

Our Scottish Letter.

Since writing my last letter, a curious and unprecedented thing has happened: the "foot-and-mouth" scare in Perthshire has turned out to be

A FALSE ALARM.

The authorities, guided by local and eminent vets., rose up in arms against the restrictions, denying that the malady was contagious foot-and-mouth disease, and an independent inquiry was made by the officials of the Board of Agriculture, with the result that within one week after they were imposed, the restrictions were withdrawn and the country was declared free of the disease. There is no foot-and-mouth disease in Scotland; our markets are all in full swing; and the authorities, who too rashly concluded that the disorder was the contagious disease, are being denounced in unstinted terms for dislocating the whole stock trade of the country on a false alarm. Perhaps it was better to err on the safe side; but it was a most unfortunate and disastrous blunder. The honors in connection with the business go to Mr. James Clark, F.R.C.V.S., Conpar-Angus, who first challenged the accuracy of the official diagnosis, and his position was sustained by Principal Williams, of Edinburgh. Mr. Cope, of the Board of Agriculture, attended on the matter personally on receipt of their report and the local authorities' remonstrance, with the result already indicated. Possibly there may have been other false alarms, and if so, stock-owners have good cause for making serious complaint.

THE MANAGEMENT OF BRITISH AGRICULTURAL SHOWS.

The show season of 1900 is about over, and the general result is to raise the old question of the place and function of agricultural shows. Never having seen one of your fairs or agricultural exhibitions, I am unable to say whether they bear any resemblance to our agricultural shows in this country, but I understand you are being impressed with the absurdity of making the agricultural element a mere side show, and that some are determined to bring it to the front and relegate all else to the background. The two national societies in this country, the Royal (in England) and the Highland (in Scotland), have pretty resolutely set their faces against the side-show element, but with varying results. Of course, a good deal depends on what one would call a side show. At the Royal, there is no hurdle jumping, and except for the presence of a first-class military band on the four days succeeding the judging day, the attractions are purely agricultural. The implements and machinery must all have a relation to the staple industry, and the live stock and produce departments are agricultural and nothing else. The Council of the R. A. S. E. deserve great credit for having so consistently set their faces against the circus and cheap-jack element, and made their show a genuine agricultural exhibition; but, unfortunately, the issue has not been encouraging, and the Society is at present in a very tight place. It has lost heavily on its last three shows, at Birmingham, Maidstone, and York, and it has now resolved to abandon its time-honored system of holding migratory shows, and to settle down in a permanent site somewhere near London. Many gravely doubt the wisdom of this step, and I am bound to say that I am one of those who regret the resolution, believing that everything has not been done which might be done to make these shows financially successful. The implement yard has been allowed to grow out of all bounds, and instead of being an exhibition yard in which each firm exhibited an article of each kind, it has become a series of open-air agricultural warehouses in which sale first, and novelty afterwards, was made the leading feature. Whatever may have led to their unpopularity, it is clear that shows like the Royal, run on rigidly agricultural lines, have, so far as England is concerned, been anything but financially successful during the past year. I do not think this is due to the absence of the circus element, but rather to temporary causes, and, in any case, it is gratifying to observe that, unless horse jumping be included, as of the circus variety, there is no disposition in connection with these great shows to abandon their distinctive character and introduce features of the type common at country fairs.

The experience of the Highland and Agricultural Society has, in respect of its shows, of late years been peculiar. For a series of years its exhibi-

tions were unpopular, and, in general, it was in a sort of moribund condition. In 1893, Mr. James Macdonald became its secretary, and its course since has been one of unbroken and uniform success. Its shows are held on circuit, and since 1893 it has made money at all of them except that at Kelso in 1898, and profit was not expected there. There always was jumping (of a kind) at the shows of the Highland; but Mr. Macdonald, having been for three or four years Manager of the Dublin Horse Show, introduced the Dublin system at the Highland, with the result that the jumping seen at its shows has in recent years been of a distinctly high order. Whether this may be classed as an element foreign to agriculture, I will not say, but unless it be so classed, the attractions at the shows of the Highland are purely and severely agricultural, and their success, apart from such circumstances as weather, over which humanity has no control, is a strong argument in favor of an agricultural show, being kept as such, and not transformed into a cross between an open-air circus, a trotting track and an agricultural exhibition. Of course, both the Royal and the Highland encourage Hackneys and driving classes; but these are cognate to agriculture, and horse-breeding of every kind should be fostered by agricultural societies.

As concerns other exhibitions in the country, some of the older ones are accompanied by a strong contingent of outside shows; but these are not admitted within the grounds, and are in no way controlled by those who manage the shows. In some districts, attempts have been made by agricultural societies to introduce military tournaments and displays, brass-band contests, trotting matches, and tugs-of-war (which last, in some localities, are extremely popular, parish teams trying conclusions with parish teams); but in the main, the respon-

hoof, and the dressed carcass of which sells for the highest price on the market, thus giving a profit to the feeder, to the packer, and to the consumer. A steer well selected from this point of view may be said, without stretching it, to be half fed. If a mistake is made here, no great profit is possible, however skillful may be the feeding or well selected the food.

The raw material must be such as will yield the product desired. The object in view in finishing the steer is not only to produce gain in weight, but to increase quality; in other words, to interlard the muscles with fat which sells for the price of muscle instead of the price of fat, a difference of from one to ten cents per pound. This raw material must be as digestible as possible. In all cases it requires a large percentage of the feed to run the machine—that is, to supply the heat and repair the waste of tissue which is constantly going on in all animals. The colder the weather and the greater the amount of exercise, the greater the waste, and the more that we call "food of support" is required. The gain made in all cases is that which the animal is able to consume, digest and assimilate over and above the food of support or that which is necessary to run the machine.

The appetite of the steer is to the steer feeder what the pulse of a patient is to the doctor, an evidence of what is going on inside. If everything is going on right, the steer has a good appetite and eats his food with a relish which seems to say "Yum yum" all the time, a contentment, peace, comfort and satisfaction that it does a man good to see, and when the steer goes off he seems to say: "I have dined."

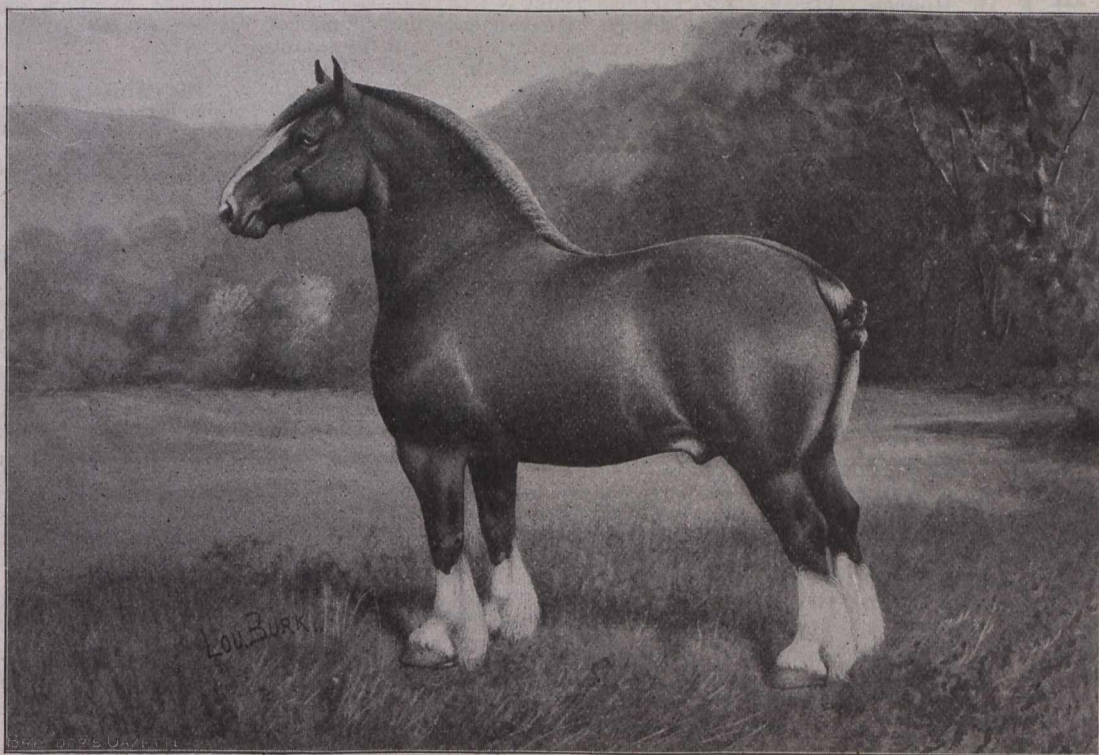
To keep the machinery running to the fullest capacity for six months in succession, in wet weather and dry, in hot weather and cold, bringing the steers to the trough with the feeling that they could eat up the corn crib, and leaving it when they feel that they could eat just the fraction of a grain more, is the highest art and skill of the cattle feeder, and to do this he needs a clear head and a steady hand. He requires to know when he looks at the clouds in the morning, how much the steers will eat that day, how much more he can give them with safety, or how much less. Comparatively few men are equal to this; none can be equal to it without the expenditure of a good deal of gray matter of their own brains and habits of very close observation. They wish to run this machine to the fullest capacity, to feed into it as much as possible in excess of the food of support without deranging the very intricate and complicated machinery that is running under the hide, unseen to mortal eyes until the steer gives up the ghost.

One day's overfeeding, the result of not closely observing the weather, may put the complicated machinery out of order, and it will take days to get it to working right again without heavy loss

and expenditure of food. No man runs any sort of machine up to its full capacity at first. Just here it is easy to make a very serious mistake. When the steer is first put on feed he will eat ravenously, and if no mistake is made in quantity he may make heavy gains for the first month or two because his capacity to digest and assimilate is vigorous and as yet unimpaired. It is no trick at all to make good big gains the first month, or even the first two or three months. The highest skill in cattle feeding is seen when the steers make among their heaviest gains on the last month's feed.

All changes of feed should be made as gradual as possible, so gradually that the digestive apparatus or system, or, in other words, the machinery, will never know that the change is being made. The changes from grass to green corn, from green corn to snap corn, from snap corn to ear corn, from ear corn to shelled corn, or to corn and oil meal, or to corn and gluten meal, should be made so gradually that no shock is given to the complicated and delicate apparatus, which gives signs of being out of order, first, by the failure of appetite, and second, by that feeling which you have had, reader, when you have eaten three turkey dinners in succession, with plum pudding, pumpkin pie, and an assortment of cakes and jams, and preserves added as dessert. You feel as if you did not want anybody to say "turkey" to you for the next six months.—Wallace's Farmer.

The world's trotting record is now held by The Abbott, a gelding, time 2.03½.



PREMIER PRINCE (10248) 9190.

Clydesdale stallion, imported in 1899.

OWNED BY ALEX. GALBRAITH, JANESVILLE, WISCONSIN.

sible agricultural societies, which are really exerting an influence for good in their own sphere, find that it pays best to make an agricultural show as consistent with its own objects as possible. The experience of agricultural societies here is, I should say, generally favorable to the efforts of those who, in Canada or elsewhere, are anxious to bring the agricultural element to the front, and to make it the prominent feature in shows and fairs.

"SCOTLAND YET."

The Problem of Steer Feeding.

To grow a calf properly on skim milk is one of the most difficult problems of the farm; to finish the steer—that is, to feed it properly for the last six months—is one of scarcely less difficulty. The man who can solve the first problem can easily solve the second; the man who can solve the second cannot always solve the first. What, then, is the problem? To secure with a given amount and kind of feed the greatest possible gain in live weight, together with the greatest possible improvement in the quality of the carcass. Looking at it from one point of view, the steer is a factory; the food, whether of grain, hay or grass, the raw material. The digestive system is the machinery in the factory, and the gain of live weight in the carcass or machine, the product.

The profit in feeding is determined largely by the selection of the cattle—that is, by selecting cattle that have that indefinable something called "quality"—by reason of which the steer when finished sells for the highest market price on the