

**English Letter, No. 42.**

Liverpool, Oct. 5th, 1882.

In several of my previous letters I have endeavored to impress upon your farmers the great desirability of their paying attention to sheep raising. Those who have taken the hint might now be reaping their reward; for all that I have said and urged is amply justified by the present state of our sheep market. Never probably within living memory have sheep been so scarce or so dear with us. At a recent sale on the borders of Scotland, sheep fetched as high as \$16 to \$18 per head, whilst good breeding ewes seem impossible to be had. A number of Canadian ewes have, I understand, been sent to Suffolk for breeding purposes, the attention being to put them to a good South-down or Oxford-down ram; get the lambs off early and then finish the ewes. This is said to be a very profitable business in many parts of England. The scarcity of good sheep in some parts of this country is now remarkable. In conversation with a farmer who came to see his brother off to Manitoba, the other day, I learned that in Gloucestershire, Hereford and Worcester, there is hardly a sound sheep left, the long succession of wet seasons and the ravages of the rot having played sad havoc.

In the low-lying districts, where heavy land prevails, this season has been little better than the three or four preceding, and, this same farmer told me, that on his heavy, clay farm, necessitating his keeping 30 horses, he has not been able to work a single horse for weeks together, either in ploughing or carting manure. In the higher lands things are better; but even there only very partial success has been attained.

I have ascertained from a friend, who has been travelling recently through the home of the Herefords, and visiting several of the principal herds, that the demand for this favorite breed, and especially for bulls, has not been so great as was expected, and ranchmen and others wanting to invest would now probably be able to get some very fair bargains. The leading breeders are well stocked, in expectation of a large demand from your side of the water. The run, however, has been mainly on "doddies" and other north country breeds, for some of which extravagant prices have been paid.

There are a number of Canadian buyers still in England endeavoring, principally, to purchase shire-bred stallions, but they are apparently not to be obtained at any price—that is horses fit for service next year. This scarcity will, no doubt, lead to a large increase of the colts kept entire; but there is not much prospect of a fall in prices for years to come.

Seeing that it is now only five or six years since the inauguration of the Anglo-Canadian trade in cattle, the improvement in the character of your exports is remarkable and highly creditable. Everyone remarks that the grass-fed cattle coming from Canada this year, are little, if any, inferior to the best classes of stock coming from our home breeders. In fact, with a little care taken in keeping the meat well on your stock, and giving them a little hard food to finish them off, Canadians will have little or no difficulty in getting the best prices going.

This is rather a dull season in all matters. The excitement of the Egyptian war is over, even Ireland is quiet, and the farmers, thankful for small mercies, are glad to get off a few shades better this year than has been their lot for a long time. As one farmer remarked: "It is not so much lower rents as better weather that they require; for, with seasons such as have been the rule, with no rent at all to pay, they could not make a profit." They are still living mainly in hope, and the harvests having been a shade improved, they are sanguine that the tide has turned at last, and a cycle of good years is before them.

**On the Wing.**

MANITOBA—No. 2.

BRANDON.—This is a prosperous and thriving town situated on the C. P. R., about 150 miles from Winnipeg. This is naturally the finest site for a city we have yet seen, either in Manitoba or the North-West Territory. The Assiniboine River runs through the city. We call it a city, as we have no doubt it will soon attain population sufficient to entitle it to that appellation, which is often applied to a houseless locality on the Western prairies. The soil here is not as tenacious as in Winnipeg. There is a fine valley on each side of the Assiniboine; from the valley the banks of the river rise to a good altitude in a sloping form, so as to allow streets to be laid out on the sloping hill, one above the other, and yet not too steep for easy travel. After the summit of the hill is attained, the land is undulating, thus affording an excellent opportunity for draining. About 2,000 inhabitants were in the place when we were there; but the growth of these prairie cities is such that one is bewildered at the rapidity with which they increase. The population may be doubled by this time.

Being very desirous of seeing more of the farmers and farm life than we had an opportunity of doing in the rapid transit we had made, we left our party to partake of the hospitalities so liberally prepared by the Brandonians. We enquired of a stranger we met in the street where we could procure a livery rig. On ascertaining our object, he immediately offered to hitch up his horses and drive us into the country. We accepted the offer and in a few minutes we were rolling over the prairie. Our Jehu was a strong, hearty-looking Englishman, a lawyer from Lincoln's-inn, London, England. He informed us that he came to inspect the country for the purpose of procuring land for his relatives; some of them were now residing in New Zealand and some in England. The name of the gentleman was W. Lester Smith. He had been in the country about a year, and had purchased 12,000 acres on Plumb Creek, in the Souris district. He was preparing a home for his relations. He considered the investment of capital would be more profitable here than in either England or New Zealand. He had already broken up 200 acres and had 50 acres in crop this year, and he appeared highly pleased with the prospects before him.

In the suburbs of Brandon we called at a brick-yard. We found that after removing about two feet of the surface soil, the ground became of a lighter color—a light-colored clay. It did not appear as tenacious or greasy to the touch as our clay. We thought it would not make good brick, and on examining those that were burned, we expected to hear a dull thud when we knocked them together, this being a test of good brick with us; but to our surprise, the bricks rang like a bell, indicating good material.

We drove over the prairie a few miles and halted at the residence of Mr. Charles Whitehead. This gentleman was seated in his buggy, and was just about to start around his farm. We informed him that we had but a short time to stay, as we must shortly return to catch our train. He said, "Jump into my buggy," and away we went over the plowed ground, around or through a 400-acre field of oats, about one-quarter of which were cut. The crop was as nice a standing crop as we could wish to behold; hardly a bit of lodged grain could be seen. The straw is very different from our straw in Ontario—much stiffer, stronger and brighter. Had we such a crop in Ontario, it would have been all lodged and tangled on every farm, but we never saw such a fine piece of standing oats before, in fact, we do not think they could be surpassed.

Two harvesters were at work; one man drove and attended each machine. The machines were going steadily along with a click, and dropping a sheaf at even intervals. These two Giant Harvesters were cutting and binding this crop at the rate of 20 acres per day. Mr. Whitehead says he will have 20,000 barrels of oats to sell. Last year they were worth 75c. per bushel at Brandon; this year Mr. W. will be quite satisfied if he realizes 50c. The influx of settlers and the construction of railways cause such a demand, Mr. Wastie, formerly of London, informed us, that last year when travelling through the Q'Apelle Valley, he paid \$3 per bushel for them to feed his horse. Horses do not work hard and live long in Manitoba.

In addition to Mr. Whitehead's oat crop, he has 20 acres of wheat, 6 of barley, 4 of potatoes, and 4 of mangles and turnips. He has commenced to raise a herd of Ayrshire cattle, has planted out a young orchard, and has a vegetable and flower garden. One of the choice plants that was pointed out to us with considerable satisfaction to all concerned, was a plant of the Russian mulberry, which had been procured from the FARMER'S ADVOCATE office. It had made a good growth, despite its having been transplanted after it had commenced to grow.

Mr. Whitehead invited us into the house, saying that as they were subscribers to the FARMER'S ADVOCATE, his wife would be much pleased to see us, as she thought much of the ADVOCATE. We entered a comfortable frame house, nicely furnished. We were introduced to Mrs. W., partook of a glass of buttermilk, and were invited to remain or come again. But knowing the train would not wait, we bid them adieu, jumped into Mr. Smith's vehicle and hurried to the station, and in a few minutes we were off with our party, most of whom had been enjoying the city hospitalities.

Do you not think Mr. Whitehead has done wonders, when we inform you that it was only on the 5th of June, 1881, that he took possession of his farm, then an unbroken prairie? The soil on Mr. Whitehead's farm is of a lighter nature than the land about Winnipeg, and it is not as rich as much we hear about; but Mr. W. thinks by judicious management he can maintain or improve the fertility. It will not produce as heavy crops of wheat as land on the Souris and other places, but from its rolling nature, the ease with which it is worked, and the advantageous situation in regard to market and a healthy locality, he envies not those farmers in the more fertile, level and more distant localities.

**A MANITOBA STOCK BARN.**

Mr. Whitehead, like most of the settlers, finds a great difficulty in procuring building material, but as his land is rolling prairie, he has adopted a very excellent and useful plan that may with profit be adopted by many. He has excavated three large cellars, leaving a good breadth of earth between them; they are excavated to the depth of about three and a half or four feet. The earth taken out is placed on the top of the earth around the excavation, thus raising it about three feet all around. This gives him depth enough to make good stabling for his stock. The top is covered with small poplar poles, and a few posts are set up through the centres of the widest openings to support the poles. When threshing his grain he sets his machine so as to throw the straw on the top of the poles, covering the whole to a good depth, so as to entirely keep the frost out, except at the openings or doors, which are easily made tight or double if necessary. Last winter it was so warm that he was obliged to cut openings to admit the air. This year