

LIVE STOCK.

William Duthie—The Shorthorn King.

BY ARCHIBALD MACNEILAGE.

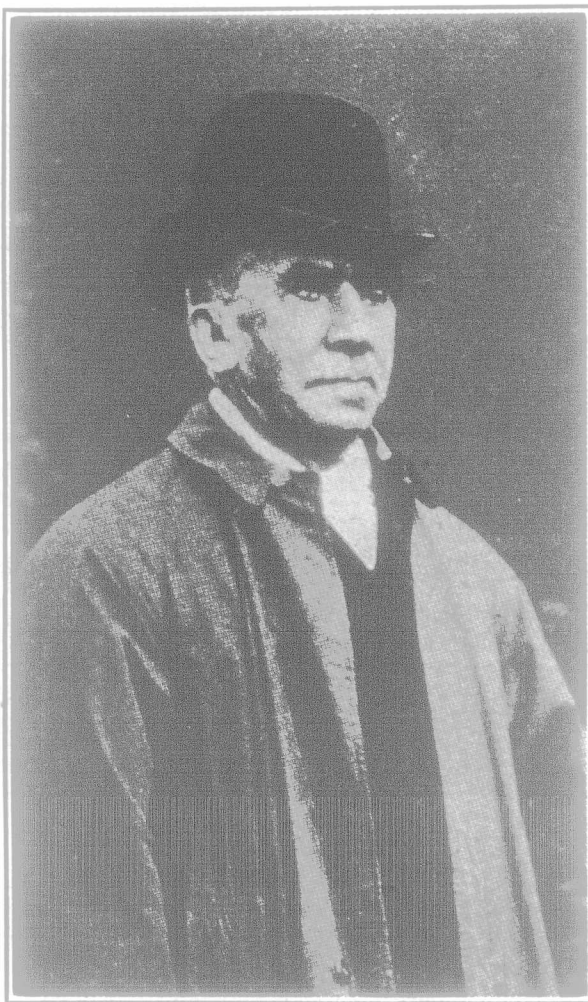
I AM asked to write something for the Exhibition number of "The Farmer's Advocate" regarding William Duthie. The task is not easy. The one man who will tell you very little about William Duthie is the man who knows most about him. As a self-advertiser the most eminent Shorthorn breeder in the world does not shine. Some men are very eager to be in the lime-light. They cultivate the press under all circumstances, and apparently are never happier than when their names appear in the newspapers. To this order William Duthie does not belong. We have known him more or less for about forty years. If his name appears in the newspapers, it is not because he has personally taken any steps to that end, but because his labors are so abundant and his interests so varied that it is impossible for him to evade publicity.

William Duthie is an Aberdonian, a native of the great North-Eastern County famous for its granite and for the very high average of merit achieved by its sons. Although known to the world chiefly as a stock breeder, Mr. Duthie is at once a farmer, a banker, a country merchant, and a stock breeder. In addition, he takes a keen interest in religious and social movements, is an ardent supporter of movements for social reform, and while characteristically cautious in the volume of his contributions can always be depended on as a supporter of movements for the improvement of the social condition of the people. He is an outstanding elder in the Presbyterian church and has for the greater part of his life, if not for the whole of it, been identified with a historical congregation in Aberdeenshire known as Craigdam.

In his business relationships, Mr. Duthie exhibits the keen, shrewd foresight of the Aberdonian. When opinions are invited on difficult problems he would be a very successful cross-examiner indeed who would draw from Mr. Duthie a definite and dogmatic deliverance. We have never known him to be a witness in a law court, but if he were the attorney who would seek to pin him down to anything very definite would be clever indeed. His capacity for assuming the non-committal attitude is hard to beat. This has frequently been conspicuously seen in connection with public questions affecting the interests of stock owners. Recently an unpleasant episode has taken place in connection with the breeding of Shorthorns. A party deeply interested was anxious to obtain the very best advice possible, and the story goes that she consulted Mr. Duthie. She indicated her desire to have his considered opinion as to her line of duty. The story is that the advice he gave was in these terms: "My advice is that you take the best advice on this matter that you can possibly obtain." Whether this be true or not, its currency indicates the prevalent opinion regarding Mr. Duthie, and his capacity for assuming the non-committal. Time and again efforts have been made to draw him with respect to methods and opinions affecting the breeding of Shorthorn cattle. On one occasion he was the guest at an agricultural dinner, which is held annually during the winter months. It is very largely attended, and the committee having control on the occasion referred to were regarded as having made a big capture in securing Mr. Duthie as leading speaker. His theme was generally expressed in terms which suggested a discourse on some points in stock breeding. What the audience received was an admirable lecture on various aspects of conduct, especially with reference to the supreme importance of following a high moral standard, studying punctuality, and throwing oneself with energy and perseverance into every task. It was all very excellent, and very fine, and most useful, but it was not quite what the audience expected. During the attendance of overseas men at Aberdeen agricultural classes, lectures on various classes of stock were delivered by gentlemen chosen from the ranks of breeders and other experts. On the Shorthorn day the leading speakers were William Andersen, Saphock, Old Meldrum, and James Durno, Rothiebrishane, Fyvie. Both gentlemen acquitted themselves first-rate. Their advice and counsel were in the highest degree useful; their papers full of practical hints. At the close, Mr. Duthie was called on to speak, and received a hearty ovation. He delivered a very racy speech containing some choice reminiscences of early breeders in Aberdeenshire, and in particular eulogizing his two neighbors who had delivered the leading addresses. But again his audience were disappointed; the great breeder was strangely reticent with respect to his own methods and the experiences which had led to his world-wide success as a breeder of Shorthorn cattle. In truth, like so many other great breeders of this country, Mr. Duthie would seem to proceed more by

intuition than by any standards which can be expressed in terms so that others can profit.

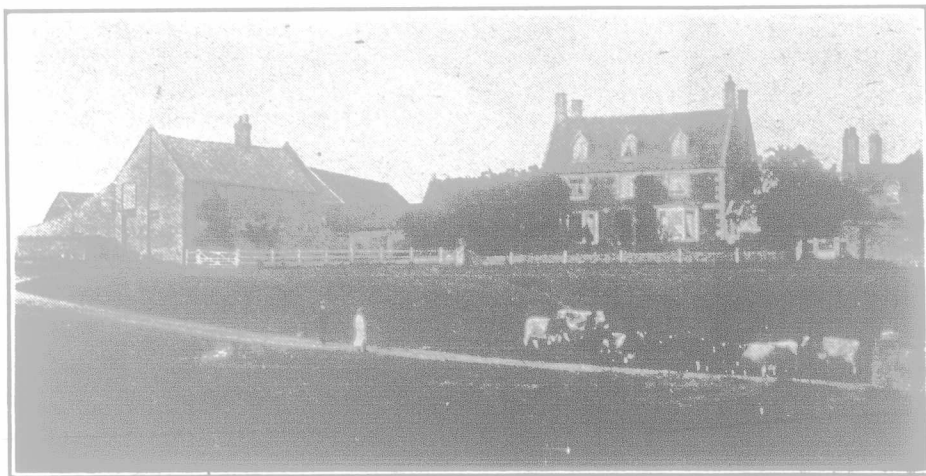
In order to discover the keynote of his success, one must get William Duthie in private. Personally, we can never forget a long conversation we had with him when seated in the middle of the parade ring at a Highland and Agricultural Society Show. Taking as his text the animals we saw on parade, and simply following up the association of ideas which one after another suggested, it was our strange good fortune to obtain an insight into our friend's methods and his lines of thought. The impression then made has never been effaced. When a young man, Mr. Duthie came much under the influence of the famous Amos Cruickshank. A formula impressed on his mind by the shrewd Quaker was this: "When thou goest to examine a bull, with a view to



William Duthie.

purchase, first of all study him carefully all over, for what I will call general goodness. If he pleases thee, in respect of general goodness, then go further and examine him closely lest there should be in him any defects which would mar that usefulness. If, however, the bull does not please thee in respect of general goodness, go no further; such an animal can never be a good bull for thee." It is when one meets Mr. Duthie under conditions such as these that he obtains a glimpse into the working of that master mind, and is enabled to form some opinion as to the causes which have led to his unique success as a breeder of Shorthorn cattle.

We do not think Mr. Duthie is personally much carried away by the craze for so-called "families."



An Old Country Farm Homestead.

Although his opinion on the subject has never reached our ears, one can draw his conclusions by observing the purchases which Mr. Duthie makes at public sales. He quite appreciates the value in the market of fashionable pedigree, but we cannot recall any case in which he was seen to buy an inferior animal because it possessed a fashionable pedigree. In nine cases out of ten, perhaps it would be more correct to say in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, if William Duthie begins to bid for an animal at a sale he buys that animal. We cannot recall ever seeing him bidding under any other conditions, and as it is chiefly females that he purchases

at public auction, his opponent requires to be a very good stayer indeed if he obtains the mastery over the proprietor of the Collynie herd.

Mr. Duthie fills so large a place in the world's eye as a breeder of Shorthorns that his eminence in other departments of agriculture is very apt to be overlooked. As a farmer—that is a cultivator of the soil—and a student of nature in connection therewith, he occupies a foremost place in a country in which men of that stamp are not rare. He has a wonderful gift for securing the confidence and respect of his employees, and we imagine that anything like a labor dispute is not only unknown but would be simply impossible in the ranks of those employed by William Duthie. He is a born leader of men, and awakens confidence among all ranks. But we are digressing from the point immediately in hand; not only does Mr. Duthie excel as a farmer, but he has few equals as a judge of a Clydesdale. It would be difficult in the whole County of Aberdeen to find a stable of better work horses than that on either of Mr. Duthie's farms. As a judge of a young growing Clydesdale gelding, William Duthie is a leader amongst many experts in that department. His ideal is a big horse with plenty of weight and good back and ribs and big quarters, and standing on the soundest of feet and limbs. Visitors to Collynie or Tillycairn make a grand mistake when they omit to visit the stables. Certainly the fields and boxes where the Shorthorns are to be seen are full of abiding interest, but the stables, suppose there were no Shorthorns, are well worth going far to see.

Mr. Duthie has spent a long life amongst his own people; none to whom we have addressed the question can remember the time when his name was not identified with the village of Tarves, in which stands the bank and the merchant premises in which are being carried on, we think for more than one or two generations, the business identified with the name of Duthie. As is well known, Mr. Duthie is a bachelor, but we know no one who more enjoys the company of young people, and we could relate anecdotes of the man illustrative of his kindly interest in young Aberdonians who have gone to the Metropolis to push their fortunes. As a typical Scot, and an Aberdonian Scot at that, William Duthie is worthy of all honor.

Hogs—The Mortgage Lifters.

The despised hog has been termed "the mortgage lifter." No doubt it has aided in buying many a farm, and even though the spread between the cost of production and sale price is small at present, the porker may at no distant future again be the aristocrat of the barnyard. One thing is certain, it will manufacture a good deal of what might otherwise be waste material about the farm into high-quality hams and Wiltshire sides, which, when served on the table, please the palate of the producer and his family.

A resume of market receipts shows a falling off in number of hogs marketed as compared with previous years. A good many farmers liquidated their stock, or nearly so, and consequently there is believed to be fewer hogs in the country. Those who have them may not be placed in the profiteering class, but come what may they have a few hogs to market at intervals during the year and are more likely to have something to sell when the price is high than those who plunge heavily into hogs when the prices are ascending, but who as quickly clean out of porkers when the market is bearish. Every cloud has a silver lining, and already the light is dawning for the pig men. There is every prospect of a lowering of feed prices, and the Dominion Government is, we understand, laboring assiduously to secure the decontrol of Canadian bacon in England. Rumors regarding this are optimistic, and if that market will pay for Canadian bacon anything like it does for Irish and home-grown bacon, the price of live hogs in Canada would naturally go considerably higher than it is now. The quality of Canadian bacon meets with favor in England, and much would be consumed if an open market could be established. In the meantime producers should select their breeding stock to further improve the quality of the finished product. This is an age when quality counts. Some producers complain about choice bacon hogs and thick fats bringing the same price, and declare that the packers offer no inducement to breeders to produce the bacon hog. Our system of marketing may be at fault. If a man sells on an F. O. B. basis what opportunity is there for grading? This local hog buyer may not be qualified to grade the hogs and pay accordingly; this is the work of an expert with years of training. Hogs are graded before leaving the stock yards and the different grades go to supply the various markets. Until such time as hogs can be marketed on a graded basis, the producer of the highest quality bacon will not secure the price he should for his live hogs as compared with that paid for the thick fat hogs.

Producers cannot force the decontrol of Canadian bacon in England, neither can they compel packers to pay more than market price for their hogs, but they can keep quality to the front and be prepared to cater to the best bacon market in the world. It must be remembered that in order to hold an export trade quantity with quality is essential. We cannot prophesy as to the future of the hog business, but it is believed that every effort is being made to secure more favorable conditions on the world's markets. In the meantime hog production, regulated to conform with conditions on the farm, is and will be a remunerative enterprise. In every district where mixed farming is carried on the hog population ought to be maintained at a reasonable level year in and year out. When bred and fed in this manner hogs pay, and pay well.