

Our Scottish Letter.

The New Year festivities are over and folks have again got settled down to work. The weather is a fruitful source of conversation with farmers, but the past year has been less vilified in this respect than most of those which have preceded it. North of the Humber the season was one of the best, and if not contributing to make farmers passing rich, it was far from being as dreary as some of those which preceded it. Summarizing the state of matters, it may be said that dairy farmers, without having any cause for complaint, fared not so badly as they sometimes have done; breeders of pure-bred stock of all kinds had no right to grumble; feeders of cattle were getting back their own with a little over, but growers of wheat and potatoes are in a sorry plight. It is not easy to predict whereunto the down grade in these crops will tend, meantime it means no trade and spells ruin; £16 per acre is considered necessary to make potatoes a paying crop. Those who are able to meet the earliest market sold their crops in 1893 at over £30 per acre, and in one case that we have heard of a second crop of cabbages was taken off the land and sold at £15 per acre. This gave a return of about £50 per acre, an abnormal price surely, and a fine illustration of intensive farming. This took place on the Ayrshire coast, where we have some very go-ahead farmers—men who do not cling to old methods, but have receptive minds, and are ever on the outlook for improvements. The wheat growers will have to take a lesson from these, and putting all the energies they possess into their business, adapt their means to the ends that are possible. When the northwest provinces can send us wheat grown at 40 cents per bushel, there is no use in persisting to grow wheat in this country, even although the land be well adapted for the purpose. The problem really is, What should our farmers grow? This question presented itself to farmers in one district some years ago, and the result was that they abandoned their time-honored rotation of green crops and went in for growing hay. They found out that land could be top-dressed with manure to good purpose, and they broke away from the traditions of their farmers, devoting their energies to other departments in which there was more money.

Some of the most interesting items going the rounds at present deal with the butchers' opinions of the fat stock champions at Smithfield and Birmingham. These reports are summarized by Mr. George T. Turner, a recognized authority on everything connected with Sussex cattle, and one of the best judges of meat as well as most judicious of writers on agriculture in England. He gives his opinions and findings to the world in the columns of the London Live Stock Journal, which, for the past three weeks, has been giving interesting notes on his findings. Generally, the results are wholly favorable to the slow-feeding cattle—the West Highlanders and the Galloways. Some of the best of these slaughtered by leading London butchers have turned out very well indeed. Lord Cawdor's first prize Highland heifer, Highland Mary, is characterized as a perfect carcass, and the Messrs. Biggar's Galloway steer as one of the best carcasses Slater and Cooke, the London fashionable butchers, ever had in their shop. Lean beef in plenty and an absence of waste are the great recommendations of these cattle. The A.-A. champion, Bridesmaid of Benton, cut up remarkably well; her butcher characterized her as the best show carcass he ever killed. Her Majesty's great Shorthorn ox, Prince Charlie, has also slaughtered well, and, indeed, may be said to have proved to demonstration that a fat ox may also be lean. It would be of lasting interest to find out how these great animals were fed. The best quality of beef is apparently got from the cattle fed more slowly, and as bearing on this a discussion which recently took place in the columns of the Scottish Farmer is of interest. There is a class of aged steers at the Smithfield Club Show, and some are of opinion that it should be given up, as it is an encouragement to breeders and feeders to keep on an expensive kind of cattle, namely, those which come slowly to maturity. That the meat so fed is excellent is not denied, but that there is any profit in such feeding is very much doubted. Perhaps, from a show point of view, the fairest proposal was that made by a gentleman not unknown to Canadians, Mr. James Biggar, the well-known Galloway breeder. It was that steers which had formerly won prizes at Smithfield should not be allowed to compete in this class. It is undeniable that it would have been better for all such which appeared in 1893 not to have been fed a year longer than the date of their triumph. Without exception they would have sold to better advantage in 1892 than in 1893, and their meat is hardly likely to have been improved by a year's keep, as they were prime fat in 1892. For the credit of these cattle, the breeds to which they belonged, and the judgment as well as the purses of their feeders during the past year, they would have been more profitably slaughtered in 1892.

Clydesdale business is in a fine, healthy state. Prices have not gone up, but the hiring of horses for service in 1894 has gone forward at a rapid rate. Anything like a detailed account of this business would not be of much interest to Canadian readers. Nearly all of the principal studs have

been drawn upon, and the highest prices have been paid for Prince of Millfield's services by Lord Polwarth. Terms are perhaps a little easier than they were, but still there is plenty of money in a good Clydesdale stallion which gets foals. There is no difficulty at all in hiring such to bring in from £250 to £400 in one season. The price of a stallion should rarely exceed one year's purchase, that is to say, the revenue which he would draw in one season. This refers to a good average commercial horse, not to horses which may take high honors in the showing, for which, of course, fancy prices will be paid. On the whole, farmers of every kind, except the unfortunate wheat and potato growers, look forward hopefully to 1894.

SCOTLAND YET.

The General Purpose Horse.

CONTRIBUTED BY CHARLES MICHIE, DEWDNEY, ALTA.

The fall exhibitions are over for another season, and the red, blue and yellow tickets have been distributed to the all-expectant exhibitors, bringing joy to the few, with wailings and gnashing of teeth from the many that would not be comforted. But who ever saw it, or how could it be otherwise? To drive a pig to the fair that for the life of him can't see the benefit to be derived from farmers' institute work, or agricultural shows, or mildly protest with a newly halter-broken colt over the same distance as to your positive assurance that he will take the red ticket (the colt isn't so sure), and then have to head for home with an empty hand, and possibly an empty stomach, why, it would have been "a credit" for even Mark Tapely "to look happy."

Judges are not incapable of erring, for like other men they are only mortal, but sometimes it is almost impossible to give satisfaction. Having attended the Winnipeg Industrial, and three or four local exhibitions in the Territories, I had occasion to observe that the greatest dissatisfaction was most apparent, as a rule, in passing judgment on the general purpose and agricultural horse class, which are generally combined. This, as a class, is usually well represented, and is most difficult to define. It constitutes a free-for-all competition, and opens its arms for the lower ten in the equine world, be they descended from high or low degree, since they cannot lay claim to a defined type. Everybody, of course, knows a "general purpose horse" when he sees it, or thinks so, but where his position in equine society begins and where it ends is what nobody knows.

I saw in one instance where a protest was made against a mare registered in the Clydesdale Stud Book, that had been entered and won a prize in the "general purpose class," her chances in her proper class being less on account of being slightly undersized. As a rule, also, among the two-year-olds and under in that class, preference was invariably given to the "big ones," some of which would make respectable draughts when furnished, while some neat little thing, with the foundation for a good carriage horse, was overlooked, although for a general purpose she filled the bill more decidedly than her more fortunate opponent. That such a state of affairs requires alteration is probably apparent to most directors of agricultural societies, but the question is how to remedy it.

I believe the directors of the Toronto Industrial omitted the general purpose class from their prize list this year, and it is their intention to rule out the agricultural class for horses next year. Such a course may be approved of in connection with an exhibition on the scale of the Toronto Industrial, but such drastic measures are not applicable to rural societies, especially in Manitoba and the N. W. T. In a country like Western Canada, where distances to market are in some cases great, something in the horse line that will step out at an eight-mile trot, and still have weight enough to draw a load when required, or work with freedom at the plow, is of necessity demanded. Their superiority over a heavy draught team in such an instance is obvious, apart from being less expensive, which the settler with limited means has to take into consideration. For the same reason but few are able to invest in a team of Cleveland Bay mares, half-bred thoroughbreds, Morgans, or any of the recognized breeds that would fill the place of the so-called general purpose. To the mixed agriculturist, however, the benefit to be derived financially from a span of mares of the types alluded to, were he fortunate enough to possess them, would be incomparably ahead of the ordinary general purpose, with no defined breeding. Such mares, mated to a thoroughbred horse of the carriage stamp, or any recognized type of the heavier class of roadster stallions, should raise colts that would "go out of the country," and command a price in any market. The same remarks hold good to draught horses, if of the proper quality and substance, supposing such an animal is used in preference on the farm. The general purpose mare, unless above the average, will, if mated to the general purpose stallion, produce something no better than herself—the chances are, something inferior—and here is the point I wish to draw attention to. The directors of some of the agricultural societies, probably from a sentiment of wishing to

accommodate one and all, gave a class and prizes for general purpose and agricultural stallions (no registration of any kind necessary). Brandon I noticed in particular, which has a society that should be ahead of such. Now, the efforts of every society should be to elevate and benefit the farmer; for that reason a government grant is given, and with the society, if properly managed, lies the solution of the difficulty referred to in the general purpose agricultural class for horses. Let the directors divide that class into two heads, and for the general purpose class let the judges be informed to keep in their minds' eye something approaching the Cleveland Bay or carriage class as their model, and award accordingly, while for the agricultural class let them be judged according to the draught standard. On a principle of that kind the general purpose horse would stand a chance of being improved, the heavier class becoming assimilated with the draught, while the lighter sorts would benefit in quality, and still retaining his general utility standard he would gradually merge into a more defined type, and consequently a more saleable animal. As for the general purpose and agricultural stallion, the sooner he turns tail the better. No intelligent breeder would ever think of mating a likely mare, with the expectation of getting a good foal, to one of those undersized or misshapen nondescripts that go around squealing in the spring, and whose owner insures you for a remarkably small sum to get a foal that will stand and suck, or walk once around the mare (no word about getting your own figure as a four-year-old).

There are people who will see perfection in some half-bred mongrel, because they bred and own him, and there are people who will use him because "a horse is a horse any how," but it lies in the power of directors, having the management of agricultural societies, to benefit the agricultural community at large to an appreciable extent, by leaving no room for the general purpose stallion on their prize list, for by doing so farmers will be left more to the option of breeding on draught or carriage lines, nor would it take many years to prove the practical benefit resulting from such a mode of procedure.

Annual Meeting.

The annual meeting of the American Oxford Down Sheep Record Association was held at Grand Hotel, Cincinnati, Ohio, January 9th. J. R. Cunningham, Vice-President for Indiana, took the chair. The treasurer's report showed a balance of \$1938.14 on hand. During the year 1893, \$1305.00 was paid by the Association in special prizes to Oxfords at the World's Fair, and at state and provincial fairs.

It was decided that the Association offer at each state and provincial fair in the United States and Canada in 1894, the sum of \$50 on pens of Oxford-Down lambs. The money to be divided into three prizes: 1st, \$25; 2nd, \$15; 3rd, \$10. Pen to consist of four lambs of either sex, bred and owned by exhibitor in the state or province where the prizes are competed for. All lambs competing for these prizes to be recorded in the American Oxford Down Record, with A. O. D. R. A. ear tag inserted in the ear, and certificates of registry under seal of the Association presented at the time of exhibition. The fees for registering lambs owned by members of the Association were reduced to 50 cents, but remain as before (\$1.00) for lambs owned by non-members, and for all sheep over one year old.

Encouraging letters were received from members who could not be present, and from President Goldsborough, regretting his inability to attend the meeting and adding, "While I do not want you to elect someone else as President in the sense of wishing to be relieved of the office, because I have always appreciated the honor, yet I do not think it fair that I should hold the place, with whatever prominence and honor may belong to it, when there are other breeders who are as largely interested as I am, and nearer at hand, and who can and do attend the meetings more conveniently than I have been able to do. My interest in the breed and in the Record Association has never wavered. I only wish, for my larger success as a breeder, and for the pleasure it would give me to meet you oftener, that I was nearer the centre of population in our country, which is not far distant from the home office of the Association."

Papers on "The Future of the Oxford," by Geo. McKerrow, and on "The Prospect," by the secretary, were read. The meeting was well attended, and members expressed themselves as pleased with the condition of the Association's affairs, and all agreed that there is no safer stock to "tie to" in these times of general business depression than a flock of good Oxford Downs.

The secretary was instructed to request the different State Fair Associations who have not already done so, to give Oxfords a separate class.

The election of officers resulted as follows: President, Geo. McKerrow, Sussex, Wisconsin. Vice-Presidents, a list of one from each state and province represented in the capital stock. Board of Directors: T. W. W. Sunman, Spades, Ind.; E. J. Thuring, Chardon, O.; R. J. Stone, Stonington, Ill.; J. C. Williamson, Xenia, O. Sec-Treas., W. A. Shafor, Middletown, O. Adjourned to meet at Grand Hotel, Cincinnati, O., second Tuesday in January, 1895.

W. A. SHAFOR, SEC.