

THE CATTLE MURRAIN.

We publish in another place, a description of the disease or diseases, which have lately proved so destructive to the cattle in certain parts of northern Europe. The subject is one of considerable interest even here, for in the first place, if the plague extends over Europe, it will in all probability reach this country also, and even if we escape its ravages, the price of beef will no doubt be greatly enhanced by the demand for exportation, consequent upon the destruction of cattle in the grazing countries of the old world. Looking at either of these results, we think our farmers should consider whether it would not be a wise policy to pay a little more attention to the increase of their herds. The mania for wheat-growing has proved as fatal to the bovine race in Canada, as the murrain in Lithuania. We are not disposed to recommend the general abandonment of grain culture, with a view to cattle-breeding and grazing. Canadian farmers cannot successfully compete with their more favourably located rivals in the prairie districts of the 'Great West' in the latter business, while they can easily beat those rivals in the former. We only deprecate the preponderance of grain over cattle, in our system of farming, on what, if we were speaking of the public health, we would call sanitary grounds. Ours is an *unhealthy* system of agriculture, as many farmers are beginning to find out. We must keep more stock in our farm-yards, whether it pays directly or not. Even in England, the value of cattle to the farmer, as "machines for manufacturing manure," overrides every other consideration. A recent English writer on this subject says:—

"The farmer fattens cattle not as we citizens in our self-complacent and patronizing moods are apt to imagine, when we read the long figures of arrivals at the markets every week, for the mere sake of feeding us and getting a fortune out of our carnivorous propensities, but coupled with a very different object. The modern farmer looks upon a beast as a machine for manufacturing manure. This in some shape he must have.—The corn crops, on which his main prosperity depends, crave it imperatively in some shape, and nothing now known answers so well as the home-made product. Guano, superphosphates, and the thousand-and-one delusive compounds puffed with all the quackery of pseudo-science, are not to be trusted; and until modern chemistry produces something better than has yet been forthcoming, the farmer must trust to himself and his beasts."

If this be so in England where so many artificial manures are available; where the grazing season is so much longer; where cattle command so high a price for breeding purposes, with how much more truth may it be said in our case?

The English Government have taken precautions to prevent the introduction of the cattle plague into the British Isles. An order in Council was published on April 2nd., prohibiting the importation of cattle, or of horns, hoofs, or skins, from those territories of Russia, Prussia, or Mecklenburg Schwerin, which lie on the Gulf of Finland, or between the gulf and the city of Lubeck. It cannot be said that this prohibition is too stringent. Certainly an order which limits the supply of human food is a strong measure, but the case admitted neither of compromise nor delay. It was necessary to exclude rigidly and at once anything which could bring on the country so terrible a calamity as a mortality among the animals used for food. The disease which necessitated these precautions has ravaged Silesia, Mecklenburg, and