

*petitio principii*, or in plain English, begged the question.—The Cotswold sheep existed as a distinct breed in the time of the Plantagenets, therefore there is “no good reason” why the Short Horns did not exist then! “At all events it remains with those who assert that these superior races of animals are of recent origin, to prove the fact!” Surely not. It remains with those who assert that they are a distinct breed, and have been for hundreds of years, to prove it. That is the affirmative. As we said above, the question is now much narrowed, for it is only one of time. The word “original,” as used by Short Horn writers, is not absolute, but merely carries us back a little further than we may have consented to go. Well, we will not quarrel with them about that. Instead of making a clear title to aristocratic distinction for one hundred years only, we may admit that they can give presumptive evidence to support a claim for three or four hundred, but this only removes the period of “improvement” somewhat farther from us. It by no means proves that such improvement never took place.

We hope Mr. A. may live long enough to supply the omissions in his history, and completely establish his theory, if truth, and the further evidence which he appears to have discovered, will support it. We shall be very happy to agree with him as to the *origin* and nature, as well as to the *fact* of superiority. He is mistaken in assuming that we are disposed to “controvert” the fact.

To the Editors of the *Agriculturist*.

BLACK ROCK, February 20th, 1848.

GENTLEMEN,—

I have received your paper of the 1st inst., containing your strictures on my communication, inserted in the first number of your consolidated paper. I find, not unexpectedly, that you are disposed to controvert my position, in relation to the improved breeds of domestic stock, at which I certainly take no offence. But as I did not propose, when penning those remarks, to *argue* any position which I hold, or then expressed, you will excuse me when I remark, that I do not feel disposed at present to follow the subject at length. It is a matter of too much magnitude for light or casual controversy, and to go further into it at the present time, is beyond the bounds of either my inclination or the time that I can devote to it. Life and health being spared to me, however, I hope at some future day to look into the subject somewhat at large, and in such process, I trust; that although I may not convince every one of any affirmative theory of my own, I may raise a question in the minds of some others, whether their own existing notions on the subject are quite so conclusive as they at present imagine.

You are pleased, in relation to the origin of the breed of Short horn cattle, to question my opinion of the antiquity of their date, and infer, even by my own showing, that they are but little, if at all, over a hundred years old, according to their history in the American Herd-book; and which authority being my own, I cannot dispute. You also talk about “Noah,” and all this sort of thing, which is very well as far as it goes; but when it is recollected that father Noah lived some 5000 years ago, and that the chronicler Moses does not say *how* many, nor *what* “breeds” of cattle he drove into the Ark with him, it will hardly do to refer back to any *distinct* race, as being the *original* of cattle kind. We may therefore, perhaps, as well let that alone.

Of one thing, however, we are very sure; and that is, that Short horn cattle of the very best quality, were bred much longer ago than one hundred years back in England by *existing* record, and *tradition* says, for centuries back of that—without any accession or “improvement” from “foreign” blood: and as to the Collings, who were eminent breeders of their day, from about 1780 to 1810 and 1818, and gave great eclat and notoriety to the Short horns from their success in breeding them, it is a well established fact, that the very stock from which they bred the most celebrated animals, in the production of which they achieved their greatest reputation, were *purchased* from several old, experienced breeders of Short horns, who had bred them for more than half a century before they—the Collings, for there were two brothers of them—commenced breeding, and the genealogy of whose original stock was lost in the still older breeds of *their* (the old breeders), ancestors, through whom the cattle descended to them. As to Berry, whose authority every body quotes, and of whom I also make mention as a Short horn author, every day I live convinces me that he is but very imperfect authority. His *first* history, and he wrote two—a dozen years apart, and very unlike—of the Short horns was pretty good as far as it went; but had I the same information when I wrote the Herd Book that I have since discovered, his assertions would have had much less weight with me. He was an *interested*

writer, having a pecuniary object in view in his later history as published by Youatt, which he partly accomplished, by making it appear that the race of Short horn cattle were comparatively a *recent invention*, and that *himself* and others were among the *improvers* of that race. In speaking of these superior breeds of cattle, I have carelessly fallen into the use of the general term “improved” with others; but I am not yet convinced that the Short horns of our day are a whit better than they were (the best of them), of two centuries ago. Certainly not, if the recorded proof they then showed in beef, tallow, and profitableness might be believed.

Curley and Baily wrote about Shorthorns before Berry was born; and Berry, if he read what they wrote—and no doubt he did, for he *mis-quotes* them—knew better than to give them as authority for many things he said. Berry is given quite too much credit in the American Herd Book, for strictly correct history, and which, should its substance ever be re-written by me, would be corrected.

As to the “improvement” of the English Short horns, by an admixture of the blood of cattle imported from the continent, on further examination I much doubt any such improvement. There is certainly no authentic evidence of the fact, although such has been asserted; but the most celebrated animals of that race cannot be traced to any particular relation with such importations. The “Cotswold” sheep—still are of the most celebrated of the long woolled breeds of England—were equally celebrated early in the fifteenth century, during the reigns of the Plantagenets, and I know of no good reason why Short horns, Devons, (this peculiarly fine race of cattle, so unlike any others, is claimed by some English authors to be an *aboriginal* race in that kingdom, and they assert that the Devons were known in their distinctive breed, so long back as the time when the Romans occupied a portion of the country), Long horns, and some other of the strongly established breeds of cattle, should not have existed so long back as the Cotswold sheep, among a people confessedly the most methodical in their habits of any in the civilized world. At all events, it remains with those who assert, that these superior races of animals are of *recent* origin to *prove* the fact.

As to what you say, of showing me the very superior specimens of *native* cattle that exist in your neighbourhood, and which indeed I have no disposition to doubt, I apprehend that if the facts can be ascertained, they owe their superiority to an infusion in *some* degree, though perhaps remote, of the blood of some of the breeds of acknowledged merit, which have been introduced of late into the Canadas. When you can show natives of the *old unadulterated* stock, which have existed since the settlement of your country, that are equal to what the friends of the better kind can demonstrate by *actual observation* to exist in theirs, I shall certainly, and with promptness acknowledge it.

There is another position, which you gentlemen, who are disposed to controvert the superiority claimed for the better kind of farm stock over the inferior kind assume, and that is, that all *real improvement*, and in almost every thing has been made within the last century, as if all knowledge was locked up for discovery in this steam engine, locomotive and telegraphing age; and that father Moses, Lycurgus, St. Paul, King Alfred, and Lord Bacon would be mere neophytes to the *Savans* of the nineteenth century. Hippocrates and Galen I think knew somewhat of animal physiology, as well as we of 1848, and it may be matter of some doubt, whether the patriarch Jacob did not know a little something of the science of cattle breeding, as well as Charles Colling or his successor, Mr. Berry; at least I fancy the diminished herds of his father Laban testified somewhat to his skill in that profession. Is the Arabian horse peerless in beauty and in grace among his species, at all lessened in the matchless qualities which endear him to the admiration of all who love the beautiful, that he is bred and owned by Barbarians of 4000 years’ duration? and here is certainly an evidence of the antiquity of a race of animals, which can, to human eye, scarcely be “improved,” and may not other fine animals have been equally well and perfectly bred by others in an obscure age?

But I have done. Please publish my history of, and strictures on English Short horns from the American Herd Book, and argue your objections as you proceed. Although I might add to what is there stated, the main question and its argument is before you, and I need not say more on what may now be considered a “tired out” subject.

Yours very truly,

LEWIS F. ALLEN.

UNDER DRAINING.

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To meet this difficulty, the expedient has been devised of making clay pipes. These carry off the water effectually, and at the same time lessen the cost of the drain. The tiles first used were made in a horse-shoe form, each piece being about fourteen inches in length, and having a flat sole of corresponding dimensions to place under it and prevent sinking in the soil, or undermining by currents of water. These were much more cheaply transported than stones, one load going as far as 5 or 6, and the cost of digging was also considerably reduced; for the tile, being only about 4 inches wide, occupies a bed much narrower than the stone. The several pieces of tile were joined