

## English Letter, No. 20.

[FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.]

Liverpool, November.

The season is anything but a lively one agriculturally; there is no news of interest. Of late we have been having deluges of rain, and vast floods, which have certainly not improved the state of the low-lying lands for fall sowing, and in some districts there have been serious losses amongst the stock. A friend of my own lost six out of nine yearling calves within a few weeks, and the mortality amongst young stock has been generally high of late.

Texan fever is causing a good deal of anxiety and alarm in this country. A report just issued by the Veterinary Department of the Privy Council states that though not strictly a contagious disease in the same sense as cattle plague or foot and mouth disease, there is no doubt that it can be communicated from Texan cattle to other breeds with which they may come in contact, or which may succeed them on pastures where they have dropped their excreta, &c. There is, however, this saving clause, as the lawyers say, in the matter—and an important one it is—that cattle which have caught the Texan fever from Texan cattle, cannot communicate it again. In other words, Texan cattle only have the power of communicating the disease to others. The importance of this limitation in the spread of the fever may be estimated from the fact that the mortality amongst English cattle which are attacked is 90 per cent. The fever has recently appeared at Tiptree, in Essex, and great anxiety is manifested about it, especially as it does not come within the scope of the contagious diseases acts. The appearance of this new terror to farmers will certainly not improve the prospects of the projected great trade in Texan cattle by means of the "Great Eastern."

I have already referred to the disastrous character of the harvest in Russia. Steamers are now being chartered in our eastern ports to carry wheat to Cronstadt, the port of St. Petersburg.

The agricultural returns for Great Britain and Ireland, which are published annually, and always present features of interest, have just appeared. In Great Britain, apart from Ireland, there are this year 32,102,000 acres of land in cultivation, and in Ireland 15,358,000, making a total for the British Isles, including the Channel Isles and the Isle of Man, of 47,587,000 acres. These figures are exclusive of mountain pasture, woods and plantations. In Great Britain the area under cultivation has increased 126,000 acres in the year and 694,000 acres during the last ten years. The land under wheat has increased slightly for the year, but was nearly 600,000 acres less than in 1870. Barley has decreased, but oats have increased in about the same proportion. Beans and peas have fallen off greatly, owing mainly to the competition of Indian corn. Potatoes are a larger breadth, but green crops as a whole show little change. There is a large amount of land in fallow—nearly a million acres—owing to the number of unoccupied farms. Rotation grasses and clover show little change; but permanent grasses have increased by 260,000 acres in the year, and now occupy 45 per cent. of the total area under cultivation. Orchards and market gardens have increased in a sufficient proportion to show that farmers in suitable localities are turning their attention seriously to these sources of profit. As to live stock, there has been a slight decrease in the number of agricultural horses, owing again to the large breadth of unoccupied land, but taking all classes, there has been an increase, notwithstanding the heavy falling off in imports, which has

dropped to only 6,600. Horned cattle show an increase of 50,000; but sheep exhibit a falling off of nearly a million, owing to the ravages of disease. This loss has fallen wholly on England and Wales. Pigs continue to decline rapidly, the home producers finding it impossible to compete with American brands of bacon. In Ireland the changes are very similar to those in England. The cultivated area has increased, but the other items referred to show little fluctuation.

The horse trade during the past season has been but dull, and the imports have been exceptionally small. Those who profess to know, however, are looking forward to a brisk demand, with, of course, rising prices. Omnibus, tramway and van horses are likely to be most in request.

Mr. Thornton, the eminent auctioneer, had his last sale of Shorthorns for the season, on Thursday last, Oct. 28th, when he disposed of 35 animals from Lord Penrhyn's herd, at Stoney Stratford, Buckinghamshire. They realized an average of £70 12s 5d per head, the highest price for a cow being given for eighth Belle of Oxford, 340 guineas. At the same sale Duke of Leicester, a splendid bull owned by Mr. Wolford, sold for 510 guineas, the Earl of Bective being the buyer.

## Manufactures.

The agricultural implement manufacturers have a society and hold their annual meetings. This year it took place in Toronto, in the second week in November. It is quite right that birds of a feather should flock together and discuss matters that may be of interest and importance to them. From reports received we learn that this association has resolved not to exhibit at county agricultural exhibitions unless suitable buildings are erected for the protection of their exhibits. Local manufacturers may exhibit at local exhibitions, and agents at their own expense.

This conclusion has been arrived at on account of the enormous expense that the attendance at so many exhibitions has entailed on the manufacturer. They complain greatly about the loss and damage and lack of remunerative results from exhibiting at Hamilton this year, when the weather was wet and no shelter provided.

There should be moderation in all things. If the manufacturers have foolishly expended too much in attending too many exhibitions, and we believe they have, it is but right that they should curtail unnecessary expenses, and exhibit where they find it to their advantage to do so. But the sweeping resolution will not be found practical, and men will exhibit when they have a superior implement in such localities as their wares are in demand.

They have also passed a resolution not to exhibit at trials of implements. This has been brought about on account of numerous local agents demanding trials in localities where they are sure of being able to control the verdict, irrespective of the merits of competing machinery. Sometimes it is difficult to procure men sufficiently acquainted with machinery to be fit to decide between the machines, and the old maxim, namely, "Every crow thinks its own egg the whitest," is a very safe guide to go by. Every person who has used one kind of an implement and found it answer his purpose, is apt to be partial to that machine—not from any desire to act unjustly, but from use and association. The same feeling is evinced by stockmen who have been accustomed to one particular breed of animals, or even the strain of blood through which an animal may have been bred. Flagrant inconsistencies do often occur. For instance, the Forsyth reaper and mower carried off the first prize at the last Provincial trial of agricultural implements. Manufacturers said it was

the worst machine on the ground; so bad was it that well-informed farmers would not use it, and the first prize Provincial reaper is not made by any manufacturer; the fact is, they all make a better implement, or they would have to shut up their factories. Fair and impartial trials might not have been objected to, but the lack of honesty and judgment may have influenced the members of this meeting.

The greatest good that appears to us to have been done has been an united effort to rid the manufacturers from a lot of untruthful, unprincipled agents—those who tell the farmer a lot of falsehoods to induce him to put his name to a paper. Of this class of men there are far too many, not only agents for manufactures, but patent right men, tree agents, notion agents, shoddy agents, and a host of others. The manufacturers have now discarded 48 of this class, and a heavier weeding is yet to take place. If a law was enacted to compel nurserymen and others to be responsible for the deception of agents and men allowed to travel under their certificate, or if the agents had real paid-up cash capital or unencumbered estate as a guarantee that farmers will not be defrauded, it would be of benefit to the farmers.

This association is about to petition the Government to amend the law for collecting debts, so that all debts be payable at the head office. This would facilitate collections, which is necessary. Farmers as a body are very remiss in punctuality. We do not consider them in point of honor in any way superior to our leading manufacturers; but there are practiced, accomplished, travelling swindlers who do a vast injury to farmers and who are difficult to restrain. We would like to see the honest farmer better protected against those who deceive him, and at the same time the collection of honest and just debts from those farmers who attempt to evade or put off paying their honest debts for value received should be facilitated.

## Another Agricultural Enterprise.

Messrs. Stevens, Turner & Burns, of London, Ont., from the success and satisfaction that their portable farm engine has given, and having been driven with orders far in excess of their capacity to construct them, have just purchased a large piece of ground a short distance from the G. W. R. station, and are about to erect one of the finest engine shops in the west. This shop is to be built especially for the construction of engines for farm work. Their engine has many valuable advantages and features to commend it to the attention of purchasers; it is named the "Western Empire."

This enterprise shows the great prosperity and spirit of progress in Canada. Four years ago there was only one shop in this city that constructed portable agricultural engines; now there are four, and each of the new shops appear to be turning out more than the single shop did when alone, without detracting from it. These great enterprises, namely, four establishments in one city turning out as many portable agricultural engines as they can construct, must show the progress and improvements that are taking place. How many million bushels of grain the engines made in this city alone are capable of threshing, it would be a difficult task to estimate.

London appears to be destined to become the main centre of agricultural advancement, as these portable farm engines do and must stand at the top of the list of all improved agricultural machinery; whereas no other city or town in Canada has more than one establishment of this kind. And a very great consideration is this, that other enterprises of this and similar kinds have either received bonuses or special favors from assessments on the public. But not one of these enterprising manufacturers, namely, Leonard & Sons, Geo. White, Stevens, Turner & Burns, and Haggerts, have asked or received one cent. They stand, as every institution should stand, on its own merits, not on moneys coaxed from the people.