

Notes from Ireland.

WELCOME INTELLIGENCE.

At last the tendency that has for so long prevailed among Irish farmers to devote from year to year a diminishing area of their holdings to tillage appears to have received a belated, perhaps, but, nevertheless, a very welcome, check. This is good news to all who have deplored the decreasing dependence placed on the plow in practically all parts of Ireland, and, taken in conjunction with the spirit of intelligence and enlightenment that is now spreading throughout the country, it is perhaps not overstepping the bounds of reason to regard it as one of the encouraging signs of the improving times in which we live. If next year a further increase should be registered, it may be taken as the just dawning of a new era in Irish agriculture, for without going into detail just now, it is safe to assert that the steady development of our tillage area would be one of the most potent factors for the general benefit of the Ireland of to-day. Let us hope that our farmers will recognize it in this, its true importance. In considering such a topic, we cannot well get on without some figures bearing on the subject, and these we find in the recently-issued abstracts of the agricultural statistics for 1906, collected by the Department of Agriculture, and showing the acreage under the various crops and the numbers of live stock throughout the country this year, as compared with last. Some sage, some time or other, remarked that "one swallow doesn't make a summer," but I think about seventy thousand would; and the most notable fact in the returns under notice is that there is a net increase in the tillage area of Ireland, this year, of 70,845 acres, as compared with last year. Surely a striking indication of the altered direction which some Irish farming would seem to have taken in the intervening period. The increase is observable in the Provinces of Leinster, Munster and Ulster, there being a falling off in the western section of Connaught. Grain of all kinds has increased, principally barley, but green crops, for some reason or other, have diminished. Turning briefly to the principal individual crops, wheat shows a total area of 43,806 acres, an increase of over 6,000 acres; oats an area of 1,076,280 acres, or nearly 9,500 acres more than last year; while barley occupies 176,410 acres, and shows a substantial advance of 21,820 acres. Hay, which ranks, of course, as distinct from pasture, covered 2,328,950 acres, an increase on the year of 34,452 acres, and of flax, also, there has been a sharp rise of over 9,000 acres, bringing the area under the crop up to 55,170 acres. The figures are not so satisfactory with regard to the root crops. Potatoes fill up nearly 616,100 acres, but this is 660 less than last year; turnips amount to 278,343 acres, and mangels to 67,190 acres, the former being 3,700 acres and the latter 5,300 acres less than in 1905. All told, the area under crops in Ireland this year is estimated at 4,727,081 acres, as compared with 4,656,227 in 1905.

TO ENCOURAGE TILLAGE.

Apart altogether from the statistics above dealt with, which naturally helped to bring the subject into favorable prominence, the question of tillage has latterly been engaging considerable attention throughout the country. One of the most interesting developments in connection with the matter has been the recent action of the Cork County Committee of Agriculture in formulating a novel scheme whereby it is hoped to induce many farmers to make a more general use of the plow. The general run of agriculturists, it may be remarked, are still skeptical of the possibility of tillage paying; indeed, the following extract from a letter recently received from a friend in the very county in which the scheme alluded to is to be put in force, sheds an interesting light on this aspect of the question: "A farmer in this locality has gone in more extensively for tillage than formerly, and his neighbors are watching the venture with great interest, wondering what time will elapse before he is a bankrupt." No amount of preaching can be expected to totally destroy such a suspicious spirit. Much, of course, has been written and spoken on the subject during the past few years, and not altogether ineffectually, as indicated by the figures above quoted, but still the fact that a farmer who ventures to increase his tillage area is regarded by his neighbors as on the verge of lunacy, suggests forcibly that a very erroneous view prevails of the advantages and profits obtainable from such increase.

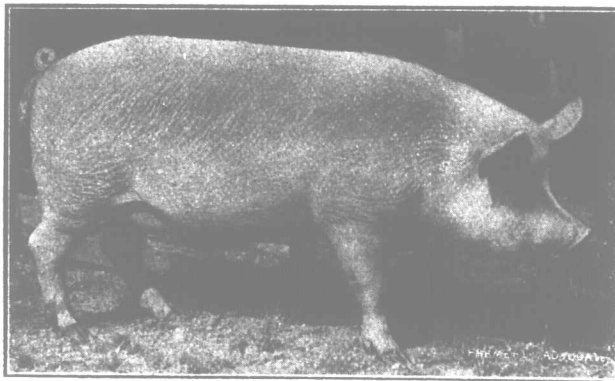
Under the County Cork scheme it is proposed to offer substantial sums, ranging (according to the size of the farm) from £18 to £30 as first prizes, and £12 to £20 for second prizes, and £9 to £15 for third prizes. The farmer that enters for these prizes must have at least one-fifth of the arable land of the entire holding under tillage. Then, on a day to be fixed, the competing farms will be inspected, and judged according to the following points: (1) The proportion of the holding under tillage; (2) the judicious character

of the cropping, efficiency of cultivation, freedom from weeds, cultivation of headlands; (3) the proportion of the crops that will be consumed by the farmer's family and by his live stock, also quantities of purchased food for household and stock purposes necessary; (4) set of accounts, showing produce bought and sold; (5) the number of stock kept for the year, showing pigs reared and fattened, sheep reared and fattened on green food, bullocks and heifers reared and finished for beef, heifers retained as milch stock, the number of cows calving in summer and winter, also the poultry bred and eggs produced.

Such a scheme as this is not, of course, intended to subsidize a system of farming that will not pay if properly conducted. It has been demonstrated time and again that tillage will return a greater profit than grass farming, and the object of the proposed scheme is therefore to encourage farmers to make a trial and test the matter for themselves. We have to regard this as a gratifying departure, and one which, let us hope, will eventually lead on to the betterment of our agricultural industry.

OUR LIVE-STOCK POPULATION.

Now, just a paragraph about the numbers of the different classes of live stock that find a home on our Irish farms, and I will dismiss the consideration of these statistics, which, as a rule, are naturally a bit dry and uninteresting, but I hope are not so in this case. Briefly put, the year has witnessed an increase in cattle, pigs, poultry and goats. Sheep are fewer, and horses and asses are slightly down, though mules and jennets are more numerous. The cattle population of Ireland is given as 4,679,000, an increase of 33,800 on the previous year, including an advance of over 9,000 in milch cows and heifers in calf, which suggests increased dairy products. Sheep, on the other hand, are placed at 3,714,770, or 34,580 less, a very strange thing, indeed, considering what a remunerative branch of the live-stock industry sheep-breeding is at the present time. Pigs, it is particularly satisfactory to note, at least from our standpoint, have substantially increased, being over 80,000 more than last year, and amounting to a total of 1,244,542. If we only



Yorkshire Boar.

First in class over six and under twelve months, Canadian National Exhibition, Toronto, 1906. Bred and exhibited by Joseph Featherston & Son, Streetsville, Ont.

had some well-worked bacon factories throughout Ireland a great impetus would be given to pig-breeding, and no doubt the numbers reared in the country would be still further expanded. This may yet be so, but I have not space to digress in that direction in this letter, at any rate, except to say that good prices are obtainable for well-bred pigs of approved shapes and sizes, and that the Irish farmer has a good chance of improving his trade in this commodity if he only makes the most of his opportunities. Poultry, it is also pleasing to note, are rapidly increasing in numbers. This season's census puts them at nearly 19,000,000, an increase, since last year, of close on half a million. There is reason to believe, also, that the class of birds kept throughout the country is undergoing a general levelling up in quality, so that it should not be a surprise if, in the near future, Irish poultry and eggs make considerably more strides in British markets than in the past. Our marketing and grading systems, though improving, are in many cases still short of what they might be, and, of course, this defect will have a retarding influence as long as it is allowed to exist. Goats are not always thought much of, but we have this year nearly 300,000 of them in Ireland—3,000 more than last year. Equine stock is generally a fluctuating quantity with us. We are credited this year with possessing 604,960 horses, a decrease of 4,000; 212,675 asses, nearly 2,000 less; and 30,230 mules and jennets, these useful types of animals representing an increase on last year's total of 1,201.

HARVEST ACCIDENTS: A MORAL QUESTION.

At this season of the year it is not at all uncommon to receive accounts from the country of

scribing shocking accidents in the harvest field. In some of these cases it is to be feared that the catastrophe could be traced to the intoxication either of the victim or some of his fellow laborers. I do not know what the state of affairs in Canada is regarding the temperance question, but, speaking for Ireland, I am proud to be able to say that a very much improved condition of things prevails towards the subject, compared with not so many years ago. Throughout the country all creeds are uniting in a crusade against the excessive indulgence that has, in the past, fettered our people so much and brought such misery and despair in its train. If it were within the scope of my letters, I could tell of many a promising indication of the ultimate triumph of the temperance cause in Ireland. I just want to mention the fact that, in the course of a recent pastoral letter, one of our Roman Catholic Bishops appealed to the farmers in his diocese to check the prevalent habit of distributing drink to their helpers during harvest time. The outcome was the holding of an influential meeting in an important center, and the unanimous decision of the farmers present to discountenance the practice by every possible means. Nor is this commendable movement confined to one district alone, as similar steps have been taken in other parts of the country as well. As a nation, the Irish people do not at all deserve to be described as intemperate, compared with some other races, but that the public houses (saloons, the Americans call them) are seldom profitless, and that they absorb thousands of hard-earned shillings—well, as Shakespeare would put it, "Tis true, 'tis pity; and pity 'tis 'tis true."

"EMERALD ISLE."

Sheep Notes.

Separate the ram lambs from the ewe lambs at this season, and both will do better.

Ram lambs intended for show or service should be fed a little oats, or oats and bran, unless they have a pasture of rape.

An old ram that has proved an impressive sire is generally a safe proposition to tie to, and he may be bought for a moderate price.

If a change of ram is required, the sooner he is selected the better, before the supply is picked over, as the best are likely to go at first.

A good yearling or two-year-old ram is preferable, all things considered, but if a good one be not available, a strong ram lamb for a flock of less than twenty ewes is safe to use, and may get as good stock as an older sire.

Sheep pens should now be put in condition for winter occupation. They need not be close or warm, but should be dry, well ventilated and free from drafts. Sheep, as a rule, do better when they grind their own grain. A foot and a half to two feet of rack, running lengthwise, is sufficient for ewes of 150 to 206 pounds.

An investigation of sheep-raising in the Southern States develops the fact that as sheep advanced in value some of the owners of small bands of sheep sold all their stock ewes and went out of the sheep business. This is on a par with a San Antonio (Texas) dairyman who always sold his best cows and kept his poor ones. The time to sell lambs and muttons is when they are ready for market, and the time to sell stock ewes is when they have outlived their usefulness as breeders.

Mischievous of a Scrub Bull.

A case of considerable interest to stockmen was recently decided by Judge Edward O'Connor, of the Division Court for the District of Algoma, Ont., sitting at Sault Ste. Marie. The circumstances of the case were these: A scrub bull broke into a field where pure-bred cattle were pasturing, with the result that a two-year-old heifer got in calf. The owner of the heifer brought suit for damages and recovered \$50. The Judge quoted from Blackburn and from Lord Denman as follows:

"We think that the true rule of law is that the person who, for his own purposes, brings on his land, and keeps there, anything likely to do mischief if it escapes, must keep it at his peril, and if he does not do so, is prima facie answerable for all the damage which is the natural consequence of its escape. But for his act in bringing it there no mischief could have accrued, and it seems but just that he should, at his peril, keep it there so that no mischief may accrue, or answer for the natural and anticipated consequences. And upon authority this, we think, is established to be the law, whether the things so brought be beasts, or water, or filth, or stench."

The decision of Judge O'Connor will be an assurance to any one incurring damages from a scrub bull that he can recover through suit.

Do not leave boys to their learning, but keep them up by amusements, that you may be able to direct the direction of each one's career.