

to a little over two hours, and he could not find an opportunity.

The Canadian sheep which are arriving now are eagerly purchased. The great complaint, however, is that the "bucks" are not kept separate from the ewes, and, consequently, lambs are being dropped at all times of the year. I have, in previous letters, urged upon your stock raisers and farmers the necessity of castrating all their ram lambs, except such as they require for breeding. As the "mutton" trade is of such great and growing importance to your farmers, a little care in this respect is worth taking. If Canadian sheep feeders like to do their best, they need fear no competitors.

An enormous demand has arisen for Polled Aberdeen cattle. Scotland is being literally overrun by buyers from the States, and it is well for Canadian interests that your buyers were early in the field. One States importer, I hear, has bought 150 bulls for the Chicago October sales, and he will not be able to land them there at a cost of much under \$250 a head. It is now impossible to buy samples of many of the best families, and one good cow could only be obtained by a determined buyer, recently, for five hundred guineas, and offers are now being refused of one hundred and twenty and one hundred and fifty guineas for animals which were readily sold two years ago at forty and fifty guineas.

Agricultural Shows—Their Abuses.

Why do we call these shows, exhibitions or expositions "fairs"? Goods are not there for sale. A few sales are made, and there ought to be more; but they are not fairs.

The manager and the public assume that animals and articles exhibited come fairly in competition for the prizes—which, by the way, are absurdly called "premiums." No doubt the managers intend that all exhibitors shall have an equal opportunity to present their articles and to have them fairly judged upon their merits. In some cases this really occurs, and managers who fail to do all in their power to secure this, neglect their duty.

If the entry books or the stock and articles in the show may be examined by exhibitors before the entries are closed, and an exhibitor may thus learn what will be shown by a competitor, he may modify his own entry, with the view of capturing prizes, by artifice, rather than of securing them by merit.

I have known a favoured exhibitor, after a sight of the books, to change his entire set of entries. He could tell very nearly what cattle were to be shown, and in which cases he would be beaten, and in which pretty sure to win. I believe this is a common practice of some men in almost every agricultural society, and of some who have official connection with the societies. When entries are closed a month in advance, the only way that any such advantage can be gained by one exhibitor over another is for an exhibitor to make a large number of entries, but to bring or present only such as he thinks will win.

It should not be forgotten either by managers of shows, or by the general public who look on, or indeed by the judges and jury who make the awards, that with many exhibitors the honor of winning is not so much valued as the money won, and that with a large class the honor counts for less than the trade or consideration which that honor brings with it. To such, a prize dishonorably gained is just as valuable as one fairly won. This is the reason why an exhibitor will often make great efforts to prejudice the jury in his favor, and so secure the award.

Influence is brought to bear upon the jury of awards in many ways. One man will openly address a judge in praise of his competitor's exhibit, and loudly call attention to the best points, but quietly regret certain defects, or express doubts about the age or breeding of the animals, or other points affecting the competing exhibit. Sometimes

a third party discusses matters with a judge in a disinterested, friendly way, talking up his friend's goods and trying to prejudice him against other exhibits. It is very hard to guard a jury against such influence. I have known the principal officers of agricultural societies take judges to one side and indicate how in their judgment the awards should go, by calling special attention to certain entries of those who were known to be on terms of personal friendship with them, and disparaging others—or damning them with faint praise. There are many men appointed as judges who are unfit to serve, and who know it themselves. These are wide awake to watch, and listen, and find out what practical men think, and it is very easy, if it is known that they are not very strong, to influence them. An exhibitor who goes to the show to get prizes, by fair means or foul, will measure such a man at first glance, and "go for him," as the saying is. A weak judge is of no account in any way. A jury of two judges works better than one of three, and a single good judge better than either; but he must be a man to be depended upon. The system especially prevalent in small societies, of distributing the prizes about so as to "encourage" all exhibitors, and make everybody happy, is most pernicious. At such shows it matters very little who the judges are. The prizes are worth nothing any way as honors, and very little in money, and so long as such a system is in vogue, they will be worth no more.

If the judges could be from a distance, and have valuable awards to make, and be real judges of the animals or articles of whose merits they decide, and be let alone, to make their awards without knowing that this, that, and the other are shown by the Hon. Mr. Blank, by Judge So-and-So, or by the President of the Society, and without knowing that certain animals belong in one herd, others in another, and so on, we would have awards that would be worth something. True, first, second and third prizes might go to the same man, and the President of the Society or the member of Congress might go without; but what of that, so long as a fair, disinterested judgment is given?

What is true of animals is true of goods of all kinds. One rule should prevail everywhere, every time—the prizes should go to the article or animal, and not the exhibitor. It is remarkable how few of the men who are picked up as judges at the smaller fairs about the country, have an idea that they ought to consider this, the merits of the animal or article solely. Nothing is more common than such remarks: "We can't do that; we shall be giving the same man both 1st and 2nd; that won't do." Or, "if we give him 1st, he will be taking 1st in two or three classes; we ought to change that."

Juries are very imperfectly instructed how to judge. They need instruction—definite rules, plainly stated, not only in printed form but verbally. A great many men have such an idea of their own knowledge and abilities that they will not read the printed rules. To such it is essential that some officer of the society should most distinctly lay down the law by word of mouth.

There is always more or less hurry-scurry at the time of the show, and questions which come up then cannot always be discussed and settled. For instance, who is to decide and throw out an entry for fraud or mistake on the part of the exhibitor—the judges or the society? Suppose the judges suspect a "pair of geese" to be both of the same sex, or a heifer in the yearling class to be two years old, or an animal to have artificially-colored horns or skin? Many a jury of judges will decide that they have nothing to do with these questions, but decide upon the entries presented to them, presuming them to be all right. Thus, of course, great injustice is done. I might show how agricultural exhibitions, which ought to be, and, in spite of abuse, are of great service to the community, are prostituted to private gain in mean, underhand ways, which are enough to disgust one who sees it worked out, with all such shows, but this is enough; and if published will put exhibitors, spectators, and officers of societies on their guard. —[M. C. Weld in American Agriculturist.

Scotch Correspondence.

[FROM AN OCCASIONAL CORRESPONDENT.]

Waterside-of-Forbes, Aberdeen.

DEAR SIR,—I have lately returned from a tour through various districts of Scotland, and may start by telling your readers interested in the old country, that it never looked better at this season

of the year, and I understand the same applies to England. The farmers are now looking a little keener over matters, as crops of all kinds are looking well, and prices of beef and mutton are nearly as dear as ever they have been. Our local markets are quoted at 85s to 88s per cwt., which means over 9c per lb. for whole sides of beef. I suppose we will soon have this remedied by your supply, as no doubt even 80s per cwt. will tempt your farmers to send us a few of their spare cattle. The peculiar thing is that even that price brings very few cattle into the market. The demand far exceeds the supply, and prices have gone up at Polled Aberdeens and Galloways from your side least 100 per cent. for Aberdeens, and Galloways are following suit. Your people seem to have awakened our farmers up to the good points of these cattle, and the home demand is also far in excess of the supply.

There are only a couple of public draft sales announced this autumn, that of the late Lord Airliie, and the representatives of the late R. Walker Montbletton, one of the oldest breeders in the country. There are some specimens of Prides, Ericas, &c., &c., at Cortachy, for which there will be a keen pull, and the foundation of many families of the late Earl of Fife's herd were drafted from Montbletton—especially the prize winning family of Blackbirds of Corskie. To give your readers an idea of the prices of some of these cattle I may mention that 300 guineas were paid the other day for a Pride cow, and several specimens have gone to Canada this spring, costing here nearly as much; so much for Polled cattle.

As remarked, crops all over Scotland were never looking better, and all are in hopes the tide of bad seasons has at last began to recede, and none too soon, as the numbers leaving our shores for America, Australia and New Zealand testify, and a good thing, too, both for those going and those remaining. Your farmers would not think much of some of our land laws, and the demand for reform of these antiquated and absurd laws pressing against the tenants are loudly demanded. The series of meetings in Aberdeenshire, mentioned in my letter to you some months ago, has resulted in the formation of "a Farmers' Alliance" for Scotland, already numbering over 7,000 members, and extending over 10 counties, from Caithness in the north to Wigtown in the south. A deputation from the alliance representing these 10 counties waited on the Prime Minister, the Hon. W. E. Gladstone, last month, requesting him to give the matter attention this session, as it is impossible for farmers to go on with the present competition without some security and compensation for their improvements. It will be a tough battle, as to make land a commercial commodity, as with you, means the doing away with the prestige and position that the possession of land in this country brings to the owner. It looks as if the laird will in the future have to take his place with other people, and invest less money in land only if it will pay, as I am afraid the days of all and sundry lifting their bonnets to the laird have nearly gone by, and, at present, it looks as if these lairds were the only people who do not see that the abolition of some of our old feudal laws would be for their benefit as well as that of the whole community.

Our turnip crop is the only one not doing very well, the fly having eaten up many fields, causing a second sowing.

Store stock in cattle and sheep are all a good deal higher than last year, caused partly by the loss of capital during the past bad seasons, and the reduction in the numbers of breeding stock all over the country.

I may conclude this letter by stating that the prospect of the agricultural community is brighter than it has been for years, and all wish it may enable farmers once more to get their heads above low water mark.