



A Grand Champion Ayrshire Bull.

The Ayrshire Breed.

By W. F. Stephen.

This breed, undoubtedly the youngest of the dairy breeds, did not originate in the genial climate nor on the moist lowlands of Europe, receiving almost maternal care and treatment; nor on the coast islands of sunny France, where each animal is treated as one of the owner's family; but in the County of Ayr, in the south-west of Scotland. This is a district of succulent grasses, and adapted to dairying, but exposed to the severe storms of an unprotected coast.

There the Ayrshires still thrive in numberless herds, the pride of the Scottish breeder, by whom foundation stock is sent to all parts of the world.

Owing to the conditions under which they have been reared, the Ayrshire is a hardy, vigorous breed, quick and active. Consequently, they withstand adverse conditions admirably. They are essentially a grazing breed, and excel in production on pasture alone.

ORIGIN.

The origin of the Ayrshire is veiled in obscurity, though there are many things that confirm the theory that the native cattle of the country are the foundation of the Ayrshire of modern times. They were said to be white, with red ears and black noses; high, white and cream horns, with black tips; with an animal now and then having more of the brown color, black or red, intermingled with the white. This theory seems reasonable, when we consider how easily the Ayrshire reverts to the white. Then, too, there is frequently an Ayrshire that has a strong tendency to that alert bearing that characterized the foundation stock.

IMPROVEMENT.

The first to hear of any effort being made to improve the native stock of the country was about the year 1700. This was said to have been accomplished by judicious selection and better care.

Aiton is about the only writer who gives us any light on the matter. From his works we learn that, about 1740 or 1750, the Earl of Marchmont purchased from the Bishop of Durham, and carried to his seat in Berwickshire, some cows and a bull of the Teeswater breed, of a white and brown color. It is known, too, that about 1760 John Dunlop introduced some cattle spoken of as Dutch cows, but, from their brown and white color, believed to be the Teeswater cattle. This Dunlop strain of cattle was much larger than the common cattle of the country, and, when given proper care, proved to be very superior dairy cows. Therefore, they and their crosses soon became very popular.

In 1811, in "Survey of Ayrshire," Aiton writes that the Ayrshire dairy breed is "In a great measure, the native indigenous breed of the County of Ayr, improved in their size, shapes and qualities, chiefly by judicious selection, cross-coupling, feeding and treatment, for a long time, and with much judgment and attention."

From about the beginning of the last century, we find frequent mention of efforts for improvement in the shape of body, and especially in the shape of the udder.

A writer of the last century states: "About 1790 to 1800 this improved breed was generally approved by dairymen in Ayrshire and adjoining counties. They went on increasing, and were established in 1801 as the favorite dairy cattle of Scotland. Thenceforward they were introduced throughout Great Britain and Ireland, and wherever they were taken, they were much admired for

their many superior qualities."

Lowden says: "They are the most improved breed of cattle to be found for the dairy. They have no parallel under similar treatment, climate, relative circumstances, and in feeding for the shambles they are fitted above all others yet known to answer in almost every diversity of situation, and are found to exceed all others in their yield of milk, with the same feeding and care." In this respect the Ayrshire has not lost her laurels in 20th century competition.

The poet Burns, when he occupied a farm in Dumfries, introduced some of the west country cows, thinking they would produce more milk. He kept a dairy, and made a considerable

quantity of cheese. His efforts to procure an Ayrshire cow show that they had a high reputation for this object. In a published letter of the poet's, dated 1788, he refers to a heifer which had been presented to him by the proprietor of Dunlop House, which he said was the finest query in Ayrshire.

The names of the Earl of Marchmont, John Dunlop, Bruce Campbell, John Hamilton and John Orr have all come down to us as men who added their quota in improving and developing this grand dairy breed during the closing days of the eighteenth century.

FIRST IMPORTATION TO CANADA.

Ayrshires were very early brought into Canada by the Scotch settlers. They were brought over on ships from Glasgow to supply milk during the voyage, and were sold on arrival at Quebec and Montreal. So popular did this breed become by their good appearance and splendid performance, that shipmasters frequently received orders to bring out a few more of these splendid-producing cows. It is said that Lord Dalhousie, Governor-General in 1821, was a breeder and importer of Ayrshires. From time to time importations have been made since those days, until Ayrshires and their crosses are more numerous in Canada than any other dairy breed.

Over 30,000 animals have been recorded in the nationalized herdbook, but this only takes in those whose lineage traces to importation on the side of sire and dam. In the early days, no herd records were kept, consequently thousands were left outside of our herd records which were available, had their breeding been known.

As far as we can learn, Ayrshires were first imported into the United States about 1837, by the Massachusetts Society for the Promotion of Agriculture bringing a few head into the State, and scattering them among the farmers of Massachusetts. Other importations from Scotland followed at intervals into different parts of the United States, as the value of this breed for dairy purposes was made evident. To-day they stand high in the estimation of the up-to-date dairy man in that country.

To-day, in Canada, the registered Ayrshires are found in every Province, and are owned by over 2,000 farmers and dairymen from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The Ayrshire Association has nearly 500 members scattered through every Province, Quebec taking the lead, our farthest outlying member being at Ft. Vermilion, nearly 700 miles north of Edmonton, Alberta.

In Quebec, the names of John Dods, Alexander Crawford, Messrs. Dawes, N. S. Whitney, Alex. Somerville, Jas. Drummond, James Stephen, J. L. Gibb, Wm. Rodden, Thomas Brown, David Beattie, Thomas Watson, and Thomas Irving (who still sur-

vives), have gone into history as having done much to perpetuate this noble breed. In later days, mention may be made of J. Cottingham, R. Ness, D. Drummond and R. Robertson, staunch supporters of the breed. In Ontario records we notice such names as Hon. Geo. Crawford, Geo. Morton, David Nicol, John Crosby, J. B. Ewart, H. E. Eyre, Thos. Guy, Joseph Yuill, Hon. Thos. Ballantyne, J. K. & J. W. Jardine, James McCormack, W. M. Smith, Joshua Knight, and Wm. Stewart (who is still actively engaged in breeding and showing his favorites). These men are among the pioneer breeders of Ontario, and bred the Ayrshire because of her large and economical production.

A TYPICAL ANIMAL.

The Ayrshire cow in general is a handsome, sprightly-looking cow of medium size, weighing at maturity from 1,000 to 1,100 pounds. In color, brown and white, or red and white, the relative proportions of red and white being greatly varied, and yielding readily to the taste of the breeder, from his skill in selecting breeding animals.

The Ayrshire has a small, bony head, large full eyes, dish face, broad muzzle, large mouth; upright horns, of fair size; long, slim neck, clean-cut at throat; thin, sloping shoulder, with the spine rising a little above the shoulder blades; back level to setting on of tail, except a slight rise at the pelvic arch; broad across the loin; barrel deep and large, with ribs well sprung to give abundant room for storing coarse fodder, and wide through the region of the heart and lungs. Hips wide apart; rump long; hind legs straight; thighs thin and incurving, giving room for udder; legs short; bones small, and joints firm. The udder should be large and square, and on young cows it is nearly level with the belly, wide, long, and strongly hung; teats from two and a half to three and a half inches long, of good size, placed wide apart on the four corners of the udder, with udder inclined to be level between the teats; milk veins large and tortuous, entering the belly well forward towards the fore legs. Skin soft and mellow, covered with a thick growth of fine hair.

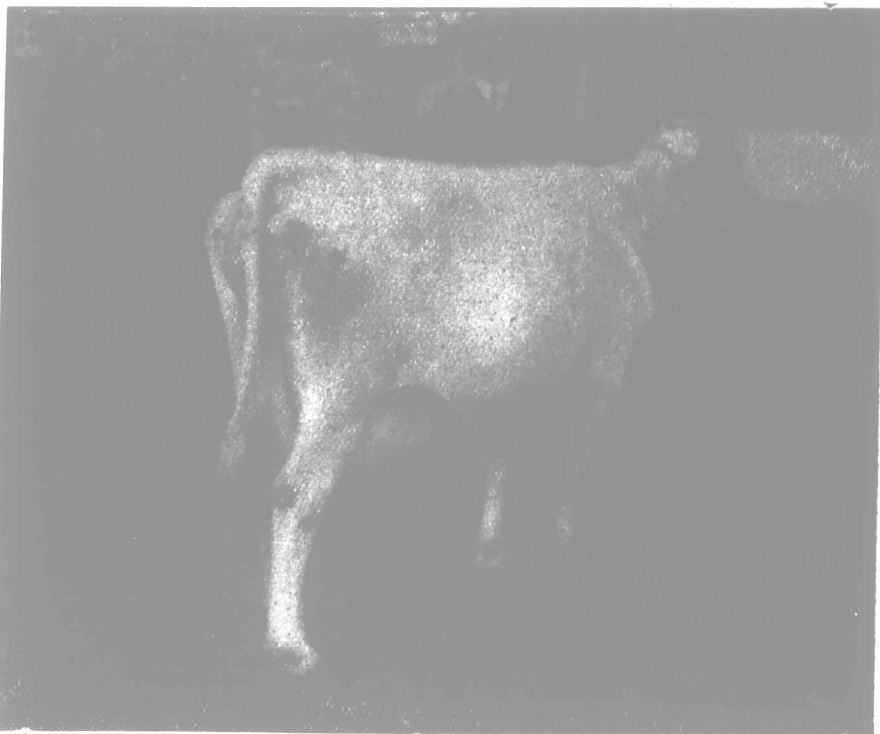
The males answer much to this description, only have stronger and more masculine characteristics, are heavier in front and lighter behind, correspondingly, than the females. The weight of the males varies from 1,500 to 2,000 pounds at maturity. As a rule, they are very prepotent, and stamp their breeding on the progeny when mated with other breeds, especially the Ayrshire form and characteristics.

DAIRY CAPACITY.

Being a tough, hardy cow, with a vigorous appetite, she readily turns her food into good account. She is capable of high production either on the bleak uplands or in the fertile valleys, under summer skies or winter conditions. In whatever clime it may be her lot to live, the Ayrshire cow remains the same persistent milker, and is always ready to perpetuate in her offspring those characteristics that enable her to excel as the best all-round farmer's cow. No dairy breed produces milk so economically as the Ayrshire. Her milk is the best suited for all conditions. From her milk may be produced the finest cheese or the choicest butter. As a market milk, none excels it. It is rich in butter-fat and other solids, those constituents which give milk its value as a food, and is always of a high color. Owing to the fat globules being small in size, it stands transportation admirably.

DAIRY TESTS.

In the dairy tests the Ayrshire has frequently



A Modern Ayrshire Cow.