

One of Our Leading Agriculturists.

John Miller, Ontario's veteran stock breeder and farmer, was born May 12th, 1817, near Annan, Dumfries, Scotland. On April 12th, 1835, he left Scotland in a sailing vessel and arrived in Markham, June 1st of the same year. With him he brought some Leicester sheep and pure-bred swine for his uncle, the late George Miller, of Markham, with whom he lived for five years. His father and mother then arrived from Scotland, and for eight years he resided with them and took a leading part in clearing what is known as the "Atha Farm." In 1848, he bought the farm so well known as "Thistle Ha," so called from the bad state of its cultivation when purchased. It originally contained 165 acres, but from time to time more land has been bought, and at the present time the subject of our sketch owns 660 acres, much of which is now in a fine state of cultivation, and 100 acres of cedar land.

In 1836, he showed a young Shorthorn bull against all ages and breeds in a class of eight at Toronto Spring Show, (bulls were not then shown at the fall shows), all were imported but the one he showed, which took first place. When the first Provincial Show was held in London, 1854, the exhibitors from the east went to Hamilton by steamboat, and thence by railroad to London. This year Mr. Miller imported three yearling heifers—two Shorthorns, Louisa and Jane, and one Galloway. The Shorthorns won first and second place in the above show. In 1857, he again showed four two-year-old heifers and a bull "Redkirk," these, like the first, were bred by R. Syme, of Redkirk, Dumfries, Scotland. They were very successful in all the Canadian show rings—including the Provincial, also at several of the leading State fairs in the U. S. A. At Buffalo, he sold Redkirk for \$300, which was a good price for a young bull in those days. In 1867, Nelly Bly 2nd was bought for \$1000 in Illinois, after she had won first at St. Louis and several other places; she was the first bovine brought to Canada which cost \$1000; her dam was the foundation of Spear's Nelly Bly family, and this heifer is the foundation of the Nelly Bly family now found in Canada. About this time Prince of Bourbon 6060, was bought from R. A. Alexander, of Kentucky; he was followed by Oxford Mazurka 8750, which was shown for five years, and with two exceptions always took first money; he afterwards took first place over the bulls that had previously beaten him; he was injured and had to be killed; his dressed carcass weighed 1870 lbs. The last two years he was in the herd he had for companions Fawsley Chief 1051 and Canadian Prince = 43 =. Fawsley Chief = 107 = was never beaten, though shown at all leading Canadian shows when one, two and three years old. He was imported in 1869 with Ruberta, a renowned show cow which Mr. Miller sold to the Hon. M. H. Cochrane for \$1000, who afterwards sold her to Col. King for \$2000. She has been a successful show cow down to recent years. In 1870 Rose of Strathallan, Cherry Bloom, Cherrybini, Isabella and a number of other very good cows were imported. Before leaving Scotland Rose of Strathallan won many prizes, among which was second as a two-year-old at the Highland Society's show, and first at Dalkeith, 1868, first at the Highland Society's show in 1869, and gold medal at the same show in 1870. The last prize is given to a special class composed of cows which have won first in the cow class at this show, and is, there-

fore, a distinguished honor. Her dam, Rosa Bonheur, won first prize at the Highland Society's show and Perthshire show, including the gold medal at the Highland Society's Glasgow meeting in 1867, and her dam won similar honors. Rose of Strathallan reared ten calves and has been the dam or grand dam of many prize winners. Lord Strathallan was shown all over Canada and was very successful, and eleven times won first at leading American shows. In 1878 three bulls descended from his dam won first, second and third places in Toronto, and the year following one of them took the sweepstakes at the same place. A year or so after Crown Prince of Strathallan 49200 again won first at the same show, beating Messrs. Watts' celebrated Barmpton Hero = 324 =, the only time he was ever beaten. This family, like the Isabellas, are all sure and regular breeders, and are noted for their excellent quality throughout. Imported Isabella was the foundation of the family so well and favorable known in Canada to-day. Many prize winners are also found among them. Isabella was never beaten but by her stable companion, Nelly Bly 2nd; but she has proved a much better breeder than this cow, her



JOHN MILLER.

descendants as a class are much superior. In 1871 Lady Oxford, which was sold for \$2500, and Lady Juliet, sold for \$2000 (both went to C. C. Parks), together with a number of other good ones, were imported. From that date until now, from time to time as required, fresh importations have been made. At present the herd numbers 50 females and 10 males. Among them are representatives of the Strathallans, Isabellas, Nonpareils, Lydias, Rosebuds, Prince of Wales and Coquettes. The herd is headed by the grand show bull, Vice-Consul, which has been shown eleven times and won as many first prizes. We believe him to be the best bull in America to-day; it is very doubtful if there is a bull alive that is good enough to beat him. He is now 42 months old and weighs 2,350 lbs.; in color a red, his legs are short and his body very thick and massive. He has been used by Mr. Miller three seasons, and has left each year a wonderfully good, even lot of calves, which are very like their sire and possess his smooth, massive qualities.

Mr. Miller imported his first Clydesdale, viz., Rob Roy [31], in 1854, and in 1860 Black Douglass [72], though previous to this date he had been breeding to good imported horses, and

had then a mare, Maggie, that had won 22 first prizes. She girthed eight feet one inch, and by the service of Black Douglas produced the horse which won first and sweepstakes at the Provincial show in 1863. The competition was keen, there being a lot of imported horses present. The next horse imported was the far famed Comet [174]. He was used in Ontario for twenty years. Before coming to Canada he travelled in Scotland one season. Many of his colts were prize winners, and perhaps, excepting Netherby [126], there never was a horse in Ontario that was the sire of so many good colts. They were unusually good workers, heavy and compact, and of a kindly disposition. The mares generally bred well. Here and there throughout the country, even to the present day, may be found horses got by him. Comet and Netherby are names found in the pedigrees of most of the best Canadian bred Clydesdales. With the next importation came Boydston Boy (111), Young Ivanhoe (1887) and Royal Diadem (1286). These horses are too well known to need any special comment. Each is at the head of leading breeding establishments.

In 1875, he showed four imported mares at five different shows and won twenty first prizes. Again, in 1882, he imported a horse and three mares; with these he won four first prizes at the Provincial the same year, and two firsts and one second at Toronto. In 1883, he imported thirteen horses and mares—among this lot were several prize-winners. In 1884, nine horses and mares were imported—three of which were shown in Toronto, winning two firsts and one second. In 1885, five were imported; on this date at Toronto, he won first with foal, first with yearling colt, and second with yearling filly; the yearling was got by Boydston Boy, and was shown against the colts which won first at the English Royal Show, first at the Royal Northern, first at the Glasgow Summer Show, and second at the Highland Societies' Show. Mr. Miller afterwards sold this colt for \$2,500—the highest price ever received for a Canadian bred Clydesdale. In 1886, he won first at Toronto on yearling colt, and first and third on two-year-old filly. This is the last time he has shown horses.

During 1887 and 1888, he made extensive importations, but the extent of his sales have prevented him from showing. At the present time, their stables contain a number of Clydesdale stallions and mares, also a Cleveland Bay horse and mare.

The first ten years of Mr. Miller's life in Canada, he imported and bred Leicester sheep, and for the next fifteen years a flock each of Cotswolds and Leicesters were kept; but from 1860 to 1880, Cotswolds only, with the exception of a few Shropshires which were imported in 1863, but were all sold in 1867. In 1880, and each year since, extensive importations of Shropshires have been received. During all these years the sheep kept at "Thistle Ha" have been most noted and successful. The foundation of many of the most successful flocks, both in the show yards and breeding pens, now in Ontario, were laid from purchases made here. In 1887, Shropshires owned at this farm won the silver medal at Toronto, as the best middle or fine wool flock, and in 1888 they won the flock prizes at the Provincial show and at Toronto, as well as a fair share of all the class prizes.

Since August last, 500 head of pure-bred sheep