

Ayrshire Cattle.

In our June number we gave a very interesting article on Ayrshire cattle, written by Mr. Wm. Rodden, the President of the Ayrshire Importers' and Breeders' Association of Canada. Before this date we had made preparations to issue a number of articles on this breed. In the Dominion of Canada, as in Europe, we have a great diversity of soil and climate. The commercial conditions and the wants of our people vary very much. Because of these conditions a certain breed will be found more profitable in one locality than another breed, while in another section, possessing a vastly different soil or subject to different conditions, it may not be a desirable kind to keep. Canadian farmers should consider these facts more than they do and be guided by them in selecting stock of all kinds. We believe it would be interesting and profitable to our readers to know

HOW AYRSHIRES ARE VALUED IN BRITAIN.

Mr. James Buchannan writes as follows concerning them:—

"This heavy-milking and hardy breed of dairy cattle is well suited to the soil and climate of Scotland, where it has been long established and is highly valued. Small in size, short in the legs, and with fine, clean bones, Ayrshires thrive and give a fair share of milk where large and less hardy cows would scarcely live. In the south and west of Scotland where large cheese-dairies are kept it is a rare thing to find any other breed of cows used, and the knowledge of this fact enables us to appreciate the justice of Mr. Scott Burn's remark, in one of his books on the Dairy, &c., where he says: 'For dairy purposes in cheese districts the Ayrshires are justly celebrated; indeed, they seem to possess the power of converting the elements of food more completely than any other breed into cheese and butter.'

"Little is known as to the manner in which this favorite breed was first brought into or bred in Scotland, but it is generally believed that the cows from which they and Shorthorns are descended were the country cows belonging to the district between the Wear and the Tees; and it is probable that some of these cows—which were famous for being good milkers more than a hundred years ago—were bought by Scotch dealers or drovers when returning to their own country, after disposing of their 'drives' of black cattle in England. The mothers of the milky herd being thus introduced into Scotland, there is good reason to believe that bulls of the West Highland breed were used for crossing, for West Highland cows are to the present day good milkers, and we often see a brindled bull or cow of the Ayrshire breed; but, above all, in the size and shape of the horns of a true Ayrshire there is clear evidence of West Highland blood.

"Great attention and care have been bestowed on the improvement and development of this valuable breed of dairy-cattle during the last thirty years in Scotland. An Ayrshire Herd-book has been established, milking competitions, and of late years an annual exhibition of cows called the 'Ayrshire Derby.' This has brought large numbers to the county from which these cattle take their name; and the competition for the thirty-five prizes offered in the 'Derby' is very keen indeed.

"Large numbers of Ayrshire cows are annually bought and sent to England, Ireland

and the United States of America, and the breed is rapidly rising in favor in all those countries, for although they are profitable on poor and inferior pastures, they are much more profitable where grass is rich and plentiful. The returns from individual cows, and from whole dairies of this breed, have frequently been published in the agricultural papers, and from these statistics it is easy to understand why many tenant-farmers and dairymen are anxious to obtain cows of so profitable a kind. The first cost in Scotland being much less than what is paid for large cows, and the fact that a considerably larger number of the small cattle can be kept on a given acreage, induce many men to give the northern breed a trial, especially where milk is the chief desideratum.

"At a Scotch show thirty years ago judges of Ayrshires looked chiefly to very fine bones, thin, soft skins, small deer-like heads and necks, narrow muzzles and prominent eyes, and these points, with large, well-shaped udders (about which the same opinions still hold), were, and are, sure indications of great milking powers. But it began to be felt that more stamina and stronger constitution were desirable, and therefore, at the present time, a cow is thought more of for having a thicker skin, if soft and flexible, stronger bones, and the horns need not now be thin and fine; and if a cow has a light fore end, with a clean, well-veined neck, judges like to see her with a good covering of flesh, believing that although such a one will probably give no more—if as much—milk as her prototype of thirty years ago, yet the thicker and stronger cow is to be preferred, because her appearance indicates strength and hardiness, with a proportionate capacity for resisting sickness, and an improved aptitude to fatten.

"In Cork and Kerry the Agricultural Societies have endeavored to promote the importation and breeding of Ayrshire cattle by offering special prizes for them. In Kerry, particularly, the Agricultural Society there (which is one of the most flourishing of the kind in Ireland) fully recognizes the importance of the breed. One of its members, an extensive land agent, imported a number of Ayrshire bulls for the use of the tenantry on a number of the estates for which he is agent. Lord Ventry also imported and bred some excellent specimens of the breed; while an extensive farmer has informed me that he intends keeping no other breed of dairy-cows on the two farms he occupies in that county.

"When the Royal Agricultural Society of Ireland visited Tralee, there was a fine show of Ayrshire cattle, and although the competition in the cow class was very strong, the cow which was awarded the first prize had been bred and reared in the country."

WHAT CANADIAN BREEDERS THINK OF AYRSHIRES—THE INTRINSIC VALUE OF AYRSHIRES.

BY D. NICHOL.

I have been breeding them to some extent for twenty-seven years, although I have never possessed more than thirty-two at one time. I have raised and sold a number of fine animals. I prefer them to any other breed. I supply city dealers with sweet milk, cream and skimmed milk, all of which must be of good quality. So far I have succeeded in giving satisfaction. I keep cows for strictly dairy business and only good, business dairy cows suit my purpose. I

believe they are the most profitable breed for me to keep. I know that with other breeds there are some phenomenal cows which produce enormously, but I also know that with these breeds one cow differeth very much from another as regards productiveness. I have good reason to believe that there is no breed nearly as uniform in this respect as the Ayrshires. I thoroughly tried the general purpose cow with very unsatisfactory results. Eighteen years ago I hired for a season a first prize Shorthorn bull of fine symmetry to cross with my Ayrshires with a view of increasing their size. In that matter I succeeded well. Out of nine calves four were heifers, which I carefully raised to be very handsome animals. I also trusted that in productiveness they would, when matured, at least equal their dams, but in this matter I was woefully disappointed, for although they gave good milk lavishly for two or three months after calving, they, in spite of all efforts to keep them milking, dried up in less than seven months, hence the average annual yield of each cow was only about 3,500 lbs of milk, consequently I was obliged to sell them to the butchers when five years old, realizing less for the beef than it cost me.

I had something of the same experience with Polled-Angus, and have been forced to the conclusion that the Ayrshires as a strictly dairy cow cannot be made more profitable by the intermixture of the blood of any other breed now in existence. With a matured Ayrshire cow properly fed there is no difficulty in obtaining annually 6,000 pounds of good, marketable milk. That is only an average of 20 pounds per day for ten months. I could show you some cows that have not been dry for six years. These are more profitable than any other breed in sections of country where dairying can be made more profitable than beef production, as is the case in Eastern Ontario and all the Eastern Provinces of the Dominion.

Hardiness and healthfulness are two of the qualities they possess in such a remarkable degree which makes them so peculiarly adapted for the business for which they have been specially developed. I have never exposed any of my cattle to intensely severe weather, therefore cannot say exactly what they may be able to endure, but from what I have learned by observation I have no hesitation in saying that, with the exception of the West Highland, a Scotch breed, they are the hardiest of all breeds. I have never seen an unhealthy Ayrshire cow, except some which, being too highly fed just before calving, have been taken off with milk fever.

Additionally, permit me to say that from among the common cattle of the country, although a very large majority of them are poor producers, there may be selected some remarkably useful dairy cows, which, if their pedigree is good (I mean if their dam and grand-dam have been good milkers), can be made to produce good dairy stock by being bred to a pure Ayrshire bull. In the Province of Quebec I have seen many grade Ayrshires doing good business in the dairy. Many more things I would like to say but I know you dislike long articles.

THE AYRSHIRE AS A DAIRY COW.

BY JOSEPH YULL.

Great difference of opinion exists as to the origin of this valuable dairy breed. Aiton tells us that in the beginning of the 17th century the