

English Letter, No. 24.

[FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.]

Liverpool, March 2nd.

I have, in previous letters, referred to the projected employment of the "Great Eastern" in the Texan cattle trade, and expressed my incredulity as to its success. The projectors seem to have had serious doubts too, for they have given up the scheme, even without a trial, and the mighty ship is still without employment.

The cattle trade in this country has undergone another important phase. The alarming spread of foot and mouth disease in many counties has led to the passing of new orders in Council, which are to the effect that any animal can only be exposed in one public market before slaughter, and must be taken away from such market and killed within ten days. These regulations, which are being rigidly enforced, will have a considerable effect on the Canadian cattle trade; for though Canadian stock may arrive here in perfect health, they, in passing from one market to another, would convey disease as readily as home bred stock, and the new regulations therefore apply equally to them. The markets are, as a consequence, very flat indeed; but it is believed that the depression will be only temporary, and that with the advent of spring and more genial weather the disease will be so checked as to admit of these new regulations being rescinded. I have lately been among the Cumberland farmers in connection with a parliamentary election there, and I can answer for it that they have the good sense to see the necessity for these measures; they are exclusively worried and annoyed by their action, and any attempt to enforce them a day beyond the time that their necessity was apparent would imperil the better understanding that seems to be springing up between the farmers and the Liberal government.

I have already referred to the extent to which Polled Aberdeens are coming into favour. Mr. Geo. Wilkin, of Waterside, Forbes, Aberdeenshire, who was one of the first delegates to Canada, has just shipped a valuable consignment of these cattle to the Hon. J. H. Pope. I referred in my last letter to Mr. Pope's enterprise in this direction.

The other day another shipment left Dundee, per the S. S. Roxburg Castle, for New York. This lot consisted of 16 head, the purchaser being Mr. F. B. Redfield, of Batavia, New York, who secured several animals of the same breed about eighteen months ago. Mr. Cochrane, of Hillhurst, arrived yesterday in the Germanic, and it is his intention, I am informed, to purchase upwards of 50 young bulls, principally Herefords and Polled Aberdeens, which, after having passed quarantine, will be sent to his cattle ranch at the foot of the Rocky Mountains, on Canadian territory. Mr. Cochrane will also import two or three stallions.

The Hon. John Abbott, of Montreal, who also arrived by the same steamer, who has already had some experience with the Cleveland bay carriage horses, intends to select and send out a few more stallions of this breed.

The Americans are buying largely of both Herefords and Shorthorns, and there is also at present a considerable demand for Jerseys. A consignment of 60 of this latter breed left this port for Philadelphia a few days ago.

Mr. Angus, one of the moving spirits in connection with the great Canada Pacific Railway enterprise, was also an arrival per the Germanic. In conjunction with Mr. Geo. Stephen, he will at once commence arrangements for promoting that great enterprise in Europe.

The new Allan steamer Persian arrived in the

Mersey on Tuesday, on her trial trip from the Clyde. She is a splendid specimen of marine architecture, and will no doubt find plenty of admirers when she reaches the St. Lawrence. The Cunard Company, not to be beaten, have just launched the *Servia*, the largest vessel afloat after the *Great Eastern*. It would seem as though the great companies had abundant faith in the future of the trans-Atlantic trade.

A writer in the *Liverpool Mercury*, dating from Winnipeg city, is very severe on your government and its treatment of immigrants, and after assuming that many, in disgust, seek the embraces of "Uncle Sam," expresses like surprise at it. His letter, however, is full of glaring inconsistencies, which detract from the vein of truth which may run through it. For instance, after sitting heavily on the Canada Pacific Railway and everything belonging to it; complaining that it will be a millstone round the necks of Canadians for generations to come, he, with an amusing disregard of all he has just advanced, proceeds to declare that the great want of the North-west is adequate railway communication, in order to get immigrants quickly, cheaply and comfortably to their settling places. I think none but a "Yankee" mind could reconcile these antagonistic statements within the compass of one letter.

Our winter has been unusually severe, and shows no sign yet of giving place to spring. There have, however, been a few dry spells, and farmers have made good use of their time, so that things agricultural may be said to be fairly well advanced.

From the United States.

[BY OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.]

Washington, D. C., March 18, 1881.

The last report of the Botanist of the Department of Agriculture contains an analysis, together with a description and figure, of some twenty-five additional species of native and naturalized grasses, most of which are known to be more or less valuable for forage or hay. A few of these are adapted to cultivation in the more northern latitude of Michigan and Canada. Of Couch grass, or Quack grass, he says:

"There has been a good deal of discussion relative to this grass, some pronouncing it one of the vilest of weeds, and others claiming for it high nutritive qualities, overweighing all the disadvantages of its growth. Whichever party may be right, it is proper that farmers should be acquainted with it, in order to know how to treat it. It forms a dense sod by means of its far-reaching, creeping rhizomas or root-stalks, which have short joints, and root tenaciously at every joint. Hon. J. S. Gould in writing of these grasses says; "The farmers of the United States unite in one continuous howl of execration against this grass, and it seems strange when every man's hand is against it that it is not exterminated. Yet we can never really satisfy ourself that its presence in meadows and pastures was such an unmitigated curse. In lands where alternate husbandry is practiced it must be admitted to be an evil of great magnitude. Its hardness is such, and its rapidity of growth is so great, that it springs up much more rapidly than any other crop that can be planted, and chokes it. Still it has many virtues. It is perfectly cosmopolitan in its habits; it is found in all sorts of soils and climates. Its creeping roots are succulent, sweet and very nutritive, and are greedily devoured by horses and cows." The Botanist adds, that its very persistence and hardness are greatly in its favor in cases where the land is wanted for a permanent pasture.

Wire grass, or Blue grass, is a species which has often been confounded with the famous Kentucky Blue grass, from which it differs in many particulars. Many contradictory accounts have been given as to its agricultural value, some denouncing it as worthless, and others speaking well of it. Our report says: "It is certain that cows that feed upon it both in pasture and in hay give more milk and keep in better condition than when fed on any other grass. Horses when fed on this hay will do as well as when fed on timothy hay and oats combined.

Of Orchard-grass, one of the most popular meadow grasses of Europe, and well known to most farmers of the Northern States, he says: "The testimony that has been collected from all parts of the world for two centuries past, establishes the place of this species among the very best of our forage grasses, and we have not the shadow of a doubt that the interests of our graziers and dairy-men would be greatly promoted by its more extended cultivation. It is always found in the rich old pastures of England, where an acre of land can be relied upon to fatten a bullock and four sheep. It is admirably adapted for growing in the shade, no grass being equal to it in this respect, except rough-stalked meadow grass.

Agriculturists and stock men seem to be taking a renewed interest in the Prickly Comfrey as a forage plant. Many requests from different parts of the country have been sent to the Agricultural department for seed of the prickly comfrey, which is a coarse-leaved plant, remarkable for the prickly bristles with which it is closely beset, and which have long been known and frequently recommended as a forage plant, but for some reason never generally cultivated. Cattle are said to eat it and to thrive upon it with apparent good effects, and the yield is described as being ordinarily very large, sometimes enormous; but thus far it has not taken a high rank among our forage plants. A new interest is however being taken in its cultivation, as the correspondence with the department indicates, not only in this country, but in other lands, and especially in Australia. This prickly comfrey is a Caucasian plant, which was introduced into England from Russia many years ago. In its native country, immense herds of cattle and flocks of sheep were entirely dependent upon it for sustenance, and its large and succulent roots were frequently eaten by the inhabitants. It is not easily propagated by seed, which may account for its not receiving more attention. The difficulty has been overcome partially by the use of cuttings, but effectually by a system of cutting the roots, by which means the plant may be indefinitely propagated with great ease. The director of the Botanic Garden, at Melbourne, Victoria, writes that he considers it a very valuable fodder plant, even if we take a moderate estimate of its productive powers, yielding as it is said to do, more than 80 tons to the acre. It is also recommended for its extreme hardness, neither heat nor cold being prejudicial to its growth. In England, a general interest seems to have been aroused by a statement made by an eminent seedsman several years ago, that it would produce from 60 to 100 tons to the acre; that it is especially adapted to the feeding and fattening of stock, and for increasing the milk of cows, that it grows more rapidly and luxuriantly than any other green soiling plant; that it is a reliable crop, independent of weather and climate; that it comes in earlier and lasts longer than any other crop, and finally that it makes a very nutritious hay for cattle, horses and sheep. The farmers of this country in their application for seed, manifest their willingness to test the truth of the English seedman's glowing praise, by actual experiment. Canadian farmers might do the same.

LOTUS.