

fication as ever they were. As a matter of fact, not our sheep only, but all our domesticated animals are constantly varying. It is not only the flocks of widely remote districts that exhibit this variation; it can be seen any day, and everywhere, by comparing together any given number of flocks in the same neighbourhood, each of which will be found to have well-marked family features, by which it can be readily discriminated from the others.

The point of real practical importance is, that everywhere the Leicester breed retains the qualities which from the first made it so valuable. It is true that it is not now put to the same use as formerly. It no longer yields directly our staple supplies of butcher meat; but crosses betwixt it and the Downs in the south, and betwixt it and the Cheviots and Blackfaces in the north, now constitute the main supplies to all our markets.

January, 1862.

Before publishing the foregoing statements, it occurred to me that it would be well to submit them to two gentlemen who I knew to be well qualified to judge of their accuracy—viz., John Gray, Esq., of Dilston, and Thomas Scott, Esq., late of Beal. It is with peculiar gratification that I append the following excerpts from the letters with which they favoured me on returning my manuscript. Mr. Gray says:—

"I have been favoured by reading your paper on the genuineness of the Border Leicester, and, as I am going from home in the morning, I give you, at a late hour, a hasty line, to say how entirely my opinion concurs with your own as to the still existing purity of the *ram-breeding* flocks in the Border countries."

"I quite agree with all you say of George Culley and Robert Thomson, first at Lilburn (when the first sale of auction in the North of a pure-bred Bakewell flock took place) and next at Chillingham Barns, where he had annual lettings, at which I took rams, and learned my first lessons in the symmetry and quality of the pure Leicester. I well remember also his sale of all his flock there in May, 1814, when I was, though young, one of the judges, and presided at the dinner in a barn full and overflowing. I regularly attended the public lettings at Mr. Culley's too, and hired rams, very often. Those two flocks were certainly pure Leicester, if Bakewell's were pure—and we can go no further back. But then there were two families in Bakewell's flock, distinguished as *blue caps* and *red legs*, which came out at times in their descendants. You must have seen and known a kind of Leicester with blue faces, generally bare on the scalp, and red when lambled, and when mature, easily broken by flies, on which account they were not favourites with the shepherds. They were good feeders, but light of wool. The red or brown legs were a hardier tribe, and good in carcass also. I remember one of the

best rams I ever had being one of that kind—hired at sixty guineas from Mr. Thomson (descended from Bakewell's). That class of sheep was then used and approved by Messrs. Jobson of Turvilaws, Vardy of Fenton, Smith of Norham, Smith of Hayburn, &c. &c., and continued in those families until within the last twenty years. So long as a sheep-flock was kept at Millfield Hill no alloy or impure cross was ever admitted; but yet the character of the sheep was rather altered to suit the taste of those who hired my rams. The original breed was from Thomson's and Culley's, my father having bought gimmer's from Thomson at an early time. By way of change, I hired sheep from Burgess, and then I had three for two years from Lord Althorp, got by Buckley's best ram, called Big B., which his Lordship had for two seasons. Those sheep were perfect as to shape and quality, but on a low leg, with a round full carcass, fulfilling Bakewell's toast, 'small in size, and great in value.' If I had fed all my sheep to the end for the fat market none could have paid better than those for early maturity and the amount of mutton produced per acre, although not in large frames; but in that neighbourhood all the ewes are sold for breeding another year in Yorkshire, and the buyers like them to stand on a higher leg, and make a bigger, if not better, show in the pens of York and Wakefield: and so also with dimmons sold in the autumn to be fed in the South. Chiefly on this account, and partly because more farmers reckon more by the price they get *per head* than by the *aggregate amount* of mutton and wool in sheep of smaller size, I was induced to follow the public taste and to cultivate a large sized sheep, but without sacrificing purity of blood. The taste prevailed, I think, pretty generally on the Borders, and has wrought, together with the effects of climate, in changing considerably the look and character of the Leicester sheep in those parts from that of the original Leicester sheep of that county and Warwickshire, &c. I have seen most marked changes produced by local circumstances on Leicester sheep. I once bought some shearing rams in this county for a friend in Ireland. I saw the sheep in Queen's County three years after and could hardly believe them to be the same, so coarse were they in wool, and so changed in character. . . . You are quite right as to the origin of the name Barn, or Barnshire sheep. I remember old Green, a large buyer from Yorkshire in the beginning of this century, who always used that term in speaking of the draft ewes he bought in Barnboroughshire and Glendale. Your account of old Luke Scott's little flock is very curious and strictly true. I knew him at Easington, and used to meet him at the shows at Chillingham Barns. The last of his diminished flock was at a poor place by the road south of Wooler, called Plea Place, where his son once asked me to stop and look at the sheep which he thought