

## LOCAL FARM SKETCH.

### THE MOORS FARM, NEAR LOUGHBORO'.

Mr. John Oxby on Cheese-making.

For the first time in our wanderings up and down in this part of the country, interviewing farmers on behalf of the "Advertiser," we have run up against an English farmer who makes a large quantity of cheese. We instinctively felt that there was some good "copy" here, and so we just allowed Mr. Oxby to talk at his will. But may we first of all introduce the gentleman.

Mr. Oxby is the tenant, and has been tenant for 18 years, of one of the Garendon Park estate farms under Mr. Everard March Phillips De Lisle. Mr. Oxby learned farming with his father in the Vale of Belvoir. When he was just 18 years of age his father died, and the management of the farm devolved upon him. He had the care of his widowed mother until, at the age of 30, he came to the Moors Farm, and has occupied it ever since. As landlords the De Lises need no eulogy here. For centuries the family has stood among the best in England in their relationship with their tenants. If the reader of this article should require further testimony as to this let him ask of any farmer on the estates, or of any who at any time has farmed on the estates, and he will at once receive ample satisfaction and more.

The Moors Farm is 150 acres in area. It is watered by the Soar, and every acre of it is under cultivation. A regiment of shorthorns lay about the meadows, and our comments on their fine healthy appearance led to the question of milk and its disposal. Many of the markets (said Mr. Oxby) are over-supplied with milk in the summer months, and he himself found it more profitable to make cheese than to sell his milk. Many of the farmers didn't know how to make good cheese. Neglect of this branch of agriculture had been so persistent in many districts that it was practically a lost art. Had the English farmer kept up his cheese-making he would not now be selling his milk at so low a price. Cheese-making was far more profitable than butter-making when the farmer knew how to make cheese. One gallon of milk would produce 1 lb. of cheese, whereas it took 3 gallons of milk for one lb. of butter. Cheese sold readily at 8d. per lb., and butter at 1s. We accepted Mr. Oxby's invitation to see the cheese being made, and in all our long series of interviews we have not seen anything more interesting than this. Three dozen beautiful Stiltons were seasoning in the dairy, each weighing 15 lbs. And the cheese was as agreeable to the taste as it was excellent in appearance. We were not surprised to hear that the demand for the Moors Farm cheese is very large, and is rapidly growing. Certainly no foreign cheese that we have ever seen could stand for a single moment against this. It ought to be stated that the main responsibility for this branch of the work at the Moors rests upon Mrs. Oxby,

and not a pound of cheese is allowed to leave the dairy until it has been passed by her.

We next incited Mr. Oxby's opinion on the Tariff question, and again we found that he took a line of his own. In his judgment it was more a question for manufacturers than for farmers. The English farmer had under the present system adapted himself to the conditions. Arable land had everywhere been converted into pasture, and it was extremely doubtful whether, under a tariff, this land would be brought back under arable cultivation.

The principal crops at the Moors are wheat, oats, and beans. Mr. Oxby strongly holds that the secret of successful farming lies more with the farmer than the farm. The farmer must have a thorough knowledge of soils, manures, etc., to begin with, and if he knew anything of stock rearing he would find it an immense advantage to rear his own. None but the latest machinery should be used, and if it was somewhat costly it was the cheapest in the end.

The farmer must also keep a keen eye on the markets and know exactly when to offer his wares, and when not to. A grand lot of horses filed up as we talked, and Mr. Oxby intimated with a pardonable pride that he had won valuable prizes both at Loughborough and Kingston Agricultural Shows with both horses and foals.

The Moors Farm is well staffed, and Mr. Oxby is fortunate in having such safe and reliable labour. Evidently thoroughly happy in his farm life he spares no reasonable expense to make his farm what it unquestionably is, viz., one of the best cultivated on the Garendon Estates.

Mr. Oxby is a manager of the local Day Schools, a member of the Board of Trustees for Public Charities, and is also chairman of the Hathers Conservative Association and Club, in all of which positions he is in the enjoyment of the respect and esteem of his neighbours.

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