

## THE FUTURE OF SHORTHORNS.

INTERESTING PAPER BY MR. RICHARD GIBSON,  
OF DELAWARE, ONT.

THE following interesting paper on "The Future of Shorthorns" was read by Mr. Richard Gibson, of Delaware, Ont., at the annual meeting of the Dominion Shorthorn Breeders' Association held in Toronto on 26th February:—

At your President's suggestion I offer you a paper on "The Future of Shorthorns." Believing as I do that it is the duty of every member of this Association to do what he can to make the annual meetings more interesting, to that end I have consented to prepare a paper on the above subject and so add my mite. Premising, however, that I do not wish to pose as a prophet or that I am able to see further into the subject than my brother breeders—I do not pretend as much—but this I do know, that a great many breeders are feeling discouraged, and also that there is but little money to be made out of them now or prospectively.

It is to such I wish to address myself, and I trust I can give them some little encouragement. In the first place let us cast back for four or five years and notice the change in prices that has taken place in that time amongst the various other breeds of cattle. Herefords were booming—as much as five, six, or seven hundred dollars were being paid for bulls for ranche purposes. That trade is gone. As milkers they are not a success, hence of but little value in the thickly-populated States where milk, butter, cheese, and cream are required as well as beef, and are only of value on the rich black soils within the corn belt of the prairie States, and their worth has depreciated so much that they are now of less value than the shorthorn, the breed they maligned so much, and that notwithstanding the amount of money spent in advertising and helping the boom in every way that tact and organization could accomplish. To stop importations they even went so far as to impose a fee of \$100 on each imported animal offered for entry in their herd book. While the shorthorn breeder fought against every breed unassisted, he had also to fight those who should have been his friends, viz., other shorthorn breeders, that is, breeders of other strains of blood besides his own, and they were often his worst foes, whereas the Hereford breeders were thoroughly organized and disciplined and pooled their cattle and fought as one man, hence the secret of so many triumphs in the show rings.

What of the Angus? Notwithstanding their success at the Fat Cattle Shows their star is set, except in the corn belt of the prairie States. Have they not been worked for all they are worth? I venture to predict that within a very few months there will scarcely be a respectable herd left in Ontario; they are not wanted here, and the boom in the States is broken. No marching through city streets with herdsmen dressed in kilts leading the "Bonnie Doddies" with pipers at the head of the procession. No importations are being made, and last year, the first for some time, at the annual spring sales in Scotland the Shorthorns were not only in most demand but actually realized the higher figures.

I will not detain you continuing the parallel with Holsteins, Jerseys, etc. You all know they have depreciated in value more than the Shorthorn. But I would not have you assume that I predict a brighter future for the Shorthorn because of the depreciation in value of the other breeds, but only inasmuch as so many young breeders were coaxed away from the golden calf to seek after false gods in the shape of antagonistic breeds, and as these breeds have been tried and found wanting, in the future we may expect an exodus of young breeders who have hitherto, of late years, been persuaded to invest in anything but Shorthorns. But there are signs that would indicate that we are now nearing the morn of a bright and prosperous day and I think the golden rays can now be seen instanced by the sale in Chicago last November, when 79 head sold for \$43,320, over \$548 each; and twelve head of one family sold for \$29,050, an average of \$2,420. Again there is the fact that Shorthorns are thoroughly useful—they are not a fancy article like a piece of old china, but intensely practical and of every day utility. That they more nearly approach the general purpose cow than any other pure breed is unquestionable, and if any doubters

could only see the good cows now used in the large dairies in the vicinity of London, they would no longer be in doubt as to their value as milkers, and my firm belief is that even if the Hereford or Angus could take their place as beef manufacturers, their influence in the dairy economy could not be filled elsewhere, and they would be wanted for that purpose. It may be objected that I am saying too much on this subject, but I feel it is one of the most important questions in connection with the breed to-day. You can have good milkers and good feeders. I've had them, and so can others. Though prices are not as high or the demand as great as we might wish for, Shorthorns can yet be bred profitably, and I wish you not to forget that in the natural course of events there must be times of depression; there never has been a business or industry of any magnitude that has been continued for a length of time but what has met with reverses, and why should you expect the breeding of stock to be an exception. There have been periods in the history of the breed on this continent when the situation was gloomy indeed. Mr. Allan in his history of the Shorthorn writes: "With the year 1840, under the continued depression of the financial interests of the country at large, the spirit so active during several previous years in cultivating the Shorthorns gradually waned and further importations ceased. . . . There was little or no encouragement for breeding Shorthorns. Under this depressed condition of affairs hundreds of well-bred bull calves were castrated for steers and many cow calves spayed and reared for the shambles. Prices for the best-blooded animals were merely nominal, public sales were scarcely made at all as in the past years and private sales infrequent, nor was the depression for a few years only but continuous or nearly to quite the year 1850. In Kentucky, New York and New England Shorthorn values were no better and many breeders who had begun rearing them but a few years before became disgusted with their stock, turned their choice-bred cows into the dairies, put them to common bulls and sold off their calves remorselessly to the butcher. During this depressing period numerous good pedigrees were lost as not being worth preserving, and many valuable families of this lordly race became almost, if not wholly, extinct." What a picture! And yet in the year mentioned, viz., 1850, we find a small bevy of American gentlemen crossing the Atlantic, and attending a sale held at Kirklevington in May, where they succeeded in purchasing three females, and again three years later at the Tortworth sale, the same with other Americans laid the foundation for a herd whence a single cow realized very much more than the whole 68 animals bought at Kirklevington—a herd that at public auction realized \$380,490 for 108 head! Then let us take heart of grace, let us not be discouraged. The signs are right and the good time is coming. There never has been within my memory a time when a breeder could so easily set himself right if on the wrong track. Never a time when a foundation for a herd could be procured at such a small cost and never a time when money invested in well-bred animals at the current prices seemed so certain of being safe and profitable. Just as sure as summer follows winter, so sure will depression be followed by buoyancy; and just as sure as Ontario is worth farming, stock must be the leading feature, and if so the Shorthorn must take that high position to which he is entitled both by his lineage, prepotency and intrinsic worth.

[We are obliged, owing to want of space, to omit Mr. Snell's excellent paper on "The Milking Properties of Shorthorns."]



CONDUCTED BY J. B. HARRIS.

Two very large and enthusiastic excursions left Toronto on February the 14th and 21st respectively, for a trip around the world. The organizer and conductor was Mr. Walter Massey, who in this role, as in all others he has undertaken, was eminently successful. We say *was*, for the excursions are over, the excursionists all safe at home, and de-

lighted with their trip. From Toronto, over the prairie—through the Rockies—to the Golden Gate—far across southern seas—beneath Hawaiian Palms—across Australian meadows—to Suez—to Alexandria—to Jerusalem—to Bethlehem—to Nazareth—and so homeward—all in eighty minutes! A wonderful journey among wonderful scenes, rendered strangely familiar by the presence of well-known faces looking out from unexpected corners over all the world. The employees of the Massey Company and their friends are indebted to Mr. Massey for two delightful evenings. Mr. Samuel McNab presided on the first evening and Mr. Thos. Owen on the second, two evenings being necessary on account of the hall holding only some 700 people.

WE were favored some evenings since with an invitation to be present at the closing exercises of the first term of the Parkdale Art School. Dr. May and several gentlemen from the city were present, and all seemed delighted with the progress made by the young people during their first three months. Free hand, mechanical, architectural and other drawings, together with oil and water-color paintings were on exhibition, some of them being very creditable indeed. Mr. Bell-Smith, the Head Master of the school, delivered an address of an eminently practical character, in which he deprecated the idea of "manufacturing" artists at so much per head in a given period. He was of the opinion that a faithful study of art will be of benefit to a man in any position—that it tends to inculcate more methodical and clearer habits of thought; that the intellect as well as the hand is educated—that although only a few will become eminent, the time spent in the pursuit of artistic knowledge will not be lost to any one, always supposing such time to be honestly used. There is no royal road—all must patiently climb from success to success, never being satisfied with present attainments.

WE were favored a few days ago with a visit from old friend Harry Watson, who once occupied a prominent position in the office of the Massey Co. This young gentleman has decided to cut the counting-house in favor of a profession, and is now engaged fitting himself to cut and otherwise maltreat human beings. It is exceedingly dangerous to approach Mr. Watson now. He is an enthusiast in whatever he undertakes, but has never reached the acme of enjoyment until the present moment. He is continually on the watch for "subjects;" and any abnormal growth or other peculiarity even on the person of his bosom friend will render that friend liable to be made the victim of an "operation" at sight.

AMONG the members of the Dominion Shorthorn Breeders' Association who attended the annual meeting on the 26th February the following visited our works on the invitation of Mr. H. A. Massey, President of the Company:—Messrs. J. R. Martin, Cayuga; Aaron Shantz, Haysville; Daniel Shantz, Haysville; James Ballantyne, Sebringville, and Colin Campbell, Crosshill. They were driven to the works and were received by the members of the firm and conducted through the works by the Superintendent, Mr. Johnston, and Mr. Morrison, editor of the ILLUSTRATED. They were loud in their expressions of admiration and astonishment at what they saw, and their only regret was that they had not more time at their disposal to thoroughly examine the mechanical wonders displayed in each department. The company extend a general invitation to visitors from the country to inspect their works, who will receive every attention and consideration.