

The Grazer and Breeder.

NOTES ON GUERNSEYS.

I have lately received several copies of the *Country Gentleman*, containing interesting articles on the subject of Guernsey cattle. Some of the senders are unknown to me, but I think the best return I can make to the kindness of all, is to give through your columns the information I have myself acquired on the subject during a residence of 12 years on the Island. If I have not the knowledge of a native Guernseyman, I am, perhaps, on the other hand, free from his prejudices or his personal interests. I have kept generally 8 to 12 cows of the best strains I could procure, but I have never either bred or bought merely for the purpose of selling again. I have thus some little practical experience to offer, which may be useful to those who take an interest in the breed.

It is impossible to trace the origin of the different breeds in the three islands of Jersey, Guernsey and Alderney. No doubt they are a mixture of the races found on the adjoining continent of France, in somewhat different proportions, and with specialized qualities developed by breeding in-and-in. About the middle of last century we find the Jersey cattle described as a black and white breed. These are the prevailing colors now in Brittany, to which province Jersey is the nearest of the three islands. Alderney, which lies nearest to Normandy, where the color tends to red and white, appears to have then had a breed resembling the Jersey of the present day—the black and white shaded with red. This race was the first which gained celebrity for its quality of milk, for though Alderney is the smallest island of the three, all Channel Islands stock were, till quite recently, known in England as Alderneys; and to this day the name is often used in England to signify Jerseys, as distinguished from Guernseys. Again, in Guernsey it is very probable that the larger frames and redder colors were aided by a dash of Devonshire, from which it is about 80 miles distant, where the native breed is pure red and of excellent milking quality. But the fancy for form and color, for purposes of exportation, has gradually bred the Jerseys into the silver-grey and the beautiful shapes of the present day; while in the other islands little regard has been paid to anything but utility. But though direct importation between Jersey and Guernsey has long been prohibited, a certain amount of admixture has taken place through Alderney, between which and the other two islands free traffic has till recently prevailed, a practice also in the still smaller island of Sark, lying midway between Jersey and Guernsey. But both these smaller islands are under the jurisdiction of Guernsey, and for some years past any importation of Jersey or French breeding stock into them has been prohibited, while traffic between them and Guernsey is on both sides allowed. Thus an Alderney or Sark cow may possibly be of pure Guernsey blood, but in the absence of positive proof, it cannot be considered with certainty. For this reason the General Herd Book of the Island of Guernsey excludes (or now places in a different register) animals which were born in Alderney or Sark, or whose parents were born in either island. It is not deemed possible to carry the distinction farther back. The Register of the Agricultural and Horticultural Society admits from the three islands indiscriminately to its Guernsey list.

Dealing then with the Guernsey as we find it at the present day, I will endeavor to give a fair estimate or standard of its essential characteristics. Leaving to a future letter any remarks on its external appearance, I will limit myself in this to its qualities as a milk-producer. These are, I venture to think, too apt to be judged, particularly in America, by sensational records of so many quarts of milk, or so many

pounds of butter per week. But as the animal must be fed during the whole year, the production during only a selected part of it is misleading. It will often be found that a cow which gives a very large record for a few weeks or months, goes long dry, so that her profit in that year is not great. I have myself no cows of extraordinary record, but I have for the last eight years kept an account of the production of my own small herd, and it may be useful to give it in order to illustrate what an average fairly selected herd will do. It will be seen that it indicates a rate of from 550 to 800 gallons of milk from each cow during her best years, and including all ages, an average of 600 to 650 gallons per head during each year. In the first table I include all, however young or old, which were in my possession and in milk during each entire year, omitting, therefore, cows sold or purchased during the year, or heifers which calved for the first time in the course of the year. The gallons are imperial, a necessary warning in speaking of Guernsey measurements, where the local gallon is one-twentieth less than the imperial, and the pound about one-twelfth larger than the imperial.

Year.	No. of cows during full year.	Gallons per head.
1875	5	547
1876	7	648
1877	6	658
1878	7	649
1879	6	662
1880	5	613
1881	7	666
1882	7	579

Average, eight years..... 627

The next table will show the amount given by the best among these during a succession of years. The numbers are of the General Herd Book Register, but Marguerite could not be entered, having been born in Alderney.

Age, years.	Violet (19).	Violet 2d (20).	Snowdrop (26).	Marguerite.
3.....	480	664	594	386
4.....	513	760	594	728
5.....	678	785	679	693
6.....	735	710	652	396
7.....	562	840	593	578
8.....	626	780	670	599
9.....	540	1054	667	984
10.....	596	802	Died.	Died.
11.....	466			
Average..	566	796	634	709

It will be noticed that two of those quoted here died, a misfortune, however, which I think has befallen me in only one other instance. One died from the so-called "milk fever," or "drop after calving," the sole case I have had out of over a hundred calvings. It may generally be averted by moderate feeding before calving, and a dose of three-quarters of a pound of sulphate of magnesia immediately the calf is born. The general feeding of my cows is pasture in summer, with hay and 3 pounds of cotton cake at night; in winter they have mangel wurzel, about 30 to 50 pounds; carrots, half that quantity when they can be had, and hay, partly chaffed, with 5 pounds of cotton cake.

If these figures of milk production are compared with other breeds, they show that the Guernsey is an excellent cow for quantity as well as quality. Undoubtedly she is passed in quantity by the Holstein bred. But either Short-Horns or Ayrshires average only from 500 to 600 gallons per