

JT HILARY Br Amm 20/7/66

NOTES BY THE WAY.

(From our own Correspondent.)

ST. HILARY.

The patron-saint of the charming little village which bears his name must assuredly have been profuse in his blessings thereon, for it is one of the most picturesque spots, and fertile withal, of which the vale of Glamorgan can justly boast. Situated on an eminence, it commands an expanse of country that presents nearly all the points of the compass to the view at one and the same time, with a fringe of blue waters to the southward that indicates refreshingly its contiguity to the Bristol Channel. Wherever you look, fertility abounds: wherever you go, rich pastures, abundant crops, and magnificent flocks and herds, are the order of the moment: and, to one long accustomed to the sterility of the copper-smoke region, as I have been, you seem to be transferred into a veritable paradise of the agricultural order, where you have nothing to do but to sniff the precious perfume of unimpregnated air, and be thankful to Providence for creating such a beautiful spot of earth for you to live upon and enjoy, if only for a day.

The delicious aroma of newly-mown grass came like a spicy breeze from abroad, as, on Monday morning last, I and my friend alighted at the hospitable residence of Mr. Thomas Thomas, who rents one of the largest farms in Glamorganshire, and who happily lives under the good auspices of the patron-saint of the district alluded to, for he is one of the most flourishing, able, and successful farmers of which the county has a right to be proud. Assisted by four sons, industrious and able as himself, and by a worthy partner whose good sense, good taste, and good management in the internal affairs of the farm, keep pace with the industry and ability displayed in its external arrangement. Mr. Thomas has succeeded in forming one of the best-ordered establishments of the kind I ever remember to have seen—and I have seen many; and stands in the foremost rank of that important body to which he and his family have the good fortune to belong. The Farm of St. Hilary is a Welsh agricultural picture: and the highly-respected family to whom it owes its excellence are a true type of the good old Welsh Farmer, whose unostentatious, warm-hearted hospitality, and unassuming good-nature, it does one's eyes good to see and one's tongue good to talk about, and whose love of the old people, the old sayings and doings, and the old associations, it does one's heart good to participate in. This pleasure was mine at St. Hilary on Monday last, and is one that will be registered among the many red-letter enjoyments which I have experienced at the hands of the Welsh people, with whom, I suppose, I may now consider myself fairly naturalised, and in whose behalf I am at all times impelled to hold up one more hand than is generally regarded as the prescribed number with which to manifest your acquiescence in this respect.

But to the farm!

Very good: then we'll drive over the farm, and see what our friend and host has to show us. As we passed from field to field, from piece to piece, and from plot to plot, I scarcely knew which to admire most, the good judgment which seemed to have governed the—alternations or succession of the crops, or the excellence of the crops themselves. Oats, that looked for all the world like regiments of Lilliputian soldiers riding to battle, with their plumes nodding in the wind: wheat, that waved lazily, as it ripened in the sun, and seemed to be just gathering its first golden tint: turnips, that looked like straight strokes of green paint upon the dark-brown earth, as though Dame Nature had just been teaching her grand-son his first lesson in writing and had left off at the "straight strokes," leaving the "pot-hooks" for to-morrow: pasture land, green, fresh, and abundant in herbage, feeding on which even the skeleton of a horse would gather flesh before he could help himself, and astonish compeers less happily situated. One of the heads of oats was plucked, and I was curious enough to count the grains. How many do you suppose I found? Dy'e give it up? I counted four hundred and forty-two grains in that head of oats! And there was a whole field of the same kind; as fine a piece as you'd wish to set eyes on. The land under cultivation included 57 acres of wheat, 33 acres of barley, 15 acres of oats, 29 acres of common turnips, 20 acres of swede turnips, 17 acres of mangolds, 44 acres of seed hay, made up of sanfoin, clover, and rye-grass; and 90 acres of meadow hay. The farm altogether comprises 650 acres, with all the necessary buildings and appurtenances, everything being the most complete and effective of its kind. The wheat was all white wheat, principally Fuller's and the White Essex, Mr. Thomas, with his usual judgment, having tried the various reds, and, not finding them answer, had abandoned them. The oats were principally Tartarian, and appeared admirably to suit the description of soil in which they had been sown.

On various parts of the farm we observed 39 horses of every description, several of which were prize winners. These included 13 cart horses, 3 hacks, 5 brood mares in foal to thorough-bred horses, 3 cart brood mares, 9 promising colts, and 2 suckers. There are two 3-year olds by "Revenge," dams "Modesty" and "Phillis;" one 4-year old, by "Revenge," dam "Modesty;" two yearlings, by "Kildonan" dams "Lady of the Lake" and "Modesty;" and one foal, by "Francatelli," dam "Lady of the Lake," all splendid and promising things. I can hear of no other farm in the county where blood stock is kept up to such an extent and to such a standard of excellence.

In the stock-yard, the saddle-room is studded with prize tickets, taken at the several shows in the country; and the pile of prize-plate to be seen on the sideboard of our worthy host amply testifies to the high state of perfection at which the cattle and live stock are kept. In the yard, we find "Claret," a splendid 3-year-old bull, by "Goldfinder," out of "Fancy," one of the finest specimens of the pure Hereford breed I ever saw, and which, I am told, has already taken five prizes. He was bred by Mr. Thomas. Here is also a 2-year-old bull, "Shamrock," by "Earl Derby the Second," out of "Rosebud the Third," bred by Edward Price, Esq., of Court House, Pembridge; a fine-looking animal. Some of the stock of "Goldfinder" appears to have distinguished itself remarkably well. Here is "Lady," a pure Hereford, out of "Comely." This splendid animal has been out 15 times, and has taken 14 prizes. Also, "The Patent," out of "Pretty Maid," which has taken 5 prizes. Other animals have similarly distinguished themselves. The bull "Goldfinder" (sire of the present "Goldfinder the Second") was the founder of nearly all the pure Herefords on the farm. He was eleven years old when he died, he was the winner of 26 prizes at the Royal West of England, and local shows, and was never beaten.

The cattle on the farm number 108, made up as follows: milch cows, 18; barren dotts, 13; three-year-old steers, 18; two-year-old steers, 14; yearling steers, 9; yearling heifers, 12; calves, 22; bulls, 2.

The sheep number 595, viz.: breeding ewes, 220; yearling ewes, 60; yearling wethers, 80; ram lambs, 24; aged rams, 6; yearling rams, 4; wether lambs, 106; ewe lambs, 95. The whole flock, with few exceptions, are pure Cotswolds, and are remarkably fine. Some of the ram lambs are intended for sale at the Carmarthen show.

The stock of pigs numbers about 50 of the pure Berkshire breed, and some of them are very handsome.

The best indication of the superiority of the stock possessed by Mr. Thomas, is the fact, that he has taken more prizes in plate and money than any other farmer in Glamorganshire. Here is a list of a few of them:—

1837.—Silver cup, for the best yearling heifer. This was the first prize Mr. Thomas took. It was taken at Newport, and was presented by the Hon. W. Booth Gray, of Duffryn.

1837.—One dozen silver tea spoons, for the best 2-year-old heifer.

1838.—Silver tankard, for the best cow and offspring.

1839.—Silver punch ladle, for the best fat ox.

1842.—Silver goblet, for the best yearling bull.

1843.—Silver cup, for the best fat cow.

1843.—Silver cup, for the best 2-year-old heifer.

1817.—Pair of silver gravy spoons, for the best ram lamb.

1817.—Silver tankard, for the best two-year-old heifer.

1852.—Four silver table-spoons, for the best yearling heifer.

1853.—"The Farmers' cup" won at Cowbridge Races with the horse "Wait Awhile," and presented by G. M. Traherne, Esq.—Nov. 9th.—This horse was bred by Mr. Thomas.

1856.—Silver sugar-basin, for the best galloway, taken by Mr. Thomas Thomas, jun (his first prize). The horse was afterwards sold for fifty guineas.

1858.—Silver sugar basin, for the best pony.

1860.—Pair of silver punch ladles, for the best cart colt.

1861.—Silver tankard, for the best bull calf.

1862.—Silver cruet-stand, value 10 guineas, for the best two breeding yearling heifers.

1862.—Silver bread-basket, value 20 guineas, presented by the Mayor and Corporation of Newport, for the best stock bull, cow or heifer; G. W. Jones, Esq., mayor. Mr. Thomas competed against all the stock in the yard, and his bull-calf took the prize, being afterwards sold to Mr. Higgins.

1862.—Silver tea-pot, by the same animal at the same show.

1862.—Five silver table spoons, for the best pair of yearling steers.

1863.—One dozen silver tea spoons, for the best yearling bull.

1864.—Silver cream jug, for the best ram lamb.

1864.—Silver tankard, for the best brood mare.

The following are prizes on which no date appears: Punch ladle, for the best long wool ram lamb.—Sugar basin, for the best 3-year-old colt.—Silver cream jug, for the best cart colt, at Cowbridge. A large amount in money has also been taken by Mr. Thomas in addition to the foregoing. He and his sons have taken as many as 63 prizes in two years, from the West of England and local shows—a simple fact that renders them famous, and almost unapproachable as exhibitors of stock.

One thing that struck me particularly was the admirable sub-division of labour that appears to be carried out on the farm. Each of Mr. Thomas's sons has his separate department. Mr. Thomas Thomas, jun., has the management of the herds. Mr. Wm. Thomas, is shepherd and master of the flock. Messrs. Rees and John Thomas, superintend the land under cultivation and the machinery. Mr. Thomas, sen., being supervisor of the whole, which onerous office I think I have shown he fulfils to perfection.

While looking over the farm, among other things, I saw one of R. Hornsby and Sons' patent mowing machines in full operation, and was surprised at the effective way in which it did its work. With three horses and two men to work it, it is made to cut 10 acres of grass a day—the work of ten men. It takes a good breadth of cut (four feet), and cuts remarkably clean. The address of the patentees is Grantham, Lincolnshire, and the machine is, without exception, the best I have yet seen. There is also one of Burgess and Key's reapers used on the farm—all the implements, in fact, being of the most modern construction. A small machine in the dairy attracted my attention. It was a cheese-grinder, by T. and F. Young, of Ayr. It is simple in construction, cheap as to cost, and most effective, saving, as my respected hostess informed me, an hour and a half's work every day; and this, I need scarcely inform my fair readers, is a slight consideration, although, notwithstanding, I have no doubt it is the same with them as it is with the worthy manageress of St. Hilary Farm—"I am never happier," she said, "than when I am hard at work in my dairy!" May a kind Providence keep her prosperous in the labours of that self-same dairy, and may she never know unhappiness by cessation from the work in which she so much delights! "I have been here all my life!" she said, "and I have a liking for the old place!" Small wonder that this should be so, I thought; and my sincerest wish is, that you will live long to enjoy the old place, Mrs. Thomas, and that your industrious family after you will take for their life-text your own golden words—"I am never happier than when I am hard at work!"

Near the village is the vicarage, the residence of the Rev. Lewis Morgan, for the excellence of whose cider I can vouch, having tasted it *en passant*. From this point the view is magnificent. You have Flemingstone, Boverton, St. Marychurch, Landough, and Eglwysbrewis, before you in the valley, with the blue waters of the Channel beyond, and the Somersetshire coast far away in the hazy distance. Like a speck among the foliage is Old Beaupre Castle, a ruin of great antiquity: and about a quarter of a-mile off. New

Under
better as you can. Adieu.