

Where the cow is one of the Sussex, Galloway, or Hereford breeds, or from a herd of non-milking Shorthorns, where the custom is to let the calves run with the dam for some months before weaning (in the case of the Sussex cattle, even up to a twelve-month), there is nothing to be said but that the practice saves labour.

Grade-Shorthorn steer-calves are selling in England now for 45s. (\$11.00) a-piece at ten days old. We remember when, about 1848, Baron Rothschild's huntsmen bought calves of that strain in the Aylesbury market at the rate of three for a sovereign, as being the cheapest meat to be had for making the soup for the Baron's staghounds!

February.—Although it is not unnatural in a mild winter to fancy as the days lengthen that we are "getting through very well" the beginning of February is not unfrequently marked by the commencement of a spell of hard weather. This was recognised by our forefathers, who fixed the theory by reference to a particular day, the Feast of the Purification, or Candlemas day. An old Scotch saying runs: "If Candlemas day be dry and fair, the half o'winter's to come and sair; if Candlemas day be wet and foul, the half o'winter was gone at Youl." In other words, if the weather at the beginning of February is fine and frosty, we may expect more winter to follow than we have already had. The same motion is expressed in a German proverb quoted by Dr. Brewer, which runs: "The badger peeps out of his hole on Candlemas day, and if he finds snow walks abroad, but if he sees the sun shining, he draws back into his hole."

No doubt these old sayings are founded on observation, and consequently, although not of course to be literally accepted as regards the particular day, have some ground of probability when taken as referring to the period. In the same way the legend of St. Swithin has no doubt a basis of reason if it be taken as applying not to that actual day but to the prevailing meteorological conditions about that time.

It may be of interest to note that the authority above quoted states that Candlemas day is so called from the custom in the Roman Catholic Church of consecrating all the candles which will be needed in the church during the year, and in connection therewith there was a candle process-

sion. There was also an old Roman custom of burning candles to the goddess Februa, mother of Mars, to scare away evil spirits. The month of February was also among the ancient Romans the month of purification.

From the farmer's point of view February is the month of resuming active work. The dairymen's year nowadays has, under the pressure of milk contracts, lost its old-time symmetry, and calves in most well-regulated herds may come in almost any month. But Candlemas is still associated with the arrival of calves, while in the southern half of the country the month is probably the busiest of the year for the shepherds in the lambing pens. It marks the season of new awakening life on the farm, and whatever the weather may be, or however low the thermometer may fall, the gathering strength of the sun and the slow lengthening of the day mark the fact that the stagnation of winter is past and the brisk vigour of the spring is throwing its outposts, so to speak over the bank.

It would be well to remember that the Candlemas Day referred to above was "Old Style," i. e., not our 2nd of February but our 14th. All other ancient sayings require the same modification: the "Mayfly" (The Green-drake-) for instance, though described in the dictionary as a "neuropterous insect of the genus *ephemeris*, that appears in May," is rarely to be met with, even in southern England before the tenth of June, i. e., May 29th, "Old-Style."

Markets.

METROPOLITAN CATTLE.

Islington,—This day.

SUPPLY AT MARKET.			Corresponding date	ARRIVALS.	
To-day.			1899.		
Beasts.....	1,240	..	1,430	Scotland.....	34
Sheep and lambs.....	8,220	..	9,130	Ireland.....	112
Calves.....	—	—	—	Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex....	418
Pigs.....	—	—	—	Midland, and Home counties	699
Milch cows.....	50	..	50	Devon.....	20

ENGLISH QUOTATIONS PER 8 LBS. (SINKING THE OFFAL).

	Inf.			Sec.			First.			
	a.	d.	s.	a.	d.	s.	a.	d.	s.	
Beasts..	2	10	4	2	4	10	Pigs....	—	—	—
Sheep..	3	4	4	10	5	8	Lambs..	5	8	6
Calves..	—	—	—	—	—	—		0	6	6

Milch Cows, per head, £15 to £21 10s.