

Yet there is another cause which suggests itself to me—Was it not in some measure through having *packed* committees at the various local agricultural societies, who have invariably selected for the judges of stock either the bailiffs of noblemen, or landed proprietors; men who had the run of a long purse, and who never knew what rent-paying was; who never thought of anything further than pleasing the eye; and who invariably awarded the premiums to stock that neither you nor I would be at the trouble to drive home if compelled to breed from them. This, no doubt, has hindered the progress of breeding, and had a baneful effect on this once useful breed of stock. We will now proceed to the Durham breed, which we are told entirely originated in the county bearing their name, and first produced by Mr. Collins.* The pedigrees may be traced to his stock, but beyond that we cannot go back. I believe it is admitted on all hands that this breed came to the largest size at the youngest age of any breed in the Kingdom (here you have early maturity); and although they were raised from crossing† with different breeds, they have now a peculiar character of their own; their colors red, white, and roan, or hazel; and if ever you see a clear spot on a beast, you may at once conclude

* A bull called "Hubback" was the sire of the dam of Mr. Charles Colling's "Foljambe," who was the grandsire of "Favorite;" the dam of "Hubback," was a cow, the property of a person in indigent circumstances, and who grazed the cow in the lanes: still she was a cow possessing propensity to fatten in a great degree, as, when she was removed to some good land she did not again breed; and "Hubback" was useful as a bull for a very short period. Mr. Collings found he could not, with any certainty breed *large good animals*, and from the outset endeavored to reduce the size. The celebrated Durham ox was by "Favorite," out of a common cow at 3 years old; it was computed to weigh 168 stones of 14lbs.

† Mr. Collings tried several experiments in crossing, but he generally resorted to breeds smaller than the short-horns. Amongst the most successful was the cross with the polled Galloway: no breed of cattle seemed so likely to improve the old short-horn as this: they were calculated, by their deep massive frames and short legs, to bring the short-horns nearer to the ground, and to dispose of their weight in a more compact manner. Their hardy habits would be essentially useful, and the quality of their flesh and hair was such as to render the experiment still more safe; and being also to be had of a red color, they appeared the most suitable of all breeds to cross with the Teeswater and original short-horn. Prejudice against this cross was at the height at Mr. Colling's sale; yet a cow, "Lady," 14 years old, sold for 260 guineas; "Countess," her daughter, 9 years old, for 400 guineas; "Laura," another daughter, 4 years old, for 210 guineas; "Major" and "George," two of her sons, sold for 200 guineas and 130 guineas; yet these were directly descended from the cross with the polled Galloway breed.

it is not a pure Durham. I have found them good milkers, and have a great propensity to fatten; but I am fearful they will meet with the same fate as the long-horns, if not bred with more caution. I have no doubt the Hereford breed, the Devons, and others, are well adapted to their respective counties, but I cannot think any breeds so profitable for dairying and feeding in this county, as the Durham, or the original long-horned.

I will now say a few words about sheep; but being a ram breeder, perhaps I ought not to advance an opinion on the subject; but before I enter on it, let me ask you, Mr. Chairman, one question. Do you think the breed of sheep improved in this neighborhood within the last five years?

The Chairman would not undertake to say they were. There were more cross-bred ones than there used to be.

Several gentlemen present did not consider so much care was paid to pure breeding as there used to be.

Mr. Spencer continued,—As you consider that they are not improved, it tends to prove that the rage for crossing* has not had that good effect that many supposed; but, on the contrary, in my opinion it has produced a nondescript sort of animal, without form or character, sadly disproportioned, more bone by half than necessary, and with a long thin back and large stomach, which, as a natural consequence, must require nearly double the quantity of food to make them fat. Perhaps some of the gentlemen who have made the change will tell us by what rule or system they have bred these animals, and how they are in future to proceed to keep this character together; because in all descriptions of stock I must have a character supported. Gentlemen, I hope the friends of cross-breeding will take an opportunity of expressing their opinions. I think it quite out of my province to make any distinction or remark respecting any particular flock of Leicester sheep of the present day;† for I have received

* This is not meant to express an exchange of blood of the same breed, and which is supposed to be the true method of successful breeding; but of late the rage has been for South Downs, Shropshires, Lincolns, Cotswolds, and other rams to cross with the Leicester ewes; thus the sheep in our fair are now mostly of a broken breed.

† Amongst the most celebrated of the Leicester breeders were Messrs. Buckley, of Normanton-upon-Soar, Messrs. Burgess (successors to Mr. Stubbins), of Holmepierpoint, near Nottingham, and Mr. Stone, of Quorndon; and there is scarcely a flock of Leicester sheep which has not a strain from one or all of these flocks. Mr. Buckley's plan was to regard above everything a good constitution, and firmness of flesh; while Mr. Burgess, his cotemporary, pursued a contrary course, looking to size and fatness above everything. The flocks of the late Earls Spencer and Talbot were bred purely from Mr. Buckley's; and we believe he obtained the highest price ever made for the hire of a ram—viz., 1000 guineas.