Quality vs. Quantity Again.

MR. DRYDEN REPLIES TO MR. SNELL.

In reading Mr. Snell's letter in your April issue my first thought is aptly expressed in the scriptural words:—"Behold what a great matter a little fire kindleth." When writing my communication I did not dream of starting a controversy as between different breeds of sheep. I was arguing for a *general principle* applicable to the production of every farm product. It is in short, that the soundest policy for the farmer, regardless of what seems to be temporary gain, is never to produce an inferior article, but to always produce the best quality in the greatest possible quantity.

In the quotation from Mr. Snell's letter given in my last, I understand him to admit that the *quality* of both wool and mutton in the Cotswolds is *inferior;* but he urged that as these articles were always sold by the pound and that no additional price is paid for *quality* sufficient to compensate for the advantage which the Cotswold has in weight, therefore, the true policy is to breed Cotswolds. Accepting his admission as to *inferior quality*, I denied his conclusions, and I believe my position is sound and impregnable. I assert that if a poorer quality of either mutton, beef or pork is forced upon the market much less will be consumed than if the quality pleases the taste of the consumer. When the consumption increases, the demand must increase, and so higher prices and a steady market is given to the farmer for his product. Therefore, I say, for our progressive farmers looking merely to their own interests, the true policy is to produce and place upon the market the very *best article possible.*

I said nothing about the comparative merits of different breeds for this purpose. I accepted Mr. Snell's admission as to *inferior quality*, as shown by the paragraph quoted (only half of which he gives in his reply). Suffer me to quote it again:—"If our circumstances were such that we had a special market and could secure special *extra prices* for a *certain quality* of wool or mutton, one can readily understand the *wisdom* of breeding to meet the demand or requirements of such a market. But what are the facts in regard to our markets? Are not both wool and mutton sold at *so much per pound*, and is there any considerable extra price paid *for quality* in either case that will nearly compensate for the difference in *weight* in favor of the *Cotswolds* in carcass at any age, or in the annual clip of wool." Surely Mr. Snell declares in this paragraph that the markets will not warrant the production of a *better quality* because both wool and mutton are sold by the pound, without any distinction. Mr. Rees, writing to the Breeders' Gazette, says the same thing—"breed a big carcass;" never mind what breed, for "no one will ask you." Surely he also declares in the same paragraph that if there should be any extra price for *better quality* it is not sufficient to compensate for the difference in weight in both wool and mutton in favor of the Cotswold. Certainly he also affirms that *if* we had a *special market* for a *better quality* it would be wisdom to breed to meet such a demand. He now complains that I did not contradict any of these points. I did not need to. My contention is that a *better quality* will make its *own market* and eventually crowd out altogether that which is inferior.

He complains farther that I am attempting to mislead the public by *leaving the impression* that there is "no such thing as good quality in Cotswolds." How funny! It was not I who did this, but Mr. Snell, with his own pen, in the paragraph quoted. I assert again I said *nothing whatever* about quality in Cotswolds, but I did advise the young breeder "if he could determine *what cross* or *what breed* will produce the *finest quality* in the greatest quantity to invest in them with a certainty of winning in the long run. I believe this better quality is in demand now, and this demand will increase if the consumer is not mocked and deceived by the thrusting of that which is inferior upon him.

If there is no demand why does Alderman Frankland, the pioneer exporter and butcher of Toronto, in his address to the Sheep Breeders' Association in Toronto a few weeks ago, strongly advise the use of a Shropshire ram in order to *improve* the mutton? Why does he, as a butcher in Toronto, declare that since within the last few years this cross has been made, *much improvement* in both *wool* and *mutton* has been the result? Why do the drovers in New York State, Michigan and elsewhere advise the farmers to use the same cross in order to sell their lambs at higher prices? The demand does exist. (I am afraid some one else is in a "Rip Van Winkle sleep.")

Yet he tells me I am dreaming of some possible time in the dim distant future, when the present generation will all be dead and gone. Perhaps he does not observe that he does a little dreaming himself when his prospects for his favorite breed are brightened by the possibility of such a change in fashions *in the future* as will make Cotswold wool again in demand. I am afraid if we must depend upon fickle fashion in ladies' dress goods for a demand for our product, it will be of short duration when it comes.

But I have given a stunning blow to Cotswolds when I say I do not want to breed them any more. Surely a very light blow stuns the trade. I thought it was the lightest thing I could say. I am not inclined to run down any breed. There is room enough for all in our broad domain. But let me ask why were Cotswolds bred in such numbers in Canada? Was it not to supply crossing rams for the American Merino? I said when this trade was at its height, that when the tide turned and this demand ceased and we depended on wool and mutton for our profits, we would soon want some other breed. The demand did cease. Will Mr. Snell say why? Perhaps if he should travel again by the "rivers in Kentucky" and elsewhere, where once these sheep flourished, he might find some others who had bred them and "did not desire to repeat the operation."

But, then, I don't know whether they are useful or not, because "I never owned a good one, and did not know one when I saw it." Yet, Mr. Snell says my neighbor upon the same lot did grow one of the best flocks in the land. I must then have owned *one good one*, for the last ram I used was the highest priced and one of the choicest breeding of all which were offered at the sale of this noted flock. My ewes were bought at two other sales, and at each no one will say that I did not get the best offered. I did not lose money by the operation either, yet I concluded they were not the most suitable breed for this country. Not because they are not pretty when fed, washed and trimmed, with their locks curled ready for the show. Not because *some* of them do not grow to large weights, but because when they are thus grown there is too much tallow for the flesh, and principally because the mortality among them is so great. It is very difficult to keep them alive. I do not depend for this merely on my own experience, but my observation of my "neighbor's flock" was, if possible, worse than my own. I have grave doubts if another flock should be started on that farm it would not be Cotswold. I shall not dispute Mr. Snell's comparative weights, because I do not deny with forcing feed the Cotswold is larger than the others mentioned.

The fact that a Cotswold wins in a champion prize decides nothing as to suitability of breed. Neither does the fact of the champion prize for best flock at London prove anything. His brother, in his letter on page 105 of the last issue of the ADVOCATE, states the case as the judges declared at the time, viz., that the Cotswolds were better representatives of their breed than any of the others shown were of their respective breeds.

The coming hog, sheep or bullock will contain less lard and tallow and more lean meat than some of the breeds now furnish. If Cotswolds shall be so improved as to meet this demand, well and good. If Shropshires meet it more fully, and at the same time are prolific and hardy, as I know they are, then will the *boom* for them continue. It is not what may be done at some great exhibition, or by one individual here and there who has special faculties, but it is the average product of the average farmer which decides the best variety for this country, notwithstanding the smart sayings of either Mr. Snell or myself.

The General Purpose Cow.

In the April number of your valuable journal appears a very interesting and in many respects valuable article, under the above heading. The paper contains some very good ideas, but also some glaring and misleading statements, which we cannot allow to pass unnoticed.

In defining the general purpose cow, the author says:—The Jerseys, Holsteins and Ayrshires are out of the race on account of being non-beefers. Now I would like to know where Mr. Nicholson got this information. If this were a fact, how is it that at the Chicago Fat Stock Show (the greatest of all fat stock shows), in 1886, in the yearling carcass class, in which there were twelve entries, a Holstein and Polled Angus tied for first premium, thereby clearly excelling the ten others of the special beef breeds. Again, at the same show, in 1888, Ohio Champion, a registered Holstein steer, made the largest weight per diem of any animal ever exhibited at the shows of that Society. At the New York State Fair, 1887, the Holstein cow, Zaneta, won first premium as best fat cow over three years in strong competition, open to all breeds.

At the same show, in 1889, a registered Holstein won the 1st prize as a beef animal over Shorthorns and Herefords. In a feeding test made at the Michigan Agricultural College, where two pure bred steers (of nearly equal merit), of the following breeds (Shorthorns, Holsteins, Jerseys, Galloways, Hereford and Devon), were selected, and a complete record of the food consumed, and weights and gains made were kept, the following were the results:—The two Holsteins made the largest gain per day in pounds for a given time, and one of them made the greatest gain per day since birth, also showing the greatest gain for food consumed. Again, at a similar test, at our own Agricultural College, at Guelph, the result was the same, a grade Holstein steer making the largest gain. In our own stable a 3-year-old Holstein heifer made an average gain of 4 lbs. per day for a period of 63 days (and we did not have to resort to the molasses barrel like feeders of certain beef breeds do).

Jacobo, a registered Holstein, when killed at two years and 10 months old, dressed 67.31 per cent. to the 100, live weight; Amleto, 66 per cent.; Prince of Wayne 2nd, nearly 66 per cent.; Kooiska 2nd dressed 65 per cent. Their fine *beefing quality*, combined with their *unparalleled milking qualities*, stamps the Holstein the general purpose cow par excellence. How in the face of such facts (which could be indefinitely prolonged if space permitted), Mr. Nicholson can class the Holsteins as non-beefers, I will leave to your intelligent readers to decide for themselves. That a rivalry should exist between breeders of the different breeds is very desirable, but that this rivaly be carried on in a spirit of *honesty and fairness* is equally desirable. Our motto is to give each breed its just due.

H. BOLLERT.