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COMMERCIAL.

MR. HENRY DRIVER (on behalf of the New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Agency Co.) reports for the week ending December 27, as follows :—

Fat Cattle—Although only a moderate supply of about 120 head were yarded to-day, the market was very dull, bidding being entirely without spirit. The prices realised, however, were equal to about 30s per 100lbs. At the yards and privately we have sold, during the week, 60 head.

Fat Calves—A few only were penned, and brought fully late quotations.

Fat Sheep—1500 were penned, which was in excess of the requirements of the trade, owing to the heavy supplies offering. Good quality very heavy weight cross-breeds brought only 10s to 11s, and one or two lots of exceedingly fine sheep had to be turned out unsold. A few fair quality merinos brought 7s. We sold 300 at these rates.

Fat Lambs—200 were penned, and a portion sold at late quotations.

Store Cattle—The market is without alteration. First-class bullocks are saleable at from £7 10s to £8 10s; do. cows, from £5 to £6 10s. At Mosgiel on Friday last we sold, on account of J. F. Kitching, Esq., of Moa Flat, very superior cows and bullocks, which realised the highest prices during the season.

Store Sheep—The market continues very quiet. Buyers for young sheep are plentiful, with few offering, while aged merinoes, both ewes and wethers, are offering freely, with but few buyers.

Wool—Latest telegram from London—December 19th—reports wool market quiet, prices firm. In this market buyers are waiting for the opening sales at the commencement of the year.

Sheepskins—The holidays have interfered with usual supplies for the sales to-day; the few offering have been readily taken up at full rates.

Hides—The same remark applies: no alteration in demand or price—3½d to 4d per lb for wet salted.

Tallow is wanted both for shipment and local consumption. Prices—inferior, 25s to 28s; fair to good, 30s to 32s.

Grain—Wheat and flour quiet, but firm. Oats are in good demand; supplies small; feed, 2s 2d to 2s 3d; milling, 2s 4d. Barley—Feed and milling, good demand, 2s 6d to 3s; malting quiet, 4s to 4s 6d.

MR. SKENE reports for the week ending December 27, 1876, as follows :—Affairs in the labor market are sound; mostly all can get work who are willing, although, perhaps, not in all cases to their liking. Neither masters nor men are inclined to enter into fixed engagements until after the holidays, when, with the certainty of a heavy harvest, employment will be easily found. The demand for hotel servants, and for females for all departments is very brisk. Couples are more asked for. Day labor at pick and shovel is plentiful; but working men spoil their prospects by sticking too closely to town. A few shopmen and clerks are moving. The building and iron trades are quiet. Wages—Couples, £35, £70, and £80; ploughmen, £52, £55, and £60; shepherds, £60 to £70; day labor, 8s and 9s; shearers, 17s 6d to 20s per 100; dairy hands, 15s to 20s; house girls, 10s to 15s; hotel girls, 12s, 15s, 20s, and 25s; cooks, waiters, gardeners, &c, 25s to 50s.

MR. A. MERCER reports as follows for the week ending December 27, 1876, retail prices only :—Fresh butter, in ½ and 1lb prints, 1s to 1s 2d; fresh butter, in lumps, 10½; powdered and salt butter 1s; fresh butter is still very plentiful, and the grocers are salting down large quantities every week, and no demand for salt butter. Cheese, best quality, 1s 2d; new season cheese (fine), 1s 2d; side and rolled bacon, 11d to 1s; Colonial hams, 1s 2d; English hams, 1s 6d; eggs are now very plentiful, 1s 6d to 1s 8d per dozen.

MR. J. VEZEY reports for the week ending December 27, 1876 :—(Retail: Roast beef, 6d to 8d per lb.; boiling do., 4d to 5½ p r lb.; stewing do., 4d to 6d per lb.; steak, 6d to 9d per lb.; mutton, 3d to 6d per lb.; veal, 4d to 8d per lb.; pork, 9d to 10d per lb.; lamb, 3s and 4s per quarter.

MR. M. C. FLEMING reports for the week ending December 27, 1876, as follows :—Oats (feed), per bushel, 2s 1d to 2s 2½; milling, 2s 4d. Wheat, milling, 6s to 6s 3d; fowls, 3s 6d to 4s. Barley, malting, 4s to 4s 6d; feed, 2s 3d to 2s 6d. Pollard, £6 10s, bags included. Bran, £5 15s, bags included. Flour, large bags, £16; small, £16 10. Oatmeal, £12. Potatoes, old, 6s to 8s p r cwt; potatoes, new, 10s 0 11s per cwt. Hay, £1 per ton. Chaff, £1 p r ton. Straw, £2 p r ton

Very few of us think as we begin a journey that three men are killed every day in the year, and about 15 injured by the railways. Still fewer think as they look at a grate that four men are killed every day in the year in the collieries. We have just consulted the statistics of loss of life in collieries for 1875, and we find the total deaths to have numbered 1,242. Durham district shows to best advantage, the per-centage of life lost being 1 for every 771 men employed and 261,798 tons raised. The remaining districts range in the following order, the figures showing one death per number of men employed and tons got : East Scotland, 645 and 198,614; Newcastle, 686 and 196,812; midland, 783 and 188,699; West Scotland, 523 and 156,332; South Staffordshire, 424 and 129,994; North and East Lancashire, 440 and 110,581; St. Helen's, Wigan, &c., 349 and 88,840; South Wales, 404 and 80,933; North Stafford, 424 and 120,994; South Western, 397 and 74,852; Yorkshire, 234 and 65,962. The melancholy feature in this return is the undeniable truth that most of the accidents are preventable; and if managers would but observe jealously the laws of nature, and if men would but watch certain signs with ordinary care, there would be no such tale to tell as that set down here.—'Weekly Freeman.'

The 'Saturday Review' says :—"An instructive commentary on Mr. Gladstone's project of expelling the Turks from Europe is furnished by a repetition of the same proposal by a still more wrong-headed enthusiast—Garibaldi—but whose friends feel compelled to explain that, like Mr. Gladstone, Garibaldi means something entirely unlike what he says."