

"Juste Judicatio" assumes that by giving the judges numbers, and not names, secrecy is secured; but that is begging the whole question—I deny his premises, and I have at least ten times the experience of this suspicious exhibitor of cross-bred animals. I may say of him, as Talleyrand said of Lady Holland, "he is furious in his assertions, but when you ask for proofs—that remains his secret."

Judges of live stock are chosen because they are supposed to understand the sort of animals they are called on to judge, and also that they are men of honour, who will award prizes to merit, and not to their friends, because they are their friends.

From a large experience at stock and horse shows, I unhesitatingly assert that if a judge is inclined to give to favour what ought to be awarded to merit, he has ample opportunity of ascertaining which animal belongs to the person for whom he is ready to be dishonest. In the first place, celebrated animals that have won in the show ring more than once, whether bulls, cows, stallions, or hunters, are as well known to the majority of judges as their owners. In the next place, if the animals are not known, the men who lead them out or ride them are. Lastly, judges and exhibitors who mean to act dishonestly can talk before the judge and exchange signs while the judging is going on. In a word, absolute secrecy is impossible. The partial, I will not say the dishonest, judge, knows all his friends' animals; the scrupulous judge knows nothing, or, if it is a nice point, votes against his friend.

As there is no secrecy in any important class of Shorthorns or horses, the better plan is to put the judges on equality by putting a catalogue in their hands and trusting to their honour.

The judge who has not prejudices of any kind is a miracle. The follower of Booth does not think much of Bates, and *vice versa*, and I have never known a light weight who could thoroughly appreciate a 16 stone horse, or a welter weight from a close country who could admire the sort of hunter to be found in the first flight of the pasture counties. But you won't mend the matter by trying for an impossible secrecy as to owners and pedigrees. I speak rather positively, because for 12 years I have been the manager of the Islington Horse Show, and from the first, for the reasons above stated, have always placed the full catalogue in the hands of the noblemen and gentlemen who have honoured us by acting as judges. I do not say that in the 12 years no mistakes in judging have been made, but that the awards have been about right, has been amply proved. Following our 1st prize winners round the country to other shows, they have been as often 1st as 2nd.

I have also had the advantage of hearing for 12 years the confidential conversation of a series of judges, and have observed how often riders who came into the ring confident in their personal acquaintance with one or more of the judges have been disappointed.

The finest theoretical idea of judging was suggested by one of the best judges of horses and hounds in England, although he never acts in public; for it is utterly impracticable. Mr. W. W.—he is generally known by a more familiar abbreviation of his name—says "A horse should be put behind a curtain, which should be slowly raised above his fet-

locks, then above his knees, then above his back, and finally above his head and neck." But this was a joke. I only wish I could set down "Juste Judicatio's" offensive and unfounded imputations on the honour of better men than himself as jokes.

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