



FRIERN MANOR DAIRY FARM.—THE GREAT MEADOW.

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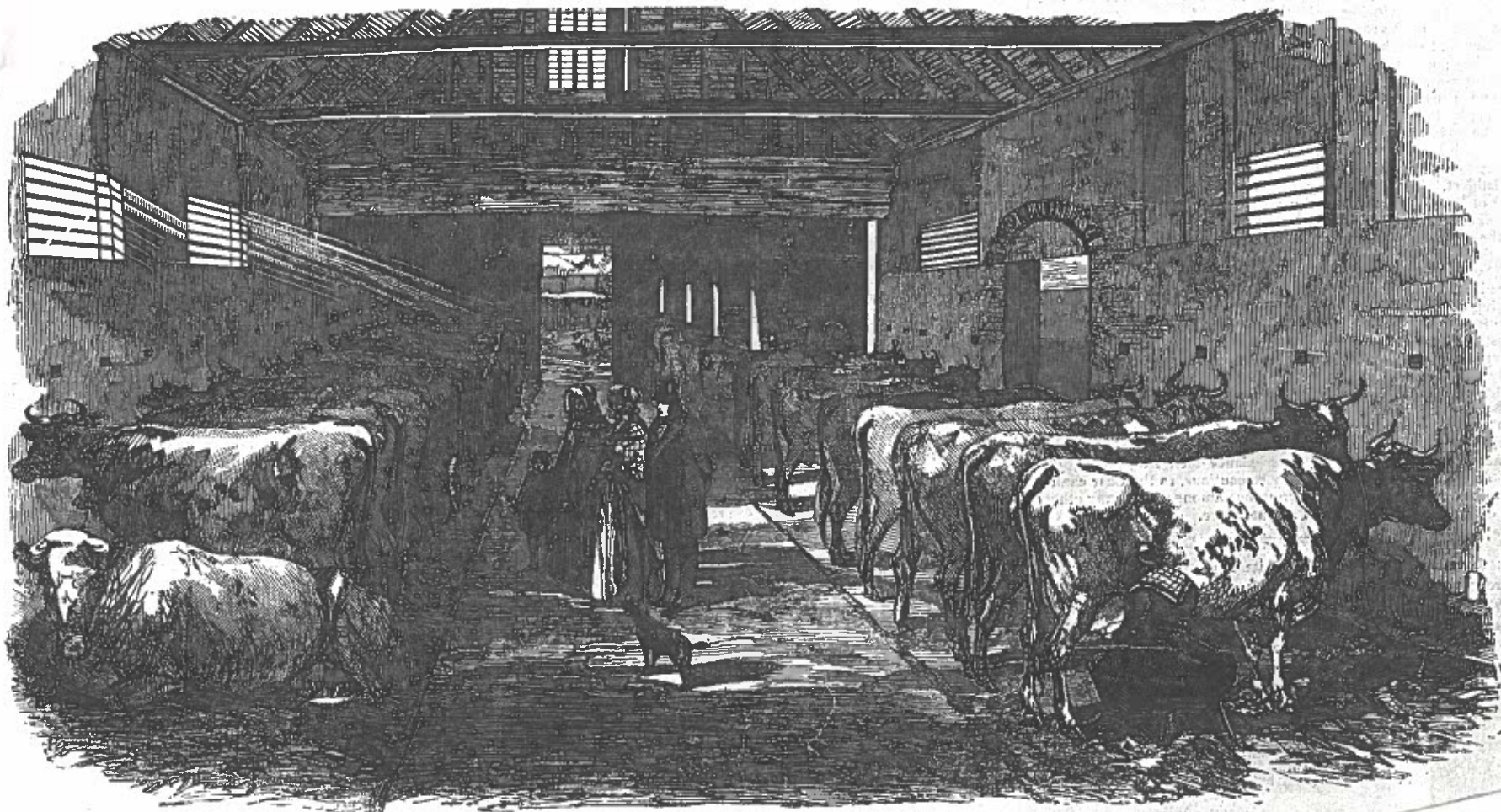
The supply of milk to the London market is so important a branch of commerce that an account of one of the largest dairy farms in the metropolis may be read with interest. The Friern Manor Dairy Farm is situated at Peckham, about six miles from the Royal Exchange. The number of milch cows at this farm is at present not less than 180. They are kept in sheds, of one of which we give an illustration. This shed holds fifty cows; in another, which contains stalls for thirty-eight, the cows are separated by a wooden partition. Upon an average of the whole year each cow gives about ten quarts per day. When the produce of any animal falls below the average, she is sold, and another bought to supply her place. Some of the cows at the farm are extraordinary milkers, several giving more than 20 quarts a day, and one or two 24 quarts. One cow gave 28 quarts a day for five months. The greater number are bought when four or five years old. At this age they begin to give the most milk; in two or three years the supply begins to fall off, when they are sold. One cow, however, is shown, which has been a singularly good milker for nine years. She used to give upwards of 20 quarts a day, and still gives 17 quarts. The following is the produce of the farm during the last week:—Monday, 1247 quarts; Tuesday, 1763 quarts; Wednesday, 1827 quarts; Thursday, 1793 quarts; Friday, 1802 quarts; Saturday, 1816 quarts. The milking takes place twice a day: at half-past 1 a.m., and half-past 10 a.m. The first milking finishes about 4 a.m., and the second about noon. The milk is in London at 6 a.m., and at 1 p.m. The sheds are everywhere lit by gas, by the light of which the night milking is carried on. Fourteen milkers are employed, all of whom are of the

rougher sex. It will be seen that our artist has put a milk-maid by the side of the cows; this is a poetical license excusable in a picture, but which a strict regard for accuracy compels us to correct. The average time occupied in milking each cow is seven minutes. The period does not seem to be regulated by the quantity of milk that the cow yields; but something depends upon the animal, and more upon the skill of the operator. Some men milk a cow in five minutes; others take ten. The cows seem to regard their milk with a strange feeling of maternal pride, for none of them like to be milked into a pail containing the milk of any other cow. Each cow is thus humoured by having a pail to herself; and, if this regulation is disobeyed by the milker, the cow is very likely to kick the pail over which contains the milk of the sister cow. The utmost cleanliness is observed with the vessels into which the milk is drawn, and these in which it is sent to London. These vessels, which are of tin, are scoured out twice a day. As soon as each cow is milked the pail is taken to the foreman (Mr. Steel), who measures the milk, and enters the quantity on a slate opposite the number of the cow. The milk is all passed through several strainers; and it is then placed—pure from the cow, and free from every kind of adulteration and admixture—in large tin cans, barred across the top and sealed. Every precaution is taken to prevent the carriers from adulterating the milk for their own dishonest profit, and with so much success that the milk enjoys the highest character for purity. Mr. Wright, the proprietor of the farm, has two offices in London, to which the milk is sent in vans—one in Farringdon-street, and another recently opened in Charles-street, Grosvenor-square, for the sake of his West-end

connection, which is considerable. The busiest season is from Christmas to June or July, when town is full.

The care taken of the health of the cows is dictated not only by a regard to the excellence of the milk, but by considerations of the ruinous pecuniary loss which would result from disease in the herd. Cows are peculiarly susceptible to contagion, and when new stock are bought, they are placed half a mile off, in a quarantine meadow, for two or three months, in order that disease, if it exists, may have time to develop itself, before they are placed with the herd. It is stated that when Mr. Wright has been to market to buy cows he always changes his clothes, and generally takes a bath before he ventures among his own herd. Some time ago the foot-rot broke out among one or two cows in the quarantine meadow, whereupon orders were given that the men in charge of them should on no account come near the buildings of the farm, or enter the great pasture in which the cows are turned out for exercise. By this means the progress of the disease was stayed. The herd at present enjoy remarkably good health. The cows are mostly of the short-horned breed. A few are Alderneys; but they are said to be too tender and delicate for this climate, and, for the most part, do not give enough milk.

During the cold weather the cows are never turned out into the meadows. They are in small numbers let loose in a yard for exercise and water for about half an hour a day. At the present season the cows are turned into the great meadow for two or three hours in the middle of the day. At the call of the cow-herd they simultaneously direct their steps from every part of the field to the gate nearest the farm buildings. Every cow is branded with a number upon the horns



FRIERN MANOR DAIRY FARM.—THE COW SHED.