

Disadvantages of Stock Shows.

Although most all agricultural and live stock papers, both on this continent and in Europe, are organs of stock men and stock shows, not daring to warn their readers against the abuses which are constantly creeping in, for fear of offending their supporters, yet we occasionally find articles contributed by authorities who have no axes to grind, and can therefore speak their minds without risk of losing vote or influence. As our shows are based upon those in Britain, most all the advantages or disadvantages urged for or against the former will be more or less applicable to the latter.

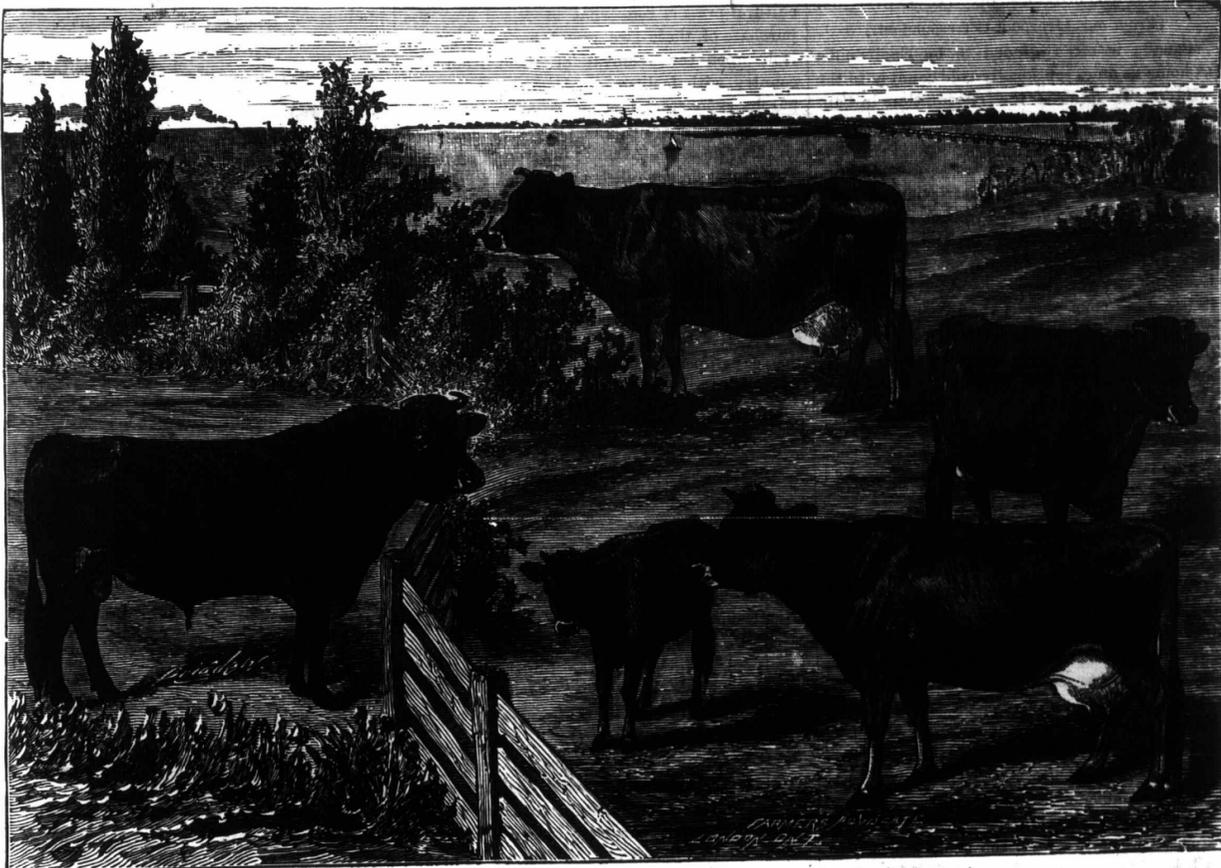
The *Scottish Agricultural Gazette* publishes a paper by Mr. Plowman, secretary of the Bath

that injury, instead of benefit, results from breeding-stock shows, owing to over-fattening being encouraged to a degree that incapacitates or deteriorates animals for breeding purposes.

With respect to the first assertion, if finality has been reached, Nature and man together have accomplished in the case of farm stock more than the most sanguine have ever dared to hope for in any other department of science or art. Even if perfection were reached, there is no guarantee that it would be maintained, and, under any circumstances, it would be questionable policy to dispense in the future with what have proved to be incentives to good results in the past.

The grievance that the wealthy or professional breeder has it very much his own way in the prize ring is true enough, in the case of the larger societies especially, but our leading societies at any rate could hardly offer any discouragement to this, as it would be equivalent

drawn, clearly defining where natural feeding ceases and over-feeding commences, it might then be desirable to have the matter pre-determined by either a disqualifying committee or inspectors, as in the case of unfair shearing; but the admitted doubt as to what constitutes over-feeding places it on a very different footing. Added to this, animals are not uniformly affected, and an amount of fat or flesh which would incapacitate one animal would not prejudicially affect another. Judges who are specially selected on account of their intimate knowledge of the class of stock which will be brought under their notice, ought to be the most competent persons to decide as to an animal's general condition, and their decisions would be much less likely to be questioned. Societies, however, should give every encouragement to judges to make it plainly manifest by their awards that excessive over-feeding is a distinct bar to success; this would speedily



STOCK FARM OF MESSRS. DAWES & CO., LACHINE, QUEBEC. (See first page.)

and West of England Society, read before the London Farmers' Club, in which the writer fairly criticises stock shows from all practical points of view. He does not deny the educational and social advantages derived from these shows, and he points out the benefits of competition in the attainment of excellence; but he deals at length with the leading objections that should be raised against existing systems of management. He expresses himself in the following language:

Among the chief objections urged against it are:—That it has had its day and served its purpose, and the limit of improvement having been reached in the breeding of stock, it is sheer waste of money to go on offering prizes; that, as the bulk of the prizes go to the wealthy or professional breeder, he, rather than the ordinary working farmer, is benefited by it; and

to levelling down instead of up, and would considerably diminish the value of shows as educational mediums. It may not always answer the purpose of the ordinary farmer to compete against a wealthy landowner, but he benefits in the long run, although at the time he may be shut out from the prize. In the local shows he is by no means conspicuous by his absence, and, emboldened by his success there, he not infrequently "flies at higher game" and develops into the professional exhibitor in the end.

We come now to the objection which is most frequently urged, and which has the most force of any, that breeding-stock shows encourage the over-feeding of animals to the deterioration of the procreative powers. That prizes are frequently awarded to over-fed animals can hardly be gainsaid. The instructions issued to judges, however, and the special regulations on the subject, testify that societies are not blind to the evil, but the difficulty is to deal with it satisfactorily. If a hard and fast line could be

educate exhibitors, and all regulations which provide for proof of breeding capacity should be strictly enforced before handing over the prize. Societies themselves would derive advantage from a diminution of too high feeding by the increase in the number of entries it would lead to, if the cost of preparation were lessened.

With regard to fat stock shows, there is a prevailing opinion that their present usefulness would be much increased if more information could be supplied as to the quality and cost of the meat produced, and the suitability of the prize animals for the table. One of the primary objects for which the Smithfield Club was established, as stated by its original promoters, was "by means of experiments in feeding, and by recording the results, to determine what breeds of animals, and what methods of feeding and treatment, on particular soils and under peculiar conditions of climate and locality, are calculated to give most food for man, from