

Why the Herd Book Standard should be Lowered.

EDITOR CANADIAN LIVE-STOCK AND FARM JOURNAL.

SIR,—I have read your report and comments on the Guelph meeting of Shorthorn Breeders, re the Herd Book standard, with interest.

The thanks of every farmer in the land are due Prof. Brown, for the national stand taken by him on that occasion.

You intimate that you are open to conviction that the standard has been placed too high, and have a sympathy for those whose valuable cattle have been thrown out of the book.

Now, sir, we do not so much ask your sympathy, as we ask that you use your vast power and influence through your journal in the interest of right and justice.

It is neither right nor just that one section of the Shorthorn breeders should control the right of record to the exclusion and manifest injury of their brother breeders, and especially with government aid.

You give four, I consider, very minor reasons, why the pedigree standard should not be lowered.

1st. "Because you are under the conviction that it would act injuriously against a greater number of breeders." Many breeders contend that registered animals are not more valuable now than when all were eligible. If so, the only injury they would receive would be that a number of the best of those now unregistered would take the place of inferior animals now registered, which would be a national gain. Shorthorns had become so numerous that the mere fact that an animal was registered in the Canadian Herd Book did not enhance its value. But given a good animal, its value increased according to the pedigree. That was as it should be. The wholesale slaughter of about one-half the Shorthorns from a *pedigree* standpoint has necessitated the use of a number of inferior registered animals. Therefore, I contend that every reasonably pure animal should have the right of entry if his owner deemed him worthy. If not worthy, the knife would be more freely used, and the *scrubs*, no matter what their pedigree, would soon drop out of the race.

Your second reason, "that it would necessitate" a revision of a large part of the work done, is entirely beside the question.

3rd, "Because a number of registered animals have changed hands" can have very little weight with you. In these transactions both parties knew all the facts. On the other hand, when you were advocating raising the pedigree standard, you must have been aware that you were aiding in the injury of many breeders and farmers who had bought these animals under the impression that their pedigrees were right, and after breeding from them for years wake up to the fact that they have been duped, and in many instances by those who are now so strongly in favor of a high pedigree standard, or, it may be, *by those now caught in their own trap*.

4th. Neither should the injury done many of our breeders be continued, because the standard has been changed so often.

How do you justify the acceptance of animals, or rather pedigrees, from a herd book with a standard of four crosses without accepting their standard? I am aware that in many parts of England the unregistered Shorthorns are practically pure bred. That is very well so far as it goes; but, sir, when we consider the number of breeds on that small island, and the fact that a great deal of crossing is done for beefing purposes, it is natural to suspect that some of the best of these have been kept for breeding purposes. The fact is, "distance lends enchantment to the view," and English herdsmen use more time, means and experience in the perfecting of their pets.

A number of members of the Dominion Shorthorn Association are also members of the Canadian Clydesdale Association. I would like to ask any one of them by that course of reasoning they infer, that the fourth cross of a pure Clyde on our Canadian mares is worthy of record, while no amount of crossing of pure Shorthorns on Canadian cows is so?

An apt quotation illustrates this whole question nicely: "Where self the wavering balance shakes, it's rarely right adjusted." Self has had a heavy hand on the balance; but, sir, I believe if the farmers and breeders who have been wronged stand firm and pull together, we shall yet get justice.

R. J. PHIN.

Hespeler, Jan. 17, 1887.

Mr. Phin, in his evidently sincere and well put letter, does not seem to put much store upon our "sympathy" in this matter. We are fully aware that it would be much more acceptable to the aggrieved did we fall in with their views of redress, and sustain it with tongue and pen. We know that it is the commonly accepted view that sympathy, to be of any value, must bring material relief. This is a low view of what we deem one of the handsomest traits of humanity. We remember well the occasion of two men travelling along the railway track with us for about three miles one day, on a branch of the G. T. R., while undergoing tiresome labors. Their sole object was to manifest their sympathy, in the absence of any other way of showing it; and although we have quite forgotten the names of the men, and lost all trace of them, the remembrance of that sympathetic act, although it did not shorten the road one step, will never be obliterated on this side the shores of time, and not at all likely on the other. The highest exhibition of sympathy the world ever saw has been spurned by millions of the race, but this in no case proves it unreal. But if the expression of sympathy is not desired by those who have in the meantime lost money with ourselves by the action of the Dominion Shorthorn association, we can easily refrain from expressing it, the only form in which we have seen our way clear to show it as yet. The moment the JOURNAL shall cease to use its "influence in the interest of right and justice," we hope that it shall die.

We admit that it is not right nor just that one section of the Shorthorn breeders should control the record to the "exclusion and manifest injury of brother breeders," where this is the *design* of the action. But has this been the aim of those men who fixed the standard of the present for the registration of Shorthorns? We have heard the expression of this repeatedly, but have waited thus far in vain for the sustaining evidence. Associations are to be governed by majorities, and where matters pertaining to their welfare become so confused that reformatory measures are absolutely necessary, the action of those majorities must be final, and where those reformatory measures cannot be made without hurting some of the members that good may result to the larger number, then the members thus injured should consider carefully before they give vent to complaint, whether the action of the association was not *right and just* in principle, in view of its reference to the good of the largest number.

But few Shorthorn breeders to-day will be found willing to defend the old four cross standard of the C. S. H. B. What was to be done? Either the standard was to be raised or not. If not raised, the whole Shorthorn community must suffer, but if raised a majority will be benefited, but a minority will in the meantime suffer. But because such will be the result, would it be wise to withhold such action? We say it would be unjust to the majority. Governments recognize this *principle* in legislative enactments. We behold it in the imposition of almost every form of tariff, and in chaining the drink traffic. Now the later removal of pedigrees by the association was the same in principle as the earlier, and if the former can be defended, so can the latter. When individuals become members of an association, it is with the understanding that so long as they remain members they shall be bound by the action of the association. When not satisfied with it they have, first, the right of attempting to carry counter-action; second, the right of protest, and third, the right of withdrawal.

We do not agree with Mr. Phin when he says the "wholesale slaughter of about one half the Shorthorns from a pedigree standpoint has necessitated the

use of inferior bulls." Good pedigreed bulls for grading purposes, weighing from 1000 lbs upwards, can be got for \$100 and less, to-day—about twice the value of butchers' meat. When parties become unwilling to pay such prices relatively, they are sure to content themselves with inferior sires, such as they ought not to use.

Mr. Phin's second paragraph is well put, although it is not altogether "beside" the question, as we see it. His third has already been answered in our previous remarks, and so, virtually, the fourth.

The idea of fixing upon some definite number of crosses as the hinging point of admission to registry of the offspring of our Canadian cattle from pedigreed Shorthorn bulls sounds well, and is sure to meet with a good deal of favor from its apparent reasonableness, and we have never said that we will not support it; but we will not do so at the present time, nor till reasons additional are presented than those we have heard; but we will not advocate it *now*. We believe the fewer complications introduced at the present time the better, till the agitated Shorthorn sea becomes calm. Two things should be considered by those who advocate the admittance of high graded Canadian cattle; the first is, would they bring remunerative prices? Would not the offspring of those tracing all the way to imported on both sides bring much better prices? And the second, would it not take longer to build up a herd in that way than to start upon an imported foundation, or on one tracing to imported? and would it not on this account be more expensive?

We have thus answered the portions of Mr. Phin's letter relating to our remarks of last number. Those portions of it relating to the action of the Clydesdale breeders and to the *motives* of members in the action they have taken, we leave to those interested to defend.

The annual meeting of the Dominion Shorthorn Breeders' Association will be held in the St. Lawrence Hall, Toronto, on Thursday, 24th February, and there we hope to meet with every Shorthorn breeder in the country. Discussion, the most full, free and deliberate, should be given to every feature of the present difficulties, even though this should require two days instead of one. We hope every one who has a complaint will make it known, and that it will receive careful attention; and we shall expect that everything shall be done in the most dignified and respectful way, every member seeking the good of the whole rather than the securing of some temporary gain, regardless of general results.

Encouraging from the Land of the Far Away.

We give below the substance of two letters from sources 3,000 miles apart and more, and these are but samples of what we are happy to say that we are continually receiving:

GENTS. I consider your JOURNAL indispensable. I have saved ten times its cost this year by the articles that appeared in swine in the two previous numbers, and I see a valuable one on the same subject this month. I think every person at all interested in agriculture should take your JOURNAL, as I am sure the many hints contained in every number would be of much service to any one.

JOHN WHITE.

Halifax, Dec. 17, 1886.

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SIR,—You may depend on me to subscribe for the JOURNAL as long as I have a dollar in this world. It is a pity that farmers don't better appreciate a paper worth twenty times its cost to them. I hope the farmers of Canada will take a pride in keeping it up.

L. O. LEMIEUX.

Brandon, 10th Jan., 1887.