

Fancies and Fallacies versus Experience in Cattle.

Prepared by R. Gibson for the Dominion Short-horn Breeders' Association.
(Continued from March issue.)

The fallacy regarding the heads of bulls is that generally advocated by young and inexperienced judges. Experience says the head of the male must be masculine, approaching coarseness rather than the opposite. It is even so in the human race. Where are the pretty men? when you find them they are generally too indolent to know how to amuse themselves. Whereas, look at the leading men of the day—the Disraelis or Gladstones, the McDonalds or the Mowats, Carlyle or John Stewart Hill, none of them would ever take a prize in a beauty show.

Again, on viewing an animal with an abnormally large brisket, how often do we hear the remark, "What a great brisket." Forgetting that if it is out of proportion to the loin and ribs it is a detriment rather than a point of excellence. All parts should be evenly balanced, and where one unduly predominates it is not an advantage, and when it occurs in one of those parts of the animal where the beef is of the least value, as in the brisket, it is still more objectionable. Experience says a long, prominent brisket adds to the weight of low priced beef, whereas a broad, deep chest indicated a strongly constituted, vigorous animal. The shoulder, though one of the most important parts of the animal, is not often troubled with the fancy peculiarities, though no doubt many of us have heard the remark, "What a great front, as wide as a barn." If we examine this wonder closely, we shall see a wide, prominent, rough shoulder, looking as if it had been stuck on afterwards by a very poor workman. Experience points out that on standing in front of the animal the shoulder points should be completely covered by the neck vein, gradually swelling out like bows of a ship, without any protuberance or hollows until it is sunk or gradually absorbed by the chest, chin and ribs, so that the eye cannot detect where the one ends or the other begins. The shoulder itself should be smooth, equally covered with flesh, not put on in rolls as so often seen. It is true that from the neck and shoulders do not come the choicest cuts, but every butcher knows that there is a lot of difference between the quality of meat in the fore-quarter, the rough, plain shoulder yielding but little except boiling pieces; whereas most can be cut into roasts from a smooth, evenly fleshed one.

Fancy correctly demands a good round rib and strong, well covered loin. Experience says ditto with hips not too prominent, especially in a bull, but the hips to be well covered. Experts rely on the hips upon which to base their judgment of the depth of flesh, as they do upon the purse to show the internal fat.

Fancy says, "Give me a soft handler," picking up the hide between finger and thumb and giving it a pull, being well pleased with a thin, papery hide. Experience, "Give me one with a firm touch," placing the hand flat on the rib, gradually bringing fingers and thumb together, feeling the texture of the flesh under the hide as well as the thickness. Fancy runs crazy on pedigree, and says, "How is he bred? I want to see his pedigree? How does it read? Does it look well on paper?" Experience teaches that pedigree alone is but little value except for

dreaming over, and for a certain school of strictly purists. That pedigree to be of value must not only be something more than a mere jumble of names, it should indicate that it descends through a list of well known and good individuals, celebrated not alone on account of their breeding, but also for what they themselves have done either in the show yard or at the pail, as sires or dams of show yard notoriety. Experience says, "I want to see both pedigree and true shape, neither is of value alone, but must be combined." We honor a man in the present day for what he is himself, not for what his grandmother's grandfather might have done. And it is right that it should be so in this age of competition, where by the aid of railroads India is as near the markets of the world as Canada. Australia and the Islands of the Seas are all in keen competition, to say nothing of the desolate places in our own country, which are now, by the aid of our intelligent young Ontario farmers, blossoming like the rose. It is a race for the survival of the fittest, whether in cattle or the human race. Then let us gird up our loins and prepare for the fray. Neither fancies nor fallacies will be of use, but strong individual merit. Pedigree must be made subservient to utility, and when the crisis comes, as it has done, the weakest must go to the wall. I have such confidence in the sound common sense of the Ontario farmer, that knowing them to be free from the common fancies and fallacies of so many, they will tide over the storm successfully, and by the aid of their good stock ride safe into the haven at last. For it is only by the aid of good, intelligently bred and well fed animals that we hope to farm successfully.

Alberta Cattle.

The MacLeod Gazette says:—There can be no doubt that the greater care which is taken of cattle now than in former years is beginning to show good results in fewer losses during the severe weather. This is accounted for from the fact that cowmen have systematically put up a good supply of hay, and that most owners have their herds more in hand than the old days, when they were allowed to shift for themselves and take chances. It is the opinion of most cattlemen that the mortality among calves has been very much lessened by weaning the youngsters before the bad weather comes in. However this may be, Alberta cattle business was apparently never in a more flourishing condition than it is at the present moment, while the prospects for vastly increased prosperity were never better. Considering the importance of the cattle business in this country, and the very large amount of money invested, its prosperity must be a subject of mutual congratulation throughout the Dominion.

Kindness to animals pays. Kindness to the cows pays very well. The man who is harsh and rough with his cows will find his profits small. It costs a good deal of money to the dairy farmer to have his cows brought home on the run by a vicious dog in the summer. It would pay the farmer who has a harsh, cruel "help" with the cows to pay him his wages to sit in the kitchen-keeping his toes warm at the stove, and pay another with a kindly way double wages to do his work. Allow no cruelty to animals around your place. The milker who mauls a cow with fork or stick should get his dismissal at once. It is a loss of money to keep him on. Be kind to the cows.

The Dairy.

Huntingdon Dairymen's Convention.

A most successful convention was held at Huntingdon, P. Q., on the 11th February. A large number of the leading men of the Province attended, including the Hon. Col. Rhodes, Minister of Agriculture; Prof. Robertson, of the Ottawa Experimental Farm; Robert Ness, President of Dairymen's Association; S. A. Fisher, M. P.; T. Holton, M. P.; J. Scriver, M. P.; Dr. Cameron, M. P. P.; Messrs. Brown, Drummond and Ewing, of Montreal, and many others. The principal speaker was Prof. Robertson, who, at the afternoon session, gave a most interesting address on "Dairy Farming." He said that a great deal of judgment was required in the profitable feeding of animals. A sensible man would laugh at the idea of feeding cows on strawberries, or hogs on timothy hay, and yet very many of our farmers exercise just about as much discretion in their system of feeding. Animals must be made pay for their food or be sent off as soon as possible when they fail to do so. A farmer would hardly care to board a dozen men just for the pleasure of looking at them, and yet we see men doing this every day with their cows. The waste of manure was another subject touched upon, and Prof. Robertson likened the average agriculturalist to a person cutting a hole in his pocket to allow his money to drop out and then running to the bank for more. He spoke in enthusiastic terms of silos and ensilage, stating a number of the advantages of the system, particularly to dairy farmers. Corn for forage purposes he looked upon as one of the most important crops grown. As much as twenty-five to thirty tons could be grown to the acre, and two tons of good ensilage would produce as much milk as three tons of hay. He condemned the use of timothy hay for cows. He spoke highly of the "diligent hog" as a medium for conveying the grain of the farm to the market.

Mr. McPherson gave his experience of silos and ensilage. Of the latter he grew twenty acres last year, and cut five hundred tons. He also spoke at length on the immense loss from badly constructed farm buildings, and advocated the erection of stables on sanitary principles, and with a view to economizing of labor.

At the evening session Mr. G. Sangster read a very sensible and practical paper on "Draught Horse Breeding," touching on the difficulty of obtaining really good stallions and the folly of breeding from an indifferent, unsound or ill-shaped mare. He declared himself in favor of the Clydesdale as a long way ahead of all the draught breeds.

Mr. S. A. Fisher, M. P., said farmers could not look for increased prices, but must try to better themselves by means of lowering the cost of production. A higher system of agricultural education was required to enable farmers to successfully fight the competition which was growing keener every day.

Mr. John Ewing, in speaking of the necessity of scientific agricultural education, said that at present the people of the Eastern Townships were agitating for the establishment of an agricultural college at Richmond, P. Q., which scheme had the concurrence and support of the Provincial Government. A most liberal grant had been promised as soon as the required capital—\$20,000—was subscribed.