

Milking Stool Reflections.

BY L. F. ABBOTT.

This morning, while milking my grade Jersey—which now scores nearly two pounds of butter daily, since going to pasture—and thinking over the possibilities in the matter of breeding open to farmers, it occurred to me that a few thoughts and suggestions placed before dairymen might not only stimulate but open up some views of the questions, which, possibly some at least, have not seen before; and thereby be persuaded to turn over a new leaf in regard to breeding and feeding of the dairy stock.

I well remember the time when a herd of dairy cows kept on my father's farm, numbering from six to ten animals, were thought to do well if they averaged six pounds of butter a week through the month of June. A pound-of-butter-a-day cow was considered an extra dairy animal. Now a descendant of the same stock, the one spoken of above, will yield the present month 12 to 14 pounds of butter a week. Her daughter, two years old in March, when two months in milk, made something over a pound of butter a day on grass, and bids fair to outstrip her mother when arriving at maturity. It is folly to ask the question, whether it is cheaper and a more rational course to pursue to keep one cow producing 12 pounds of butter a week, than to keep two animals to attain the same result. Yet thousands of farmers are doing just that thing—throwing away nearly one-half their feed and devoting labor and care for which they get no returns.

It is useless to talk of a general purpose cow when we are breeding to attain such results. Such combination does not exist, for when the practical test comes for an animal to prove herself a good dairy or beef beast at the same time, that is to say, filling those distinctive requirements to an eminent degree, she will be found to lack in one or the other.

The question of grade or thoroughbred stock for the dairy seems to confront some of our farmers as a difficulty which they are prone to let trouble them. To me the way seems plain, and the difficulty, if one it is, is to be solved by the pocket-book. For profit, the high grade dairy cow, such as lies in the power of every farmer to possess by patience and care in breeding for himself, by patronizing the best sire within his reach, crossing with a bull of a good milking strain of Jerseys, Ayrshire or Guernseys, upon the best of the dairy stock he possesses, and following in that line from generation to generation, the produce will fall but little, if any, below the thoroughbred—the milk pail and churn being the test.

The prosperity of the farmer of the future must depend largely upon a rational system of husbandry. The consumption of the forage of the farm by good stock, turning the crops grown into fertilizing material, and at the same time reaping a profit in growth of stock, as well as in dairy products, is the basis of good farming. While this is an age of commercial fertilizer, the fact still stands approved, that the manure of animals is unequalled as a means of fertilizing and improving the soil. The dairy farmer finds advantages above those enjoyed by feeding beef breeds—his returns are sooner realized and more constant. This is the case whether the farmer sells milk or patronizes a creamery or cheese factory. But it makes quite a difference to the farm which of these courses he pursues.

The farmer who manufactures his milk into

butter, either by private enterprise or on the co-operative factory system, will show a better footing as a result of the business after a term of a dozen years, if his management has been fairly good, than he would or could by disposing of the whole, as in supplying customers or in corporation cheese making. He may add a few dollars to his bank account by the latter method, but it will be at the expense of his farm, a loss hard to rectify or repair.

This matter of keeping better cows is one I have urged on farmers whenever opportunity offered itself to me. It pains me to see a farmer milking and feeding two cows to get the returns which one ought to give. This is a mighty big thing when considered from a national standpoint.

Creaming Butter from Ensilage.

Mr. L. T. Hazen, the ex-president of the New England Creameries Association, gives his experience with ensilage under the same climatic conditions as we have in Canada, in the Ottawa and Brockville districts. Coming from such a source, it is worth looking at.

My home is in the White Mountain country, a section of almost perpetual frosts. We have frosts in the spring till June usually, and as early as Sept. 1, or nearly that, in the fall, therefore we cannot depend upon quite three months of good corn weather; and while for several years I was a firm believer in ensilage in sections adapted to raising corn, I did not believe it to be applicable to my section. But finally seeing others so rapidly outstripping me in cost of production of their butter, I mustered up courage to try it in a small way, and planted fifteen acres, which proved so well, that I planted twenty-two acres the next year, and the next year fifty, and last year I planted sixty-four, from forty-four of which I put in 889 tons of ensilage.

The balance I fed green till frost, then cut, stooked and dried, cutting as I wanted it to feed. You will see by this that I got from this sixty-four acres feeding value equal to fully 400 tons of hay.

Among the advantages of ensilage are the immense crops raised, enabling one to keep much more stock than he otherwise could, and as he continues, the extra amount of manure obtained will enable him to raise more and more each year, increasing the fertility of his farm from year to year, till, as I have looked forward and asked myself, what can be the limit of production continued in this way? and I have had to exclaim, there is no limit,—when we realize that a man in Massachusetts is keeping thirty-five cows on less than seven acres, buying only the grain. By the comparison, we can form some idea of what we can do if we will go and do likewise. After hearing what this man was doing, I took my pencil and figured what, under the circumstances, I could do on an island of 105 acres. I have found I could keep through the year 525 cows.

I have made several experiments in feeding, and have found that my herd of Jerseys with the grain feed I gave them, will eat on an average nineteen pounds of hay or fifty of ensilage, and with the ensilage feed my butter yield will be about twelve per cent. more than on hay feed with the same amount of grain. One year, when I had not ensilage enough, I found when it was gone—so that I had to feed dry hay—that I had to add one quart of mixed corn and oats to hold my butter up to where it was on one-half ensilage feed.

Some may and do say that as good butter can not be made from ensilage as from hay. That

may be truth in part, and may not be true. There is no doubt that good clover hay cut in first blow, well dried without rain, will make better butter than ensilage or any other feed, except green grass; but we cannot have all good clover, and do not have half what we might have or what it would be for our interest to have; and I am fully satisfied that we can make better butter, and more of it, with ensilage than we can with the average hay of New Hampshire.

But I have seen ensilage from which good butter could not be made. We have one silo in our town, the corn for which was planted thick, cut quite green, and put in the silo whole, which smells so badly that the neighbors living within a radius of fifty to one hundred rods are talking of complaining of the owner as having a nuisance. But this is unnecessary. With all the light that has been given us upon the subject, it is one's own fault if he does not have good ensilage.

I have one silo that holds about 900 tons; it is divided into six pits. I, this year, in filling, cut into two of them about one fourth of dry oat straw, thinking it possible that it might soak up and absorb the juice that pressed out of the corn and make it as valuable as the corn itself. I had two more that held 175 tons each, or 350 tons.

I thought I would fill these with whole corn, and went at it, expecting that from the testimony of some who had used whole ensilage I should have something extra, but it was a series of disappointments from the day we began to fill till it was emptied. First, it took one more man each day to put in forty tons than it did fifty when we cut it, and instead of 350 tons in the two silos, we only got in about 200; but I kept up good courage in anticipation of the splendid feed to come, and my courage kept good until we opened them; then we found a mess of it.

I don't know what to call it; it did not smell sour, neither did it smell good. I fed it to the cattle and they seemed to like it, but I saw it affected the milk, cream and butter. I stopped feeding it to my cows in milk, and fed to my young stock and dry cows without any serious results, and opened one of my cut silos and found it sweet and good. I had in feeding the ensilage from the whole corn an additional expense of about thirty days' work cutting it as I fed. All of these experiences satisfied me that while a rich man might feed whole ensilage, I could not afford it.

Ensilage as a feed for store stock is very good. It will grow young stock fully as fast as grass, and while it may be fed as a whole feed, I think it is better to use other feed with it. I like roast turkey; I can also eat my portion from a dish of beans; though to put me on a straight diet of any of the luxuries of life for six months, I think I should get sick of them; but to have one at one meal and another at the next, I get along very well.

It is the same with stock. They like a change, and while I believe that cows will give more milk, and make more butter on all ensilage than on part hay, I think it better for the stock to eat part hay, except in particular cases. I have for four years put in about forty farrow cows, which I have fed nothing but corn meal and ensilage; have milked them till fat, and then, as we wanted them to eat, have killed them. Such beef is not often seen in winter. It will invariably be very tender and juicy. Our cooks in the woods have repeatedly spoken of the remarkably tender, rich, and juicy nature of all of the beef that went to the camp from here.