

Fads in Breeding.

In an address before the short-course judging class at the Ontario Agricultural College, last month, Mr. J. C. Snell, of the "Farmer's Advocate," London, in speaking on the breeding and management of beef breeds of cattle, cautioned the class against being carried away by fads and fancies in breeding any class of stock, while neglecting qualities that are substantial and essential to the production and perpetuation of high-class performance in the particular line for which the animals are designed, and related the following incidents in his own experience: "It was back in the seventies, when the Bates boom in Shorthorns was on and many young breeders, and not a few older ones, were carried away with the idea that nothing but a Bates bull, and a red one, was worth breeding to. I went to Kentucky, a State then noted for fine Shorthorns, and bought the first-prize bull calf at the State Fair at Lexington, paying \$750 for him. He was all red, was trained all summer by the black herdsman to hold his head high and stretch his neck with a graceful curve like a blood horse; he was the son of a pure Duke bull and deeply bred in Bates blood, but he stood high on his legs, was short in his ribs and had short, wiry hair and a hard-handling hide, but he was Bates, and red and stylish, and so filled the bill for the faddists. I could have bought at the same time for \$400 a yearling bull that had won no prize, but which my better judgment told me was far and away a better one. He was low-set, blocky, thick-fleshed, and with the right sort of skin and hair, but he was not all Bates, nor all red, and was not stylish, though he had a good honest face, a short, thick neck, and strong masculine character. I left him with a feeling of sorrow, and took the stylish calf. Well, my bull paid me all right for the time being. He won first prize at the Provincial Exhibition as a yearling by a close call, but I never did it again; his calves sold readily at good prices while young, because they were like himself, red and stylish, and people were looking for that sort, but not one of his daughters even developed into a third-class cow. He lowered the character of the herd, and I was never entirely happy till I saw the tail of the last of his progeny go through the gate to the road. I watched with interest the career of the bull I left behind me, and found that he was purchased and used with signal success in his herd by that wise and consistent Kentucky breeder, William Wartfield, who never allowed himself to follow the faddists, and who has outlived and outlasted all his contemporaries. He was shown with great success, and sired heifers that were first-prize and sweepstakes winners at many State Fairs when they had grown into grand cows. I am satisfied now that this bull, Muscaton, would have been lots cheaper at \$1,000 than my Duke at \$400.

"On a second trip to Kentucky, some three years later, when I had learned a little from experience, on looking through Uncle Abe Renick's famous herd of Roses of Sharon, which were then in high favor and on which he was using a pure Bates Duke bull, and selling calves at anywhere from \$500 to \$1,000 each, I espied a thin red and white bull calf that had a good open countenance, was deep-bodied, level, and covered with a good coat of hair, and on enquiring why he was thin, the old gentleman told me that the calf was not sired by his Duke bull, though by a right good one, and they wanted to show his dam, so they weaned him young and fed him from the pail. Said he: 'I can't sell that calf for one quarter what he would bring if he had been got by the Duke bull. What will you give me for him?' I said, with no thought of getting him, 'I'll give you \$100 for him.' When saying good-bye, the old man sided up to me and said, in a low tone, 'I believe I'll let you have that calf.' I named him Loudon Duke, and by good care and attention brought him out a first-prize winner at the Provincial Fair as a yearling, and later a championship winner, and he stood at the head of the herd winning the Prince of Wales prize, while his sons and daughters grew into prizewinners, beating in more than one instance imported animals that had been winners at the Royal Show of England.

"Now, I would not have you go away with the idea that red is not a good Shorthorn color, for some of the best of the breed have been and are of that color, but see that the hair and handling is of that quality that denotes a good feeder and the flesh thickly laid on back and ribs. The harm in the craze for red bulls was that it led breeders to use a hard-haired, thin-fleshed, leggy red, and reject a roan or a white that had these good qualities. It was not because the

cattle were Bates-bred that they were objectionable, for some of the best that have lived were of that line of breeding, and the blood was freely used in the evolution of the most popular cattle of the present day, but the trouble was that so many breeders would have Bates bulls because they were popular, and would use a mean bull of that breeding rather than a good one of some other that was just as purely bred. And style is by no means to be despised in a bull of any breed, for, other things being satisfactory, the bull that holds his head well up and has a strong crest and the look and walk of a gentleman is most likely to prove an impressive and a prepotent sire. The mistake is in attaching more importance to fancy points than to the weightier matters of constitution, feeding qualities and usefulness. Great damage has been done to many breeds of stock by reversing this order.

"There was a time when swine breeders had a delusion for 'dished faces' and heavy jowls, and the first question asked as a description of a hog was, 'Has he a short nose and a dished face?' And if a Berkshire, 'Is he well marked?' instead of 'Has he a good back and hams and legs?' He might be defective in all these substantial points, but if his head was short and he had the proper amount of white on his feet, face and tail, though he were cat-hammed and had not a decent leg to stand on, he was preferred for a breeder. In 1871, I crossed the ocean with a Canadian who was bound to have a sow with the best head in Britain. He paid \$200 for one that suited him; her face was so short and her nose turned up at so sharp an angle that her eyes could scarcely be seen, while her jowls dragged on the ground. He learned after he had paid for her that owing to the bulk of her cheeks she could not eat her food out of any style of trough, and that it had to be rolled into balls in the hand and dropped into her mouth, which she lazily opened when her nose was gently tapped with the finger. A pillow of chaff had to be placed under her head to keep her from smothering, but in the car on the way up to Liverpool in the night, the owner, on waking from a temporary sleep, found the pillow had worked out from under the head of his butter-ball sow and she had slept the sleep that knows no waking. We had some of these dish-faced hogs in the cattle car coming up from Quebec on that trip, and at Belleville an Irish section-man, seeing one of them looking out through the bars, innocently asked, 'How did that pig get hurt?' He had doubtless in his younger days been at Donnybrook fair and had seen broken noses galore, the work of the blackthorn shillalah.

"It is not many years since ninety-nine out of a hundred farmers would not be persuaded that a Jersey was pure bred that was not solid fawn in color and had not a black tongue and switch. You might 'tell that to the marines,' but they knew better, and lots of men, sane on most other points, wouldn't buy a Jersey cow with a white switch or a spot the size of a dollar, even if she were good for twenty pounds of butter in a week; but you could easily have palmed off on them half-breed that was perfectly marked or a solid-colored cow that wouldn't half pay for her board. Indeed, it was not till after the World's Fair in 1893, when Ida Marigold, whose color was nearly one third white, won the championship by inspection, as well as in the milking test, that this delusion was dispelled from the minds of most people, but there are yet thousands of farmers who know their business so well that they have no use for an agricultural paper and who are cocksure that no Jersey can be pure-bred that is not solid-colored.

"The Clydesdale breeders a few years ago got a fad in their heads for fine bone, and paid so little attention to the size that is needed in a draft horse that they brought out a class of pony Clydes, nervous and mettlesome and without a place to put their dinner, and the result was that in a few years, when heavy drafters were required for the export trade, they could not be found in Canada. The prejudice against gray horses has been persistent and long-lived, but how many farmers can say that the best horse they ever owned was not a gray one? Were not many of the best of the early Clydes grays, and was not that prince of harness horses, Old Messenger, whose progeny revolutionized the harness-horse stock of America, a gray? And when you hear or read of a horse living to an unusually advanced age, is he not almost invariably a gray? Verily, our prejudices die slowly, and though they are generally as unfounded as the baseless fabric of vision, yet they often leave a wreck behind."

Pleased.

I have been very much pleased with your paper for the past year. I received my Christmas number all right, and was highly pleased with the way in which it has been gotten up.

Yours sincerely,

S. A. OSBORNE.

Waterville, King's Co., N. S.

Our Scottish Letter.

SOME NOTABLE AYRSHIRES OF THE LAST CENTURY.

In a former communication (in issue of Dec. 2nd, 1901) I gave some information about old-time Ayrshire bulls and noted cows, but, unfortunately, the copy of the "Farmer's Advocate" which contained the article has been carried off by someone who relished its contents, and I am not sure where I left off. This is the slack season in public affairs, and before the busy time of horse shows and bull sales begins I would like to give the Ayrshire breeders a few more particulars of the men of renown and the cattle famed in the third quarter of last century.

The leading man in the Ayrshire world from the year 1850 onwards was the late Mr. Parker, Broomlands, Irvine, one who was a bit of a character and essentially one of the olden time. He always wore a tall hat (stovepipe) and fed his young Ayrshires wearing that headgear. Formerly, all dealers in Scotland were similarly equipped. The last to abandon the tall hat was the late Mr. Hugh Crawford, who died with startling suddenness in the middle of the great All-Hallow Fair in Edinburgh in November, 1892. Mr. Parker's greatest bull was Major, described by one of the best of the old judges who survive as the biggest and best bull of the Ayrshire breed he ever saw. Major was first at Ayr in 1854, and was of Mr. Parker's own breeding. He was in color brindled, with long, fine horns, and perhaps rather deficient in masculine character. His dam was also brindled, and the frequency of this color amongst the Ayrshires of half a century ago points distinctly to a West Highland influence in their breeding. Major was also first in 1853 at Glasgow, East Kilbride, and Ayr, as a two-year-old, but when he went to Glasgow in the following year he was only placed third, the first being a celebrated show bull belonging to Mr. Robert McKean, Lumloch, and the second belonging to a Mr. Cameron. At this show Major was bought by Sir Michael R. Shaw Stewart, Bart., but becoming ill-natured he was not long afterwards destroyed. Major was one of the greatest sires the Ayrshire breed ever boasted, and his two sons, Cardigan and Clarendon, were the phenomenal bulls of their time. Cardigan was probably sire of the class now known as yeld stock; that is, they were large-framed, roomy cows, but not distinguished by anything very fancy in the formation of their udders and teats. Cardigan was wanted for show purposes at the first Paris Exhibition, but an offer of £100 did not tempt his owner, Mr. Ivie Campbell, to sell him. He had a full brother named Sir Colin, which, as a stirk and a three-year-old, was first at East Kilbride, a notable old-time show, held in the month of June and extensively patronized even yet; in fact, Canadian buyers of Ayrshires should know that a prize won at East Kilbride means about as much as any prize can possibly mean in the Ayrshire world.

The produce of Major in the fifties were the leading animals at the West Country shows, but next to Cardigan his most notable son was Clarendon. He was second at Ayr in 1859, but first at Glasgow and Ayr in 1860. The dams of Clarendon and Cardigan were both brindled cows, but there was no comparison between them, the dam of Clarendon being a very fine cow and steady breeder of good calves, while the dam of Cardigan was not at all in favor with lovers of milk stock. The bull which beat Clarendon in 1859 went to Mr. Drew, Carmyle, and was got by a son of Major out of the dam of Cardigan. Clarendon was a most successful sire of milk stock, and his influence can still be traced, notably in the Muir stock of Mr. James Murray, a descendant of his having been first and champion at Cumnock more than once. His female produce made grand, big, substantial cows, with right good vessels and teats. In 1862, Mr. Murray, Carston (who still survives, in his 99th year, and has been an interested assistant in compiling these notes), was first, second and third with queys by Clarendon, and his produce held their own against most for many a day. He himself died in one of the earlier visitations of pleuro-pneumonia. A full sister of his, a brindled quey owned and bred by Mr. Parker, was first at Ayr in 1857. She was afterwards first at Glasgow and Ayr on more than one occasion. She was one of the best cows ever known in the annals of the breed. The Duke of Atholl's prizewinning bull at Battersea International Show in 1862 was by Sir Colin, already named, and another great bull of the period, owned by Mr. T. Brown, Holm, was by Cardigan. In 1864, Mr. I. Hyslop, High Cairn, showed Young Clarendon at the Highland. He was bred at Dalgig, and was got by Clarendon out of Skelpie by Clarendon. He was a red bull, and one of several which during the years 1859-66 bore the reputation of the Broomlands Major in a full flood of success. The whole of these cattle were