

Stock Department.

A Shorthorn Bull.

We herewith present our readers with an illustration of one of the most celebrated Shorthorn steers that has appeared in an English prize-ring for some years. This magnificent animal, bred and fed by Mr. Rowland Wood, Thrapston, Northampton, was calved on January 8th, 1862, was by Henry 5th (1994) out of Joan, by Diamond (5918): her dam Julietta 4th by 2nd Duke of Northumberland (3646.)

The following is a summary of this famous steer's doings in the show-yard:—1864.—Sept. 30, first prize at the Huntingdon Show of £3, and extra prize at the same meeting for the best steer in any of the classes of £5. Oct. 5, second prize at the Peterborough Show, open to all England, when 2-years and nine months old. 1865.—July 5th first prize at the Northampton Show, open to all England, £15; Sept. 29, first prize at the Huntingdon Show, as the best steer in the yard, of any breed or age, £5; and at the same meeting a silver cup, as the best steer in any of the Shorthorn classes, bred by the exhibitor, value £21; Dec. 2 at Birmingham for Shorthorns in class 5, open to all England, first prize of £15, and the following extra prizes: Silver medal to the breeder, value £2—a silver cup offered by the Earl of Harrowly, as an extra prize for the best ox or steer of any breed or age, bred and fed by the exhibitor; the Earl of Aylesford's prize for the best Shorthorn, bred and fed by the exhibitor, £15; the gold medal for the best steer or ox of any age or breed, in all the classes, value £20; the hotel and innkeepers' plate, value 25s. as the best animal in any of the cattle classes; Mr. Otley's silver medal, as an extra prize for the best animal, value 3s.; an extra prize awarded by the Society for the best Shorthorn £25; and Mr. Beach's cup for the best Shorthorn fed on his cattle food, value 7s.—total £194.

The *Mark Lane Express* wrote of this fine ox as he appeared at the Birmingham Show, as follows:—"Despite the otherwise general tameness of the exhibition, there was one good class and this was the older lot of Shorthorn oxen in the Hall, the whole of which were commended, and where the honours of the day gradually accumulated; though still, with Mr. Rowland Wood's steer it was Eclipse first and the rest nowhere. A grander beastforward has rarely been seen; with a good kindly head, beautifully covered about the shoulders, with a rare back and great depth, light of bone and full of good meat, this ox is only a little faulty about his hind quarter to keep him from absolute perfection."

To the foregoing particulars we may just add that this superb ox was killed on March 8th of the current year. His weight was 240 stone, with 26 stone and 4 lbs. of loose fat. His girth was 9 feet 9 inches, and his age when slaughtered, 4 years, 2 months, and 1 day.

A New Breed of Cattle.

We find in the current number of the *Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England*, is an article on cross-breeding, some account of experiments that have been going on for several years by John Beasley, Esq., of Chapal Brampton, Northamptonshire. This modern instance of deliberate systematic cross-breeding, based upon a careful consideration of the principles of physiology, the requirements of the British markets, improved systems of farm management, and the consequent changes in the type, con-



stitution, and habits of cattle is of a highly interesting and suggestive character, and may prove of practical benefit, by inducing thought and reflection to many of our readers.

Mr. Beasley, who is an extensive farmer and experienced breeder of shorthorns, determined in 1850 on establishing a distinct breed by engrafting the shorthorn blood upon some of the other pure races; and after mature consideration he adopted the West Highlander as the best suited to his purpose. This beautiful and well defined animal, as found in its native glens of Argyleshire, with his broad chest, springing rib, and capacious trunk, possesses in a high degree the external characteristics indicative of a robust constitution, and a disposition to fatten readily and rapidly. Ten carefully selected cows were accordingly made, all of a red colour, inclining to the lighter or yellow shade, and had the orange tinge of the inside of the ears and skin, so much valued in many pure breeds, as indicating a kindly disposition. These cows were all put to first-class shorthorn bulls, and after producing their second calf, were fattened off or otherwise disposed of. The heifers were put to the best shorthorn bulls that could be procured, either bred by, or descended from, the herds of Lord Spencer, Sir Charles Knightly, or the late Mr. Richard Booth.—"It was an interesting study in itself to watch the effect of the cross with the different bulls, and it was remarked that the Booth blood always left the clearest impression. In some cases it was difficult even for a practiced eye to distinguish the second cross from a pure bred shorthorn; but invariably the last traces of their mountain origin were to be detected in the length and thickness of the horns, width of the forehead, and shortness of nose or distance from the eye to the muzzle. The original cows, like all mountain breeds in a semi-wild state, were shallow

milkers, though the milk was of a very superior quality. As the produce receded from the Scot and merged in the shorthorn, the quality of the milk increased with each cross, yet retained much of the quality of the original dam."

The first cross (shorthorn and West Highland) was found to be inferior in size to that between the shorthorn and Aberdeen or polled Angus and other large breeds; but for disposition to fatten economically, and quality of meat, it could not be surpassed, and rarely equalled. The steers upon ordinary grass

through a large portion of the year, and fed in winter, in open yards, on hay and roots, progressed rapidly, attained to great weights in proper time to the amount of quality of food consumed, and produced beef of the very best quality. Eight steers, under three years old, were sold just before Christmas 1859, for £33 each: Estimated average weight 11 cwt.; thereby affording a handsome profit to the breeder and feeder. The second cross proved equally, if not more encouraging. A detailed account of the food and treatment of one steer is given, a scale much below that of ordinary

fattening cattle, but the animal when only a little over two years old weighed when dressed nearly 10 cwt., and it is said that several others reached a similar standard. In speaking of cross-breeding it must be carefully borne in mind that in the cases we have been considering, Mr. Beasley always uses pure shorthorn bulls.

A promising young animal, with three crosses of shorthorn blood, was saved as a bull, and at ten months old sold for £30, to a farmer having a small herd of pure shorthorns. The cross from this animal is represented as being so far successful, the calves looking prospering, well shaped with abundance of flesh, and plenty of hair. This, with some of the younger bulls as to quality, colour, and general appearance so closely resemble the pure shorthorn that a critical eye could only detect the difference.

Mr. Beasley's cows have all been regular breeders, and the total number of calves raised from this family considerably exceeds a hundred, although the pleuropneumonia, four years ago, in spite of every effort, carried off a number of the best animals. Notwithstanding this the stock is regarded to be hardly above the average, and remarkably free from disease. It is remarkable that, without a single exception, the stock has no black on any part of the body; even the muzzle is invariably of a light or flesh colour, so generally regarded as a distinguishing mark of a thrifty animal. The first and second crosses were principally red-roses, with a few blood reds, but of the first cross some were white with red ears. The bulls that have been sold for use have been either red, red and white, or dark roan. The first and second cross retain much of the wild and restless habits of the Highlander; and it is not until they become more closely related to the shorthorn that they acquire his docile habits. In