part of the social machine and has his hunting and his shooting, is surrounded by servants, in fact, in our Western phraseology, he is the "whole cheese," and better than all, his markets are at his door. But he lacks the security the farmer in the West possesses. Their great grievance, and most rightly too, is their insecurity of tenure. Under the present reading of the law, the tenant may claim damages for "unreasonable disturbance," but if an estate is sold, and owing to the legislation that is being forced through the British Houses of Parliament at this time, many are being put up for auction, and the tenants in consequence receive notice to quit, the farmer cannot plead "unreasonable disturbance" and has no compensation whatever. Under such conditions it is easy to see that a tenant is very tardy about making improvements of any kind. Bingley cattle show was visited at Birmingham.

In the fat stock exhibit we were more astonished with the enormous fatness of the beasts than with their actual size. We have seen bigger beasts in Alberta of the same age. It is difficult to compare the implements used here to the Western ones on account of the different nature of the soils; still we think the West is a little quicker in adopting new designs. British machinery on the whole is made heavier, stronger, more accurately and with a better finish. The keenest interest is taken in crossing different grains for better seed. Artificial manures and cake for stock are important here, which at present we in Alberta do without. We are so familiar with the rapid expansion of our Western provinces that we are apt to forget that it is just possible even such an old country as the Motherland may advance, although not at the same pace. We who have been absent for four and a half years noted a distinct improvement. In the agricultural districts of the Midlands, which are generally considered the last to accept the gospel of progress, there is much more mechanical power used and many labor-saving devices. Here, as in the West, gasoline power is the favorite. It was the writer's privilege to be shown over an up-to-date country flour mill, and it was our opinion that in its particular line, with its grain washing machines, automatic mixers, test baking ovens and many other adjuncts to the milling business, that we cannot mention through lack of technical knowledge, it was run as systematically and economically as the great packing plant of Chicago. The millers told us that our Western

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