

So far as this year's potato crop is concerned, very little can be done to save it, but much remains to be done to prevent a visitation of the same misfortune next year. Everybody who knows the history of the disastrous potato blight which visited Ireland, and the subsequent lamentable visitations of famine and fever consequent upon it, will remember that while the blight first made its appearance in 1845, the culmination of the disaster was not reached till 1847. Such a continuance of the potato rot was as preventible then as it is now, but the nature and cause of the blight were not then understood and through lack of knowledge on this point the evil instead of being stamped out was actually perpetuated. A correspondent of the *Cultivator and Country Gentleman* furnishes the following vivid picture of the first appearance of this formidable destructive agency and its attendant train of evils in Ireland:—

"This blight was precisely then what it is now. The leaves became withered and scorched as if by fire; the stems were spotted with black patches, and the decaying vines gave out a fetid odor. When the tubers were taken up, they were found to be more or less affected by rot, but not to a disastrous extent. The diseased tubers and vines were left upon the ground—as we now know, to sow the seed for a new crop—and the land was prepared for another season. This year (1845) the disease was worst upon boggy ground, and low, damp undrained soils, and where the potatoes had been continually grown in the small patches occupied by the poorest cottagers, whose cabins were of sods, or the roughest sticks daubed with mud. The next year (1846) was a wet one, and the blight was more frequent, and the crop more generally rotten. The same fatal fault of sowing for the next year was committed, and in 1847 culminated a disaster which reduced the population of Ireland from eight millions to six. Death and forced emigration removed two million souls from that unhappy but verdant and beautiful island. It was then, as a medical student passing through a course in a London College, that I was sent, with some other volunteers, to assist in aiding the starving people, stricken with a most virulent contagious fever, such as always follows famines. The whole crop of potatoes was rotten. The black putrid vines covered the soil; the earth was filled with rotten tubers, and the stench was almost overpowering, even to those who had been used to the wards of a large hospital and to the odors of a dissecting room. Dead corpses lay on the roadsides, wretched cabins became the vaults in which whole families lay dead and decomposing; dead mothers were to be seen as they had sat on the roadside, nursing their infants, which still hung upon the cold breasts."

Such a terrible affliction very naturally attracted the attention of the whole civilized world, and after careful and protracted investigations the real nature of the blight was discovered to be a parasitic fungus which first appears in a preliminary stage of growth or vegetation as mycelium or white threads, which corresponds with the foliage of other plants, and afterward in their mature state of fruit as dark spores or seeds. The blighted leaves and stalks are

filled with the mycelium, which bears the sexual organs, and these fructifying, produce the spores in the vines and tubers. It may be that in some cases the leaves are infested by spores carried in the air, while the stems and tubers are diseased through spores in the soil. This being the case and well understood, the prevention of the perpetuation of the evil should be simple enough. The parasite must be destroyed at all hazards. To destroy the parasite, every vine and tuber infested by it must be destroyed and given no opportunity to reproduce its species. The ground upon which the infected potatoes have been grown should be devoted to some other crop. Low, wet land, animal manures and everything tending to rank growth should be discouraged. The correspondent from whom we have already quoted gives the following very sensible advice to farmers who have this season suffered from the potato blight or rot:—

"The effect of the disease upon the potato is to destroy the starch cells, and cause decomposition of the albumen and nitrogenous elements, thus giving rise to the intolerable odor of the decayed vines and tubers. When the damaged potatoes are boiled, they are only injured so far as the partial loss of substance. The spores are destroyed and the tubers may be fed to stock usefully. As a precaution, every spotted potato should be thus used, and a good use for them is to feed them to swine, with a portion of corn meal. To prevent the decay of sound potatoes which may have been infected superficially by contact with spores gathered from diseased tubers, they should be kept in a dry place, and well dusted over with air-slacked lime, which, by its avidity for water, takes the moisture from the spores of the fungus, and so destroys them. This is a certain preventive of damage, and I have found it to be effective in stopping decay in those potatoes which have been partially touched by the rot. Lime has been found also to be useful when applied to the soil previous to planting; but this I have noticed in my own case to have the effect of making the potatoes harder to cook, requiring longer boiling to make them mealy. The use of perfectly sound seed—goes without saying—is advisable, and it will be a timely suggestion to those concerned that it would be judicious to select the sound potatoes now for next year's seed, and to use lime for preserving them."

The fecundity of Doll Wicks, dam of Deck Wright, almost staggers belief. A record of her offspring shows that she has produced fifteen colts in fifteen consecutive years. She is a bay mare, foaled 1859, got by Young North Briton (Kelsey), son of North Briton, dam by Fan Wicks by Young Duroc; 2nd dam old Fan, called a Messenger mare. Doll Wicks was bred and owned by Benjamin Wicks, Ox Bow, N.Y. She produced a foal each year from 1862 to 1876, inclusive. She missed in 1877 and produced foals in 1878, '79, and '80. Deck Wright was foaled in 1869, and was her first colt by The Hinsdale Horse. She was bred to this horse in 1870, and the offspring was the black horse Ira, 2:30. Since then she has dropped six foals by The Hinsdale Horse, among them the brown-stallion N. J. Fuller, foaled 1874, who has made a record of 2:28½ this season. He and Ira are brothers to Deck Wright.

Correspondence.

THE CHICAGO FAT STOCK AND DAIRY SHOW.

CHICAGO, Nov. 20, 1885.

From our own Correspondent.

The universal opinion of everybody who attended the eighth annual Fat Stock Show, is that it has been the best show all the way through ever held here. In point of attendance it has certainly been the best. Your correspondent has met men here from Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, New York, Mississippi, Texas, California, Oregon and Canada. So it may be seen that stockmen came from all parts of the country to attend this great gathering of the stock clans. In point of numbers and of quality the Herefords took the lead this year.*

The Indiana Blooded Stock Company, of Indianapolis, Ind., had the largest exhibit of Herefords and carried off a good share of the premiums.

Fowler & Van Natta, of Fowler, Ind., also had a very fine exhibit, as did also George Leigh & Co., of Aurora, Ill.; Swan & Bosler, Indianola, Iowa; B. Hershey, Muskatine, Iowa; J. S. Funkhouser, Plattsburg, Mo.; Seabury & Sample, La Fayette, Ind.; C. M. Culbertson, Chicago, Ill.; and Adams Earl, La Fayette, Ind. The Hereford men certainly deserve a great deal of credit for the grand display they brought out. They got the lion's share of the premiums until they came to an Angus exhibited by James J. Hill, of St. Paul, Minn. This steer had things his own way for quite a while and carried off many ribbons.

The Angus men were out in better style this year than last, and they made quite a good showing.

James J. Hill, St. Paul, Minnesota, was the largest exhibitor of the Polls. He gave the Herefords a pretty hard pull and left the Shorthorns away in the shade. W. R. Estill, Estill, Mo., had a very good exhibit of cross-bred Angus cattle. Gudgeon & Simpson, Independence, Mo., and the Indiana Blooded Stock Company, Indianapolis, Ind., had two Polled animals each. The best Polled animal was Hutcheon, owned by Mr. Hill. He was the one that stopped the Herefords from taking off all the best premiums. He was a very fine specimen of the breed.

In the Shorthorn class the largest exhibitor was John P. Gillett, Elkhart, Ill. He is probably the largest feeder of cattle for market in the country and has always exhibited at the show from the start. He has never exhibited any prodigies, but has shown what can be done by crossing Shorthorn on the native stock. His cattle are a very uniform lot, in fact. I could pick out a Gillett steer anywhere I saw one, so uniform are they. John B. Sherman, manager of the Union Stock Yards and Transit Co., had a large exhibit of very fair cattle. He is also a regular feature of the show. J. R. Peak & Son, Winchester, Ill., had a very good exhibit, as did also Morrow & Renick, Clintonville, Ky.; J. H. Potts & Son, Jacksonville, Ill.; B. Waddell, Marion, Ohio. These gentlemen are all old stand-bys of this show and always have good stocks. While the Shorthorns were comparatively few in number, what there were, were good animals.

* The Bow Park representation was sadly missed by the Shorthorn men this year and its absence was noted by all the regular attendants at the show. But it is not to be wondered at, as it could not be expected that Mr. Hope would exert himself as he did last year, to lift up the Shorthorn, after the shabby manner in which the Shorthorn Breeders' Association treated him. It may be truthfully said, the Shorthorn men would have been beaten last year and the year before if it had not been for his exertions. Last year Benton Champion, and the year before Roan Boy, gave him a pretty hard pull, but with Clarence Kirklevington he pulled them out all right, and he alone did it.