

Ayrshire Points and Qualities.

Mr. Buchanan gives the points of the Ayrshires as follows: The favorite color of the Ayrshire is a light brown, or brown and white; some few are found black and white (a notable bull, belonging to the Duke of Buccleuch, of this color won many prizes), and now and then even a pure white one is seen; but, so far as I have seen or heard, they are never roan-colored. Some years ago an Ayrshire was hardly considered pure unless it had a black nose, but a white nose is not looked upon as any drawback to a good cow at the present time. When a cow or bull is slightly brindled it is pretty sure to have a black nose, or if the prevailing color is dark brown, the nose and some other points are likely to be black; this is merely an indication that the West Highland blood is reappearing. Some people think if a cow shows a "notch" in each of the ears, it is a sign of a Pure Ayrshire, but this is a mistake; it belongs, nevertheless, to some families, and is regularly transmitted, but it is no particular advantage, and an Ayrshire cow is just as well without the notch. Nor do I attach any importance to the "escutcheon," never having observed that a cow was better or worse for having a large one.

The udder is the chief point from which we can infer the milking capabilities of a cow of any sort, and especially of an Ayrshire. Take the following description of what good judges esteem the best shape and appearance:—"It should, in form, be long from front to back, stretching well forward on the belly, broad behind, filling up well the space between the legs, but should not be too deep vertically—that is, hang too far down—space being obtained in it rather through length and breadth." I may add to this description that some cows, even with large, well-shaped "bags," are not nearly so good as they look, on account of their bags being fleshy; and it is sometimes hard to tell, from their appearance, whether they have been milked or not. A cow having a far less udder, but which can be emptied, or "milked down," as it is called, is of more value, and will probably keep on milking fairly well for a much longer time than the former will do; it is always satisfactory to see the large veins on the belly full and prominent, with a good large cavity at the upper end of each. When well-fed, a good Ayrshire cow will give milk up to within two or three weeks of calving, but she ought never to be allowed to do so, as it injures her considerably for the following season; milking once a day should be begun about ten weeks before the cow is due to calve, and she ought to be quite dry at least eight weeks before calving. There is often considerable difficulty in doing this, but the animal should be kept on straw and water until the milk leaves, if found necessary.

As young Ayrshire heifers and cows have generally very small teats, inexperienced or heedless milkers should not be employed to milk them. After they have had one or two calves, their teats get larger, and they are as easily milked as cows of any other breed. As these cows are of lively and active dispositions, it is very seldom indeed they require any help when calving, unless they have been allowed to get too fat; this sometimes happens when they have run on to midsummer before calving, and when they have had very good pasture. The best way is to turn a cow loose, when she is about to calve,

into a roomy box or yard, and leave her alone; it is very seldom that interference with her on these occasions does anything but mischief. When any unusual symptoms are observed, she may be looked to occasionally, and assisted if really necessary.

In June, 1868, I set aside the milk of a number of my best cows, in order to try how much butter they would each yield in seven days, with the following results:—The best cow produced 14 lbs. of butter, and the worst very nearly 12 lbs., in the time named; these cows were all pure Ayrshires. The pasture they had was first year's clover seeds, and they had no other food whatever; the quantity of milk required for each pound of butter was nearly twelve quarts. The experiment was made on the farm of Sackville, near Tralee, Ireland, and was conducted with great care and exactness.

In County Durham, England, there are many farmers who keep Ayrshire cows. In July, 1876, one of those farmers showed me his dairy books, from which it appeared that the gross returns from his thirty-six cows were over £25 each cow; and he assured me that he thought it a very bad year indeed when they produced less than that figure each. This gentleman had carried on his dairy for nearly thirty years in that neighborhood, and had always, up to that date, bought cows as he required them in Scotland. This seems the best plan for English farmers to follow, for whether it is due to the climate, food, or their management, it seems certain that those bred and reared in England seldom prove as good milkers as those which are brought from the north; the latter are always much harder also, and in the midland and southern counties they thrive very well, with little or no shelter, even in winter time, if only they have a fair bite of grass on the pasture.

At a meeting of the New York Dairymen's Association, Mr. Robert McAdam read a paper, giving the results of his experience of Shorthorns and Ayrshires in the dairy. He said he began dairying in 1843, in Scotland, and followed it till 1869; that he had studied the two breeds carefully on the farm and at fairs; that he had known many large milkers among the Shorthorns. He thinks the preference given by the best Scotch dairymen to the Ayrshire over the Shorthorn, where either could be easily obtained, ought to go a good way in deciding the question between the two; that a few great milkers are not evidence of the general quality of a breed, but rather the average produced by large numbers. He purchased the milk from a neighboring Shorthorn herd, and mixed it with that of an Ayrshire herd, and found that the mixed milk was poorer than that of his own herd had been before. He made a comparative test next season, and for the month of June found the following result:—

Ayrshires—64 cows—65,380 lbs. of milk; cheese, 6,424 lbs.—ratio, 10.17; daily average of milk per cow, 33 lbs.; cheese, 3½ lbs.

Shorthorns—64 cows—52,680 lbs. of milk; cheese, 4,797 lbs.—ratio, 10.98; daily average of milk per cow, 27 lbs.; cheese, 2 7-15 lbs.

He says both herds were pastured in adjoining fields, on land of similar quality. Both herds were esteemed first-class of their respective breeds. He for some years was an instructor in cheese-making, and made cheese in a hundred different places, and had opportunities of exam-

ining a great number of herds; took notes of the yields of various dairies, and the general results were in favor of Ayrshires. He thinks that land which will maintain nine Shorthorns will keep ten Ayrshires, and that the latter will yield more and richer milk, and are harder and more prolific. For a period of twenty-five years the average yield of his own dairy was 500 lbs. of cheese per cow.

Our Beef Cattle.

Our export trade in beef cattle is almost exclusively with Britain, and is not affected by the McKinley Bill, now become law in the United States. The trade this year has been large, and the prices fairly good, when the quality of a large part of the shipments is taken into account. We cannot claim any improvement in the past year's shipments. In many sections our beef cattle are not as good as they were ten years ago. Bulls have been used that were no better than "scrubs," by many breeders who should have known better. Prices have been low, and instead of getting better stock in the hard times (the best and only way of making more money), many have gone back to cheap mongrels that never had any money in them for anybody. Others have used bulls of dairy breeds, and the result is a decided lowering of the standard of our beef export. This should not be so. If there is any money in feeding cattle, the largest and best returns will be received from the best animals. That there is money in feeding, those who have raised and fed animals of good quality well know. It is a far more profitable branch of farming than grain growing. It is carried on with less exacting manual labor, and is always making better the land where it is the main branch of husbandry. Good breeds can be got at reasonable prices. Get them, keep them well, and the result will be more profits and better cattle. And in selecting bulls, do not get big ones. In the days gone past there was a scramble for the largest and fattest animals. Huge tons of fatted beeves were the sight of our Christmas shows. Many good breeders are still after the same type. It is not wanted. Smaller animals, of better quality and medium weight, are more desirable; they make better beef and bring better prices. Breeders and feeders should watch this change on the market and prepare for it. Get your bulls of medium size and of good quality. Have your fat steers and heifers from 1,100 lbs. to 1,400 lbs. weight, under three years, and well covered with rich juicy meat, not overburdened with fat. At the last Fat Stock Show, at Smithfield, England, animals about twelve hundred-weight brought top prices, while those about a ton weight were almost unsaleable, and went begging for buyers. This change has been gradually going on for some years in England, and has been very marked this year in the States. This month the Chicago markets stood, for first quality fully matured beeves, from sixteen to eighteen hundred pounds weight, \$4.90 to \$5.10. Second quality beeves, from thirteen to sixteen hundred-weight, \$5.15 to \$5.30. Mark this change, and get your animals ready for the top price. Let big, bony animals alone. Select the smaller and neater ones. Look out for quality, quality, quality! There is no danger of getting too much of this. Keep more cattle of better quality; feed them well, and they will pay you well. Put your surplus grain into good beef for the British market, and it will pay better than worrying over the McKinley Bill.