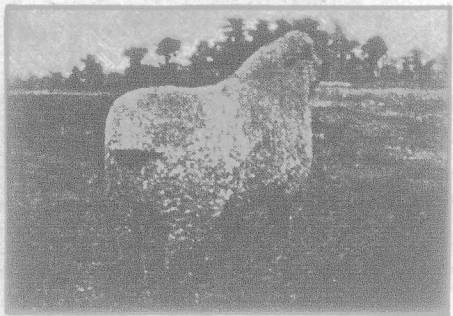


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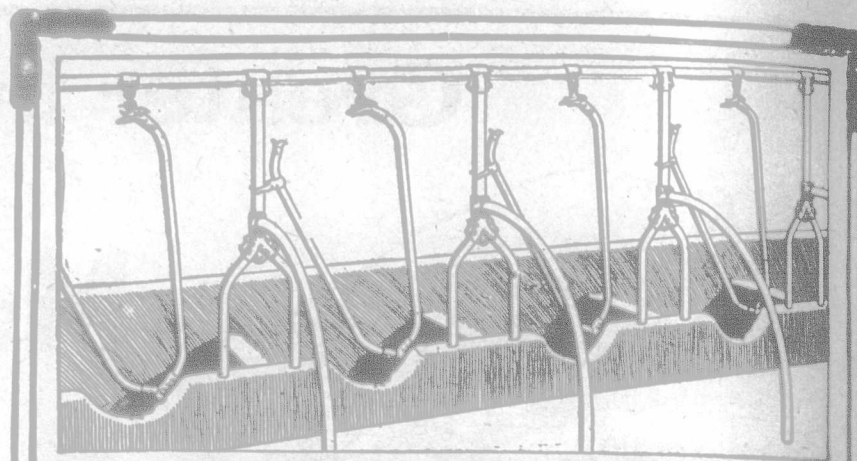
W. A. Ball, 12 Hanover Square, London, W. 1

Our Scottish Letter.

September has been a month of surprises. Harvest work has been proceeding under weather conditions of the most aggravating description. It has been rare to find two days uniform, and if the grain crop has been saved in tolerable condition, it has largely been in spite of the weather. The heavy rains in August exercised an ill effect on the hay crop in upland areas. The saving of a large crop of what is called meadow hay, that is, of natural grasses, is a matter of great moment to owners of mountain flocks. In a severe winter—that is a winter of frosts and snows—the farmer who has a large reserve of hay has a great advantage over his neighbor whose crop may be short. This has been demonstrated over and over again. Hence the prevalence of a dry spell in September is of vital moment. This year, on account of the excessive rainfall during July and August, meadow hay, while a heavy crop, was difficult to "urir". It contained too much moisture. Hence the need for what has been sadly lacking this season—plenty of sunshine and hard drying winds. About a week ago the temperature suddenly fell and the weather has been much colder. It is fortunately dry, and one result of the low temperature has been the warding off of potato disease. Very little has been heard of this in Scotland. There is prospect of a heavy crop and a crop free from disease. This is a good omen for the country at large. The food outlook is not bright. The Minister in charge of that Department of State has been telling us that necessary foods at Christmas, 1920, will be at least 9s. 6d. dearer than they were a year earlier. A heavy crop of potatoes at reasonable prices will go far to ease the situation. Beef remains at a high figure, but the country is not making much complaint. A white Shorthorn bull, fed by Mr. Clark, High Possil, near to Glasgow, was lately sold for slaughter in Glasgow market for £126. He weighed 2,562 lbs., so that his price was as nearly as might be one shilling per pound. This is indicative of the high prices realized for beef, mutton and pork on hoof in our public markets. Still we would get through not so badly if only people would work.

The week closing has been one of the most anxious in our history. Not even during some of the worst days of the war have the minds of men been more exercised than during the past few days. The coal miners of the country, by a large majority, voted a universal strike, the direful catastrophe to be entered on to-day. Almost to a man the press of the country has been against them. Their leaders recognized this, and evidence accumulated that these gentlemen were ill at ease. The mines of the country are still controlled by the State, and the miners profess to be anxious that this should continue. They claim, in fact, that the mines should become the property of the nation. The proposal is not novel, and in itself there may be nothing wrong with it. What the miners demanded was that the price of coal should be reduced by 14s. 2d. per ton to the home consumer, and at the same time that the miners' wages should be advanced by 2s. per shift to every adult worker. On the face of it the two-fold demand seemed to be self-destructive, and so it has proved. The Government declined to discuss the first proposal, and with respect to the second pointed out the ill-omened fact that every advance in wages since 1914 had been followed by a reduction in output. The miners' leader hardly denied the latter fact. The Government offered to submit the whole question as it affects wages and output to an impartial tribunal, and to abide by its decision. In the beginning of the week the miners' leaders abandoned their demand for a reduction in the price of coal, and last night at almost the stroke of the twelfth hour they agreed to suspend the operation of their strike notices for a week. Meanwhile they are to set to work with the mine owners and endeavor to fix a minimum datum line of output, and, if we understand the terms aright, to submit the wages and put questions to an impartial tribunal. We are thus enjoying a respite, but leaders of the miners have been careful to warn the press that a respite does not necessarily mean that there will be no strike.

A curious indirect effect of this coal menace on the farmers' operations appear.



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34x4 1/2	12.75	3.20	35x4 1/2	13.10	3.40	36x4 1/2	13.40	3.50	33x5	13.25	3.10
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