

English Letter No. 34.

[FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.]

Liverpool, Jan. 4.

My first and most agreeable duty is to wish the FARMER'S ADVOCATE and all its readers a very happy and prosperous new year.

Our winter, so far, has been a singular contrast to the last one, and such as a Canadian could scarcely understand. To-day has been as mild and genial as an average day of May or September, and, so far, we have scarcely had a frost worthy of the name. The worst of our mild winters is that we generally equalize matters by having a very late and cold spring at the time when really mild weather would be of some value. Business in all branches is very quiet; but a better feeling pervades trade generally, and the hope and belief is general that, with the advent of spring, there will be a great and general revival in our industries. The attempt to get an equitable treaty of commerce with France still languishes, and fears are entertained that it will fall through. It will remain to be seen which country will be the loser.

We do not propose to confine the good things of the future to ourselves. A land company has been formed here in order to purchase land in Manitoba, and to promote settlements thereon. It is rather a big thing. His Grace the Duke of Manchester, and Mr. Robert Allan, of the well known Allan Line of steamers, figure in the list of directors. The fact that the applications for shares were five times in excess of the number for allotment, may be taken as indicating either vast faith in the undertaking, or a great superfluity of cash here. I leave your readers to decide which. I believe that the company's location, in the neighborhood of Brandon, Manitoba, will exceed a million acres. Another indication, and probably a more valuable one still, of the way in which the great Northwest is looking up, is the fact that the Hudson Bay Company's shares, which were quoted last January at £17, are now at £27 10s.

I hear that a number of your leading stock-raisers are bound for this country with purses well provided, and that they intend purchasing suitable stock on a more extended scale than hitherto. In my next I hope to be able to report upon some of their operations. The Christmas shows are now all over, and, though prices ruled comparatively low, it is the confident opinion of the knowing ones that the coming season will see a marked improvement in prices for all classes of live stock. Certainly our home stock of sheep is rapidly decreasing; the chances of successful competition from the Australian colonies are not considered at all brilliant, and it follows that those of your breeders should be proportionately good. With the increasing demand in the States, and the certainty of a good market here, I should say that your sheep farmers—I mean your farmers of good sheep—have a very nice time in store for them.

Mr. Dawson, of Brampton, Ont., has visited us with a small supply of turkeys and chickens, which were immediately sold out at good prices. Mr. Dawson seems to be thoroughly up to his business, and only brings over the best article. He also attends to the business here himself, and so avoids the heavy exactions of the agents and middle men. Mr. Dawson says that prices have ruled so high in Canada and the States that it almost pays as well to sell at home as to bring here, and the risk is, of course, less. He has, however, a good connection here, and, like a wise man, does his best to keep it.

A few volumes of 1880 still on hand, and can be obtained at \$1.50 per mail, postage prepaid.

From the United States.

[FROM OUR WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT.]

Jan'y 18th, 1882.

The National Convention of Agriculturists has been in session the past week at the library of the U. S. Agricultural Dept. in this city. Delegates were present from most of the States and Territories of this country, and a representative from Canada.

The essays read and topics discussed by practical agriculturists, horticulturists, orchardists and stock breeders, contained much valuable information upon the various subjects presented to the Convention. The interest manifested in the work of the Convention was not confined to the simple tiller of the soil. A number of Senators and representatives in Congress attended these meetings almost every day, and seemed to take an interest in the addresses and various expressions of opinion by the practical and educated men who constituted the Convention of Agriculturists.

Among the addresses delivered and essays read and afterwards discussed in the Convention were the following: "Animal Husbandry in the Central West," "Blood Horses," "Jersey Cattle," "Sheep," "Science of Developing and Perpetuating Milk Qualities," "The Better Organization of Agricultural Work," "National and International Crop Reports," "Inspection and Grading of Cereals," and "Improvement of the Cereals."

In this letter I shall confine myself to extracts from the address of A. E. Blount, President of the State Agricultural College and Farm of Colorado, on the "Improvement of the Cereals." He said that, at the present day, cereals under the common mode of cultivation yield only about $\frac{1}{2}$ of the real capacity within the cereal belt of our country. Wheat, oats, corn, barley and rice constitute our cereals. Corn and oats are not particular where they are planted; they will grow and try and make something; they are really indigenous to every State. Wheat, barley, rye and rice are much more eccentric in their habits, preferring certain soils and climate to develop their essential properties. So far as their adaptation to soil and climate are concerned, as well as to the wants of man, corn heads the list. It possesses all the properties of the others, and more—it has an abundance of oil and the power to resist all its enemies. Wheat is full of eccentricities, made up of whims and freaks. In some sections it promises to make the farmer a millionaire; in the next these promises are all blasted by blasted heads and rusty blades. Every man can raise corn, but every man can not raise wheat. It is a fact we all recognize that half a crop is not made in the cultivation of the cereals the country over. Why? Every one can give a reason. I will give mine in a few practical remarks: Records and well authenticated reports show that, sown broadcast, 102 bushels of wheat have been produced per acre in Montana Territory; that 108 bushels have been raised by special culture by F. F. Hallet, of England; that 791 pounds were raised from one pound of seed; that 1,800 pounds were grown from one pound sown by myself, and that 576,840 grains or 47 pounds 7 ounces have been produced by division, resetting and cultivation by C. Miller, of Cambridge. Records also show that 206 bushels of shelled corn have been raised on one acre; that 64 oz. have been produced from one kernel; that 3 bushels and 9 pounds were raised on 100 stalks by myself, and that 63½ oz. were taken from one single stalk.

He thinks that it, with a little service and extra cultivation, the production of corn and wheat can be brought up to these figures, there is room for doubling the average yield by the proper care in the ordinary methods of cultivation. To do this

he offers the following suggestions: "Seed wheat as used now-a-days is hardly fit for chicken-feed, say nothing of using it for seed. It is degenerate, impure, imperfect, full of parasitic fungi, and simply ruinous to the farmer and to our health. Up to this date there are over 350 different varieties of spring and winter wheats in the United States. Among all those that have become standards are found typical and genuine grains, which any farmer with an eye to improvement and profit must see in his ripening crop. This genuine grain, which is always found in the largest stools—those that come up evenly together and ripen uniformly—he should select and pick *himself*, and sow on choice land, cultivate, harvest and put away under lock and key, to be again sown, cultivated and harvested *by himself*, that no meddling or mixing can take place through others. By following all these rules, and observing the natural laws that govern vegetable growth, wheat can be made to double the length of the head, increase the grain one hundred per cent., and its quality will be so greatly improved that we will hardly recognize it as being the same kind after three years improvement. To build up a wheat (if I may use the term) to a degree that will develop its full power is a work that almost any observing farmer can carry out."

He said further that while hundreds of English farmers condemned Hallet's Pedigree Wheat because they say that while he doubled the yield, the grain was proportionately coarser and the flour inferior, he for one did not believe that it is necessary to confine ourselves to trifling crops or trifling averages in yield in order to retain a fine quality. He thought from actual experiment that when any defects were developed by in-and-in breeding, they could in the hands of a skillful, intelligent farmer, be overcome by hybridizing. In this system of cross-breeding or hybridizing he alleged that while it is the best method to adapt wheat to any soil and climate, as well as to combine all the elements essential to success in the field and in the mill, so much tact and knowledge of vegetable physiology and the art of combining elements was required, that farmers did not succeed in breeding a good variety more than once in a thousand times. He offered some valuable suggestions on the method, etc., of cross-breeding, and also gave an interesting account of corn and its culture. These and other topics of equal interest and importance to the farmer and stock breeder, must be deferred for a future letter.

An official report here says that the U. S. Consul General at Shanghai, China, has sent to this country a quantity of the seeds of the Tallow-tree of China. The Tallow-tree, it is said, grows all over China, resembling the Aspen in shape and foliage. Its nuts grow in clusters and are gathered in November. When ripe the capsules divide and disclose about three kernels covered with pure, white, hard tallow. From 133 pounds of nuts is obtained from 40 to 50 pounds of tallow. If its propagation in this country succeeds, the animal tallow can be devoted exclusively to oleomargarine and old boots, while the vegetable tallow from the tree is used for better purposes. LOTUS.

Australian Notes.

[From an Australian Correspondent.]

VICTORIA.—The wool sale on Oct. 26th, at Goldsbrough's rooms, was the largest ever held in the Colonies; 16,000 bales were catalogued and 10,000 were sold, representing £200,000. The American buyers competed strongly, securing several clips. Sir Samuel Wilson's 4th sheep sale at Cecildoune realized £9,300. Stud rams went up to 55 guineas, the majority realizing 20 to 35 guineas; stock ewes fetched 2 to 4 guineas; special flock ewes 3 to 14½ guineas; special ewes, dense flock, to 15½ guineas.