

Agricultural Intelligence.

BIRMINGHAM FAT CATTLE AND POULTRY SHOW.

This Annual Show of the Midland Counties of England, took place, as usual, the beginning of December, and although it fell somewhat short of last year's, yet it has been pronounced not below an average. There were 135 exhibitors of animals and roots, and 412 of poultry and pigeons. In the various classes there were 109 cattle, 44 sheep, and 81 pigs. The Herefords, as might be supposed from the contiguity of the show to their native district, were in considerable numbers and of excellent quality. Mr. Shirley's Hereford steer won the gold medal, and several money prizes, as the best animal in the yard. Col. Townley's short horn heifer won similar honors. Her sire was the world-renowned "*Master Butterfly*," which the Colonel sold about two years since to a firm in Australia for the unprecedented sum of 1200 guineas! From recent accounts, we regret to learn that this bull is dead; not, however, without leaving descendants both in England and the colony. Prince Albert gained a first prize for a beautiful Devon Steer of his own breeding. The now almost obsolete Long-horns, were favorably represented, together with some excellent specimens of the Welsh and Scotch breeds.

In fat sheep and pigs the show appears to have been satisfactory, but the Downs are said to have fallen short, especially in quality. A memorial was agreed to, requesting the Royal Agricultural Society to admit the Shropshire Downs as a distinct breed, to which they appear to possess strong claims. The following remarks of the reporter of the *Mark Lane Express*, will be read with interest on this side the water.

"There were three pens of Cotswolds, the prize sheep of which division had this

note added on to the award:—"The Judges complain of the unfairness of the way in which the sheep in this pen had been shorn;" and very properly too: the only matter for surprise is that they did not complain of two-thirds of the sheep they inspected. In the Leicester and Southdown classes more particularly, the manner in which some of the animals were trimmed into form was really disgraceful, and little short of a positive insult to the spectator. It is hard to understand how judges can continue to pass such glaring abuses. However, at the meeting of the Smithfield Club to-morrow morning, Mr. Valentine Barford one of our oldest flock-masters, is to bring the matter formally before the members. It is to be hoped that this will not be without some very strong effect, or the art of shearing and showing a sheep will gradually demoralize the whole agricultural community. Thimble-rigging or horse-chanting is nothing to it as one of the occult sciences."

We subjoin some excellent remarks from the *Times*, relative to the poultry department of the Exhibition:—

"Of poultry there are 1,342 entries, and pigeons 214, or 1,556 altogether, being within three pens of the number last year—a singular circumstance, considering the variability of the exhibiting constituency, and the wide distances between localities represented. There no longer exists a poultry mania: but the taste for domestic fowls of the most perfect feather or the greatest weight, and other characteristics of excellence besides size and beauty, is in no wise diminished. Certain it is that while the egg—that most nutritive of albuminous meat, the invalid's joint, and the indispensable component in the cook's recipe—continues to be an article of such value in the provision market; and while table fowl, roast duck and goose, and turkey—that lordly dish,—are in such popular demand, the cultivation of good breeds of poultry must always be of high national importance. We keep good horses, bulls, and rams for the advantage of our humbler neighbors' breeding; why not also benefit our rural peasantry by distributing among them chickens of the best breeds, replacing worthless by really valuable poultry, such as the Spanish or Dorkings, that would yield large profits in eggs to the poorest cottager? It is estimated that 500,000,000 eggs, worth about a million sterling, are annually exported from Ireland, and we import from France, chiefly from the Pas de Calais, also from Sardinia and Holland, a large proportion of the eggs which supply