

had been awarded to it at meetings of the great Agricultural Societies of the United Kingdom and at foreign exhibitions. Merton rams have been exported to all parts of the world in which improved sheep-breeding is carried on.

For the six months ending 30th June, 1885, there were landed at Liverpool 10,544 Canadian cattle, and 762 sheep. Compared with corresponding period of last year this shows an increase of 767 cattle, but a decrease of sheep to the extent of 3,322 head. It is worth noting that the average mortality is under one per cent. of the whole cattle carried.

One of the greatest agricultural evils of the period is the prodigious increase of swine fever. Throughout the West of England, the malady appears to be spreading with a truly alarming impetus, while in the Eastern part of the Kingdom its prevalence and the rabid virulence of fresh outbreaks are causing the greatest apprehension. The matter has been before the Privy Council, and it is said that an order will be issued dealing with this pestilence in the most summary manner.

THE WEST HIGHLANDER AT HOME.

Correspondence of the London Live Stock Journal.

Of our many British breeds of cattle, the purest as well as the handsomest, and in every way the most interesting, is that of the Hebrides and West Highlands. With the "West Highlander," as he is commonly called, most of our readers are doubtless familiar enough; but by the time he has crossed the border and settled down to English grazing, he is the West Highlander largely educated and civilized; still very handsome and very interesting no doubt, but very different from the same animal while still in the undisturbed enjoyment of his semi-savage life in his native wilds. To know the West Highlander as he ought to be known, and to see him in his beauty, you must meet with him while yet his hoof is on his native heath, and "his name is MacGregor!" Then and there only will you be fully persuaded that of all the bovine race the perfectest of symmetry, and handsomest and activist beyond compare, is the genuine West Highlander.

Gentle reader, come, take your stick in your hand, and throw that plaid over your shoulder, for the mist on yonder hills may develop into rain at any moment, and let us go up and have a look at a lot of cattle of the purest strain, genuine West Highlanders, now grazing in upper Glen Eilte.

Reaching the quaint turf-built bothy of honest Donald McEwen, the herdsman—the only human habitation within a circuit of many mountain miles—we are fortunate in finding him at home; and after kindly greeting and a drink of richest milk from the good wife, we produce our flasks, and in best "mountain dew," clasp hands in the good old Highland fashion, we drink a deep *deoch-sla nte* round, and feel all the better for it. "These Donald," we say, "are a couple of gentlemen from the south; they want to see the cattle; so come along and show us round the corrie." Donald is instantly a-foot and ready; and with stick in hand, and a couple of large rough Collies at heel, he leads the way over some intervening hillocks and hollows down to a meadow beside the stream, the favorite noonday haunt of the *crodh laidh*, as he terms them; literally the calf-cattle, or cattle with calves at foot—the nursing mothers of the herd. And there they are! 18 in number, magnificent animals every one of them; big horned, large and shaggy—the very pictures of what Highlanders should

be in the mature stage of life. The calves are extremely beautiful; from a month to three months old: black, reddish-brown, and dun, two or three almost milk-white, with black muzzles and black-tipped ears. They knew Donald, but of us, as strangers, they are manifestly suspicious, gathering into a group, and looking at us with pricked ears, and large wondering eyes. The mothers, too, know that we are strangers, and cease grazing until, making a slight detour, we pass by and disappear over a neighboring ridge.

A walk of half an hour brings us to the upland slopes of the corrie, where the queys or heifers are grazing; and how beautiful they are! 32 in number—three and four-year-olds—black, reddish-brown, mouse-colour, and dun, and grey. A magnificent dun, with jet-black muzzle and a black stripe down the back, seems to have been appointed sentinel, for, getting sight of us as we top the crest of an intervening ridge, she tosses her beautiful head stag-like, and gallops towards us as if for a nearer view and to discover whether our presence means any danger to the herd. At Donald's suggestion we strangers halt for a moment while he walks forward, and, speaking to the quey as if she could perfectly understand his meaning, he assures her in Gaelic that no harm is intended, that we are only strangers, who have come a long way up the glen to admire the beauty of herself and her companions, and go away again. The quey, having really seemed to listen, instantly puts about and gallops away to her companions, who are by this time gathered into a close phalanx on the opposite slope, their forest of long-pointed horns and pricked ears giving them a singularly wild and striking appearance. Quietly approaching, Donald leading and speaking to them in Gaelic, we get within 100 yards, near enough to be able to admire their exquisite symmetry of form, their long silken pile that almost reaches to their fetlocks; glossy on the back and flank as velvet, and parted down the spine as neatly and evenly as ever a young lady bent on conquest parted her hair in even "shed" before her mirror that tells her, as it has already told her a thousand times, that she is beautiful. As we move slowly round them they slowly shift round *pari passu*, so that their heads and horns are always towards us in readiest attitude should occasion call, either for attack or defence. There can be little doubt, we think, that the "square" formation in military evolutions was originally adopted from the way in which cattle in their wild or semi-wild state thus instantly throw themselves into a similar formation, when they apprehend and would repulse an attack. Tossing their heads threateningly, and pawing the ground, these beautiful queys seemed preparing to charge, and we felt for a moment uncomfortable, until Donald, speaking quietly to one of his Collies, it dashed forward with a loud bark which made the sentinel dun and the entire herd instantly turn tail and dash away across the glen at a swinging gallop that, under a swaying forest of horns, was in such a case the very poetry of motion.

In answer to our questions Donald confessed that it would be dangerous for a stranger to pass alone through their grazing ground; more particularly if he was accompanied by a dog; for the sight of a strange dog excites them to fury. It was only the week before, Donald said, that an unfortunate shepherd's dog, that chanced to stray into the corrie, was instantly surrounded by the herd, and in a moment gored and trampled to death. Complimenting Donald, as we bade him good-bye, on the beauty of his herd, he was much pleased, as with pardonable pride he remarked, "How, indeed, sir, could they be otherwise than beautiful, for they have never yet slaked

their thirst at any other water than the water of Eilte!"

AMERICAN VETERINARY AND AGRICULTURAL NEWS.

[If *The North British Agriculturist* had not made a distinction between America and Canada in the following article which—by the way, shows more geographical knowledge than the most of English writers for the press seem to have acquired as to this continent north of the equator—Dr. Smith, of the Ontario Veterinary College, and Dr. McEachren, of the Quebec College, might have stood up to respond. As it is they can keep their seats.]

A good deal of information is furnished on veterinary subjects in most American agricultural newspapers, and there should be numerous readers, inasmuch as nearly half the population of the United States and Canada are more or less directly connected with agriculture, while the love and interest in horses abounds as much as in the British Isles. The recent spread of contagious pleuro-pneumonia and the agitation regarding Texan fever at present direct increased attention to veterinary topics, to quarantine, and to sanitation. The bulk of veterinary teaching in American newspapers, endorsed although it often is by gentlemen styling themselves 'doctors,' is, however, rather crude, and not remarkable for accuracy. The actual nature of disease is seldom condescended upon, the important department of preventive medicine, which may be advantageously discussed popularly, is sadly neglected; treatment and wonderful prescriptions command the most popularity. Generally ignorant of medical subjects, stock-owners in America are more victimized by quackery than their brethren at home. Interminable are the pills and potions, the universal cures, the infallible heal-alls. The scarcity of competent educated veterinarians doubtless drives stock-owners to the empiric and his specifics. The three American veterinary colleges have not yet educated and sent forth trained practitioners in numbers sufficient for the wants of the Western Continent.

In illustration of the loose way in which even common diseases of animals are discussed by American agricultural papers, we may cite an article on contagious pleuro-pneumonia in cattle which has recently been copied into many journals, although ignorantly propounding the view that this specific lung fever is merely pulmonary consumption. Regarding black-leg, one of the inspectors of the Bureau of Animal Industry remarks that the disease is becoming more prevalent throughout the northern and middle States. He states it to be merely an inflammatory disorder, makes no mention of its specific anthrax and contagious character, and advises that the young animals affected should receive plenty of salt, saltpetre, and sulphur, which he avers will save 25 to 30 per cent. A mixture of pitch tar and lard, he adds, will also be found beneficial in many cases. The inspector's teaching is very misleading, for in its ordinary natural form, whether in Great Britain or America, it kills fully 95 per cent. of the subjects attacked, and is certainly not arrested in its course or cured by a dose of physic. Another authority states that he has forty-five years' experience as a breeder, and has cases of black-leg appearing every year amongst his cattle, but he at once prescribes half a tea cupful of common salt and saltpetre, "well mixed and given dry; orders severe exercise for twenty minutes;" a second dose, he adds, is seldom requisite, and never a single animal has he lost! The so-called black-leg is obviously some simple disorder, and the fortunate breeder who seeks to instruct his neigh-