

They stood first at such and such Royal Shows—such is the record in aftertimes; but the fact that they were subsequently deprived of any permanent token of their honours, owing to their barrenness—their artificially created barrenness—is studiously kept out of sight. But, although the money prize has not found its way into the purse of their owner, nor is the medal produceable, their temporary honour serves as an advertisement for other, perhaps inferior but more useful, animals of the same herd, and the value of the latter becomes heightened in consequence of their relationship to the winners. That is the secret. Forcing for show purposes is only a mode of advertising the excellence of the owner's wares; for short-horn breeding is quite as much a trade as shoemaking or tailoring; and though in some respects a costly mode of advertising, still it pays, and pays well too, in certain cases. Of this we have a clear example in the success and high standing of the Warlaby herd; for, without attempting for a moment to detract from the unquestionable merits of the Warlaby short horns, we may be permitted to doubt whether Mr. Richard Booth would ever have enjoyed—and long may he enjoy—his comfortable income of £5,000 a year from the hiring of his bulls, were it not that he regularly sacrifices some of his best females to the absurd necessity which exists of overforcing for royal show exhibitions. And perhaps this very circumstance proves more than anything else the extraordinary excellencies of the Warlaby short-horns. Mr. Booth's females are crammed for show purposes, and sacrificed in consequence as breeders; and yet the standing of the herd is kept up by breeding from what may be called, comparatively speaking, the very weeds of the herd. Such being the case, the reflection naturally arises in one's mind. What would that herd become, and to what pitch of excellence would it arrive, were show judges invariably to act as they would do while purchasing for themselves, and, by their uniform rejection of all animals unfit for breeding in consequence of overforcing, encourage a feeling in favour of natural condition, and thus save the lives, and secure the usefulness, of those wonderful short-horns which are annually sent forth from Warlaby? If the éclat conferred by even nominal success at a Royal Show pays Mr. Booth, and atones for the loss of usefulness on the part of the prize females of his herd, we cannot, nevertheless, consider it in any other light than a national loss, when the flowers of such a herd are compelled to be sacrificed in order that they may attain a certain standard of excellence, which is never taken into consideration, and is even scrupulously avoided, at any other time than at a show, or believed to be desirable in any save show animals.

It is not because Mr. Booth is a sinner above all others in respect to overforcing his short horns that we thus allude to him. It is because

he is—to use the designation applied to him by his fair and enthusiastic disciple, Lady Pigot—"the hero of short-horns;" because when we speak of "Booth blood," we refer to the most successful line of short-horn blood in existence; for the majority of winners at all the shows in the kingdom have Booth blood in their veins; and for these and other reasons we hold it to be a national loss, as we have said, when such a man as Richard Booth must yield to a fatal and absurd passion, whenever he chooses to become an exhibitor, and by doing so deprive the country of the advantages which would follow to remain in a natural state, so as to transmit their peculiar excellences through a line of healthy and prolific descendants.

But although it may, perhaps suit Mr. Booth and a few other breeders to run great risks, it does not suit everyone to follow their example. And it is because many have tried to do so when they had not the right stuff nor the same advantages to fall back upon that we find in short-horn history so many instances of what we must call disappointed ambition, and of temporary success followed by sudden and utter extinction. All who are acquainted with such matters know that many individuals have attempted to become eminent short-horn breeders and exhibitors, and failed in the attempt. They have gone to great expense, without much judgment as to the materials they were collecting for the foundation of their future herds; they have forced their show stock, and they have sometimes even got a prize or two; but the very expensive cost of their whistle has ultimately sickened and frightened them, and they have abandoned the pursuit in disgust. Now, if those people had chosen to rest contented with moderate expectations, to have gone quietly and reasonably to work, it is most likely their efforts would ultimately have proved serviceable to the community and profitable to themselves, instead of leaving them in such a position as to act merely as beacons, to warn others of the rock on which they made shipwreck.

For all these evils there is a remedy, and we feel convinced it is high time it should be applied. Let it be perfectly understood that judges at our royal shows are resolved to reject every animal which comes before them, no matter how superior that animal may be in other respects, provided it is shown in such a state from forcing as to render its qualification, as a breeding animal doubtful. Let this rule be firmly and uniformly acted upon, and there will be no more forcing, the finest and, therefore, no more sacrifices of cattle in the world. For breeders who are exhibitors do not follow the practice because they like it; they have no desire to do so, but they have no option. They must either force or stay at home. There is, no doubt, a regulation in the programme of our principal societies to the effect that judges are expected