

The Tamworth Pig.

BY G. ALLENDER, ENGLAND.

When I first exhibited Tamworths at the York "Royal" many people took them for a new breed, wild from some jungle; and they did look a little that way, I must confess. On turning, however, to the early meetings of the Royal Agricultural Society of England we find that not only were Tamworths shown, but that they held their own and won in good company. At Northampton, in 1847, Mr. Moses Cartwright, of Stanton Hill, Burton-on-Trent, took first prize, £10, for a Tamworth sow, in an open class of twenty entries, such well-known names as Earl Spencer, Fisher Hobbs, and Philip Pussey (the latter showing Berkshires) being exhibitors. In those days pigs had only two classes—"large" and "small"; nearly every county had its pig, the colors being white, black, red, and blue spotted. As time went on the breeders of the modern Berkshires, the small blacks (Fisher Hobbs's), and the whites—large and small—obtained classes under these names, and the "blue-spotted" pig of Cheshire, the "plum pudding" pig of Oxfordshire, and the Red Tamworth disappeared from the catalogues, and became, so far as the general public was concerned, extinct and unknown breeds, continuing to exist only in their own immediate districts, uncared for, and unfortunately, I think, unimproved. The Birmingham Christmas Show was the first, I believe, to again recognize the Tamworths, they being as it were, "Natives."

Culley, on "Live Stock," 1794, wrote: "The most numerous breed of pigs in this island is that generally known by the name of the 'Berkshire pig' now spread through almost every part of England and some places in Scotland. They are in general of a reddish color, with black spots upon them and large ears hanging over their eyes." This is a funny picture of our friend the "Berkshire." If an animal thus described by Mr. Culley were now to wander into the yards of any of our Berkshire breeders, I fear he would not be recognized as a "pig and a brother" by the present occupants.

I find the following in The Complete Grazier: "Sir William Curtis, exhibited at Lord Somerville's Cattle Show in 1807, some pigs which attracted universal admiration. They were of the Berkshire breed, the specific character of which is a sandy or white color, some of them are entirely sandy color, some with brown or black spots and the sides very broad. Although generally termed the Berkshire breed, having probably been originally reared in that county, yet they are now dispersed over the whole kingdom. Some of the best are bred in the neighborhood of Tamworth, in Staffordshire. The Yorkshires are similar in color to the Berkshires, but with longer ears and coarser hair. They have long legs, flat sides, and are coarse in the bone."

Such were our pigs in the early part of the century. All seem to have been about the same in character—large, coarse animals—but producing excellent bacon, fit to fill the bacon chamber in our old-fashioned chimneys. Locomotion was difficult; great stores of salted or cured meat, beef and pork, had to be prepared for winter use, and the big pigs served the purpose. Fresh pork, in the form of small porkers, was not in much demand, perhaps for want of a supply. Then came the Neapolitan and the Chinese pigs—black and white,

round, plump balls of fat. This must have been some fifty or sixty years ago, for I find a writer about that time saying, "Their flesh is rather too delicate for bacon, it is also deficient in lean meat; most of them have a great aptitude to fatten, and it is on this account that they have spread all over the kingdom. Perhaps this disposition to accumulate fat is, to a certain degree, an objection; they can rarely be used for the purpose of bacon, and they are often too much loaded with fat even for common purposes."

Mr. Parkinson, a most valuable writer on live stock, described a pig of this breed that obtained a prize at a Christmas show as being "a perfect bladder filled with hog's lard." The same writer goes on to say, "A pork butcher described him to be the worst pig he ever saw, and that the judges were deceived in supposing it to have little offal, for it was all offal." I read further that "many of the crosses of these (Chinese) pigs are, however, truly valuable, and there are few of our breeds that are not, to a greater or less degree, indebted to them for compactness of form, &c., &c."

From the foregoing we arrive at the conclusion that our original pig in this country was a strong useful animal, but coarse; his flesh was generally consumed cured or salted. Then "the heathen Chinese" appeared on the scene; his blacks, crossed with the old Sandy (the Tamworth) or spotted pig, made the modern Berkshire, and his whites, used to the old pigs of the whiter or lighter colors, produced our small and large whites.

As time went on, it was easy, in an animal that reproduces itself so rapidly, to encourage the worst element of the Chinese cross, and it is to be feared that other judges, besides those mentioned by the old writer, have for many years mistaken the plump, round, broad-backed, short-flanked animals as having little offal; whereas, as in the old days, they have been deceived; the offal, in the shape of useless grease was ever becoming greater; for what is offal but that part of an animal that is not food? and an excess of grease is quite as much offal as an excess of bone. This tendency in breeding, or rather, to put the saddle on the right horse, in judging, came to a climax about ten years ago. Twenty years back the showyard pig was a real good bacon hog. But year by year he got broader and broader in the back, thicker and thicker in the neck, and shorter in the head; nearer and nearer to his Chinese grandfather, and further away from the old English bacon pig. In 1878 Messrs. Harris, the great bacon-curers in Wiltshire, began to take a serious view of the increasing difficulties in obtaining a class of animal suited to their business and to the requirements of the public; although as far back as 1871, they had already issued circulars drawing "the attention of farmers and others to the public aversion to fat, and heavy (thick) bacon." they wrote:—

"We have found increasing difficulty year by year with fat bacon. The public are getting more and more averse to it, and feeders have been buying pigs more highly bred, and, as a consequence, they have been developing a larger quantity of fat and less lean. We think it an important point to bring out, that judges in awarding prizes, should be guided by the weight of flesh carried on the most valuable parts, and

in so doing to show that while a good broad back is a desirable point in cattle and sheep, it is by no means so in a pig, as the streaky or belly part of this animal is the most valuable, and consequently it should have broad deep sides. Thick big shoulders and neck are made great points of by judges; yet these parts of a pig are the least valuable, and do not command so high a price as sides and belly."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Devon Cattle vs. Scotch Shorthorns.

BY THOMAS CHICK, STRATTON, DORCHESTER, DORSET, ENGLAND.

I noticed Mr. Nicholson's paper in the April issue of the FARMER'S ADVOCATE, and am waiting for the May issue for the conclusion of his paper. Mr. Nicholson evidently is deeply interested in some way in "Scotch" Shorthorns. He certainly knows very little, if anything, about "Devons."

The following, from the Live Stock Journal of May 2nd, 1890, proves his assertion as to "Devons" to be not founded on facts:—

"The calving season in the herd of dairy Devons belonging to Mr. Thos. Chick is now virtually over, there being one cow only to calve. Forty-one registered cows and heifers produced forty-two calves, two of which were born dead. Three favorite cows did not breed. They are, however, such excellent milkers that they are still in profit, and will continue to help to fill the pail until likely to produce a calf again. There has been a demand for well-bred Devon calves as steers, consequently all the bull-calves have been sold for this purpose, instead of keeping them longer. Of the heifer calves eighteen are being reared by hand on skim milk. Eight of these are sired by Unionist 2,167, seven by Lord Dorchester 2,435, and three by Alder 2,189. As the owner lets his herd of forty-two cows to a dairyman at a fixed rent every year (the rent this year is £12 per cow), it is imperative that every cow shall be up to a fair standard as a butter-producer. That the Stratton herd is good in this point is evident, the rent paid being as high as for any Shorthorns or Crossbreds in the neighborhood. It is also a proof that Devons can be bred good for dairy purposes and flesh at the same time. The sires now in service are Lord Dorchester 2,435, bred by his owner from his old Pink tribe, a most valuable milking strain; Alder 2,189, of Mr. Wm. Perry's breeding; and a young bull Sir George, bred by Mr. John Risdon. The sire of this young animal is Whitehall 2,175, a pure Flitton Blood, and his dam is Dolly's Darling 8,783, a full sister to the well-known bull Draughtsman 1,711. Amongst the recent sales have been the bull Unionist 2,167 and six young bulls; these have gone into West Dorset and East Somerset for service in dairy herds."

In my humble opinion one ounce of fact is worth more than an unlimited quantity of bare statements, unsupported by evidence of any kind. As the owner of the Devon herd mentioned in the enclosed cutting is a tenant farmer, deriving his living from his farm, and does not keep "Devons" for a fancy, but as the best cattle to make the rent of the farm, this is proof that in this part of the world, at any rate, Devons excel Scotch Shorthorns and all other breeds as the general purpose cow. If time permits after your May issue reaches me, I will try and send you a short article on Devon cattle. Canadians who visit England are invited to come and see my stock, viz., Dorset horn sheep and Devon cattle. My experience as a breeder reaches back to the year 1852, now 38 years ago.