

Our Scottish Letter.

We fear our readers will be disposed to think that "Scotland Yet" is somewhat fitful in his correspondence. Time passes so rapidly that ere one is aware, the months have flown and silence has been too long unbroken. I propose, in this communication, to discuss Ayrshire cattle as bred and reared in Scotland. The original habitat of the Ayrshire was the parish of Dunlop, and the district of Cunningham, or North Ayrshire. What elements went to give the breed its reputation for milking properties cannot be accurately determined, and nearly every one who has any pretensions to authority on Scottish agriculture has a theory of his own on the subject. Here is mine, which is given for what it is worth: The original cattle of Ayrshire were the Kyloes, or dark-colored West Highlanders. I do not mean the modern Highlander, which is an animal of a somewhat different and heavier type; but the sharp, active, intelligent-looking animal, known in some of the older books as the Arran cow. This animal was crossed with a bull, or bulls, which came from Berwickshire, and these can now be identified with the original Holder-ness breed. They were Shorthorns of a milking type, and the calves from this cross were greatly fancied by the dairy farmers in North Ayrshire. Gradually the native breed became modified to a dairying type, and before many years had passed there came to be recognized not only an Ayrshire breed of cattle, but a Dunlop cheese made from the milk of these cows. Like every other breed, as it advanced in utility, the Ayrshire attracted the attention of those who made fine stock a hobby, and in the end an Ayrshire type came to be evolved, the strong point in which was not milk production, but a particular form of fancy vessel and small teats. The idea at the back of the fancy vessel was a sound one, but the notion for small teats was a patent absurdity. We believe it owed its origin to a simple incident. The Duke of Hamilton, who flourished in the early sixties, was a keen fancier of fine stock, and his factor or estate manager was the late Mr. Lawrence Drew. Amongst other classes of stock, Ayrshire cattle naturally received a share of the Duke's attention, and he was a good buyer and keen exhibitor in all classes. One of his purchases was a black cow, bred in Eaglesham Parish—a favorite pastoral district in Renfrewshire. She was perfect in every line of an Ayrshire; had a great vessel; was on extraordinary milker, but her teats were short. She won innumerable prizes, and was finally sold by Mr. Drew to Mr. James Nicol Fleming (who was then farming in great style in Ayrshire) for £100. Her undeniable merits in other points made even her defects fashionable, and she became the leader of a very bad fancy for short teats, which threatened for a time to ruin the show-yard Ayrshire for practical purposes. So much was this the case, that two kinds of Ayrshires came into vogue—a class kept for showing, and another class kept for use and rent-paying. The pressure of foreign competition has pretty well exploded the former fancy, but much yet remains to be done to bring about a thoroughly efficient testing of the Ayrshire for practical purposes. The keeping of milking records would be a means to this end, and awarding prizes for the best and richest yields of milk would also have a beneficial influence. Both systems are growing in favor, and the appearance of the vessel alone, even when the teats are of the proper length and set, should not be regarded as the be-all and the end-all of Ayrshire breeding. The younger race of farmers are much more in favor of milking competitions than the older, and this augurs well for the future of the breed. They know that the pressure of foreign competition calls for the straining of every nerve, if ends are to be made to meet in these days, and when filling dairy byre, cattle to yield milk are of more importance than cattle with shallow vessels and well-set teats which give little milk.

The four principal shows at which Ayrshires are exhibited are now over—Castle Douglas, Kilmarnock, Glasgow, and Ayr,—and one is able to form a good idea of the trend of public opinion on Ayrshire judging. The leading herds in the South of Scotland are those of Sir Mark J. Stewart, Bart., M. P.; Mr. Andrew Mitchell, Barcheskie, Kirkcudbright, and Mr. Leonard Pilkington, Cavens, Kirkbean. In Ayrshire, Mr. Alexander Cross, of Knockdon, fairly eclipses all his compeers—and it is generally admitted that, taken all through, he has the best lot of Ayrshires in Scotland to-day. Mr. Gilmour, of Orchardton, New Cumnock, has a capital herd, from which many of the best milking strains of Ayrshires have been bred. Mr. James Howie, Burnhouses, Ealston, was a celebrated breeder, and Captain Steele, of Burnhead, had also a herd which produced prize stock sold at long prices. Messrs. Wardrop, Garlaiff, New Cumnock; Hugh Drummond & Sons, Craighead, Manclaine, and Robert Montgomerie, Lessnessock, Ochiltree, are gentlemen who have made names for themselves as breeders of bulls, and prize-winning young animals of both sexes. In Lanarkshire, one of the most famous breeders of milk stock, as distinguished from yield, is Mr. James Lowrie, Newton, Strathaven. He took many prizes at Glasgow, and exhibited in the Derby a descendant of the black cow owned by the Duke of Hamilton, already referred to. As breeders of bulls, the best-known families in Lanarkshire are Mr. Robert McKinlay, Hillhouse, Sandilands, and Mr. Thomas Scott, Nethall, Sandilands. These gentlemen have been wonderfully successful with the produce of a bull named "Adjutant," whose record is one of the

best. In no part of Scotland are there better Ayrshires than in the Island of Bute. The late Mr. Robert McAlister, Mid-Ascog, had a splendid herd, and his sons are maintaining its reputation. No one in the West of Scotland has this season had better-deserved success than Mr. Charles Duncan, Little Kelnory, another Bute farmer. At Glasgow, he carried his stock to victory, and at Rothsay, he exhibited cattle of surpassing merit. They were both good milking cattle, healthy looking, and had show points as well. His brother, Mr. Hugh Duncan, Langalchorad, is a great fancier of the Ayrshire, and he and Mr. James McAlister, Meikle, Kelnory, have this year been successful exhibitors. In Dumbartonshire, the best-known herds are those of Mr. Thomas Kerr, Rosneath, and Mr. John McKean, Dam-of-Aber, Drymen. One of the finest herds of really useful commercial Ayrshires in Scotland is that of the Fairfield Farming Co. (limited), at Kippen, in Stirlingshire. If a visitor to this country wished to see good representative Ayrshire cattle, and had only time to examine a few herds, we should advise him not to miss those of the Fairfield Co.; Mr. Cross' herd, at Knockdon; Sir Mark J. Stewart's, in Kirkcudbright, and two or three of the Bute herds. The highest honor in the Ayrshire world is the winning of the Ayr Derby for three-year-old queys. The entries for this class are made when the animals are stirks, and both this year and last the winner has been Mr. Alexander Cross. Mr. Thomas Kerr, Kirkchrist, Kirkcudbright, won a somewhat similar trophy at Castle Douglas; and at Kilmarnock, Mr. William Howie, Burnhouses, and Mr. Robert Montgomerie, were winners with three-year-old queys. At Glasgow, the Derby sweepstakes were won by Mr. James Lawrie, with a black and white cow, descendant from Mr. Drew's black cow, already referred to. As indicating the value now put on milking records, I may mention that at Ayr three bull stirks from the Knockdon herd were sold by auction, and made the high average of £57 6s. 8d. each. One of the three was sold for £73. His dam has a great record as a milking cow. At the same time, Mr. Hugh Drummond's champion bull, Duke of Manclaine, was sold by auction for £60. There is life in the dairy breed.

SCOTLAND YET.

A Practical Test for the "Experts."

An interesting correspondence has taken place between Mr. Wm. Sutherland, Peel, Perthshire, Scotland, and the President of the British Board of Agriculture, with reference to the continued closing of British ports to the importation of Canadian cattle. Mr. Sutherland makes a proposal with the view of setting at rest the much-discussed question as to the existence or non-existence of contagious pleuro in Canadian cattle. He suggested that, on the opening of the Canadian cattle shipping season, a half-score or so of bullocks should be sent him in sealed trucks out of any suspected cargo—the selection of the animals to be left to the Government Inspector—and he was prepared to take them on what might be considered their fair market value, and house-feed them for six months along with home-bred stock, on the following conditions:—(1) That in the event of any disease breaking out amongst them during the period of probation, he would be permitted to adopt his own treatment; (2) that in the event of the cattle being to all appearance free from any contagious or scheduled disease at the end of six months, he should be allowed a free hand in the disposal of them. If, on the expiry of the trial, the cattle were declared by competent parties to be affected with contagious pleuro, he would, whilst submitting to their compulsory slaughter, claim no compensation whatever (provided the animals, after slaughter, were found affected), but retain and dispose of the carcasses himself. Every facility would be offered for a thorough watch being kept over both premises and stock during the experiment.

The Board declined this proposal on the ground that the test of a limited number of cattle would not be conclusive.

To this, Mr. Sutherland further replied that not only would he leave the selection of the "suspects" to the Government Inspectors, but would receive the suspected animal themselves and their immediate neighbors, not only from one, but from two or three cargoes, if as many "suspects" could be found. The results of six months' contact with healthy home stock, he contended, would be most conclusive evidence as to the existence or not of the disease in Canadian stock.

Of course, it could hardly be expected that the authorities would risk the reputation of their veterinary experts in such a trial as that, so the second proposition was also declined.

With typical Scottish persistence, Mr. Sutherland next proposed to place his farm steading, herd of home-bred cattle, and every possible assistance otherwise, unreservedly, at the disposal of the Board, for the purpose of the experiment, offering to take all risk of loss, and proposing no conditions as to treatment or otherwise. Up to date we have seen no response from the Board to this challenge, nor will there probably be any.

A simple and effective device to keep a cow from switching during milking is to take a piece of inch-rope about 6 feet long, and splice the ends so that it will form a ring. Before commencing to milk, hang the rope over her rump, just in front of the hook bones, and down behind so that the lower portion will fall almost to her hocks.

Calf-Rearing.

BY F. J. S.

Judging from the specimens of yearlings and of calves that may be seen turned to grass at this season throughout the country, it would appear either that the principles of calf-rearing are but imperfectly understood, or otherwise culpably neglected. Unthrifty, stunted calves are the originals of our cows that, under the searchlight of the Babcock milk tester and weigh scales, prove worthless in the dairy; and also of the two and three-year-old stock that are picking a living by the roadside in lieu of filling a place in a trans-Atlantic steamer. Much is being said about the necessity of producing high-class butter and cheese, but it seems to the writer that a little more energy and intelligence put into calf-rearing would result in infinitely greater profit.

The first principles of calf-rearing are doubtless fairly well understood. Hand-rearing is best. New milk for eight or ten days is sufficient to give an impetus to growth, then gradually changing to skim-milk. Feed lightly three times a day until four weeks old. This will tend to ward off indigestion and its attendant evils. A uniform temperature, as near to 98° Fahr. as possible, and regularity in feeding periods, are essentials. The required temperature may be secured, if milk is scarce, by adding hot water, otherwise by heating a portion of the milk, or by adding a syrup of boiled flaxseed or flaxseed meal. A substitute for the fat may, perhaps, best be had in flaxseed, boiled or ground, or both. A porridge or gruel of oatmeal is also good. Commencing with small quantities, as the new milk is lessened, these may be increased as far as found satisfactory. Oil-cake should not be used as a substitute for the butter-fat removed. When three or four weeks old the calf should be supplied with a wisp of nicely-cured clover hay, fresh each day; it will also commence to eat a little ground oats or bran, or both, if these are placed within reach. From this time forward the calf should have access to good drinking-water each day. Keep the calf dry and clean; thrift is out of the question under wet and filthy surroundings. A light currycomb or brush used occasionally will tend to a quieter disposition and greater thrift.

But there is another aspect of the subject of which we wish to treat. The majority of calves, especially in factory districts, are dropped in the spring or late winter, and when grass is at hand are turned out for the summer. There are few less-to-be-commended practices. Skim-milk, at varying temperatures, and without any substitute for the fat extracted, together with grass, is supposed to be sufficient to grow and thrive upon, and give sufficient surplus energy to fight flies and combat heat. The usual result ensues. From the time summer heat is with us and flies become troublesome, the calf of promise is never seen outside the stable during the hours of the day until such conditions abate. A nice, cool, darkened stable is a paradise for any class of stock during summer months, especially for calves, and if we would raise profitable stock this practice is essential. How often do we forget that at least twice as much profit is obtainable from the first twelve months of the life of a shipping steer or a dairy cow as from any subsequent period of similar length. Who is he, who, having once faithfully tried stabling calves during summer, speaks not of it in high encomiums?—and who else is fitted to speak? Green clover, clover hay, well-cured; bran, ground oats, green oats and peas, corn, or any tid-bit in season,—these are requisites in the work and pay handsome interest and return of capital.

But we would speak of another point. The fall calf we would esteem much higher than his spring relation. It escapes the probabilities of sour milk, or no milk at all; it is usually better fed and attended to, due to less hurry of other work; it escapes the intense heat, and, still worse, the flies, which worry its earlier brother. We know we are safe in saying that the average fall calf is worth twenty-five per cent. more at twelve months old than its spring brother. That it is the foundation for a better steer or dairy cow goes without saying. But I hear upon all sides the contra-shout: "We must have our cows come in to be ready when the factory starts." The writer is strongly of the opinion that were the farmers of Ontario as strenuously anxious to increase the individual status of their herd as to have a cow in when the factory starts, the distance between the profit and loss lines would very mightily increase.

Dipping Sheep.

There is no time of year that tick-killing on sheep can be so effectively done as soon after their fleeces are removed. It requires much less dip than when the wool is long. It is important to put all the lambs through at the same time, as the ticks leave the ewes and go upon the better protected and more tender bodies of the lambs at that season. If a flock is thoroughly dipped, and again gone over in a couple of weeks, when the eggs are all hatched, there is no reason why the ticks of that flock will not be almost, if not quite, exterminated.

A good object lesson can be learned by allowing an uncovered pan of water to remain over night in a newly-painted room. In the morning, if you taste the water, you will imagine that turpentine has been put into it, so much of that odor will it have absorbed. Now, milk absorbs taints much more readily than water; which at once explains the cause of the often unaccounted-for flavors in butter and cheese.