

## MR. SOTHAM ON IMPROVED BREEDS OF CATTLE.

{ PIFFARDINIA, LIVINGSTON Co.,  
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MR. EDITOR:—I see, by Mr. Parson's first letter, the reason he gives for the superiority of Short Horns, is, by their great number over other breeds. *This is a very wild thought.* Two-thirds of them, even with *herd-book pedigrees* (which he well knows) have their hides stretched over them as if tightened with a pair of pincers, and not worthy to be classed with *any improved breed*. Those who are so strongly their advocates, should be prepared with some better cause for their preference than their becoming fashionable.

I will here ask Mr. Parsons whether it was his judgment, as Chairman of Short Horn Committee, in deciding the first premium for the best Short Horn Cow at Niagara, 1850. If so, I differ very widely with him there. I should not have noticed the first premium cow; so either he or myself must be incompetent to judge of improved breeds of cattle; which of the two, remains to be proved. There were several far better cows in my estimation. I will here describe her so that there will be no "*mistake*," for I was very much surprised when the decision was made. She was a young cow, very long on the legs, *very coarse bone*, a narrow hollow crop, large paunch, le. and chine, very scanty brisket, medium breadth of hips, rumps very good in shape, and flat sides,—these were covered with thick "*flabby flesh*" of very inferior quality, which concealed a multiplicity of faults *to the eye*, but could not *deceive the hand*. There was no elasticity about it. Her udder was small, but handsomely shaped. The calf, which was in the pen with her, was thin in flesh and indicated her lack of milking properties,—neck long and thick—head a staggery appearance—colour red and white. This seems to me to be as correct a statement as my recollection serves to guide "*my opinion*" of the animal. I will call upon other *disinterested judges*, who saw her at the time, whether these are *facts* or not. If this was a model of a good premium cow, I am no judge, and I think it is an important point for a man who writes for an agricultural paper on the "*qualities*" of *improved breeds of cattle*, to first show his judgment and capability. I did not advance this controversy; therefore, I am "*on the defensive*." This is not the only time Mr. Parsons has given the preference to an animal with "*soft flabby flesh*" when he has been judge; and I can name it, if necessary.

This, Mr. Editor, is one of our most important errors; judges are too apt to give the preference to *fleshy* breeding animals, no matter what the breed, or quality; they always look at the animals as they are, and will not allow for adverse circumstances. A *good judge* ought to be able to discriminate a *good symmetrical and high quality animal in low, or medium condition*, from a common animal loaded with *inferior flesh*. If he cannot do this, he never ought to be put on any Committee. But enough of this—I suppose I shall make some enemies; but, if *facts* will do it, I must encounter them.

Another point. Mr. Parsons said to me, at Rochester, that I must have a better quality of *Herefords* to contend against the *Short Horns* than those I had there. I will admit that they were low in condition—not one of them ever had a peck of meal in their lives, to my knowledge. I have a proposition to make to him, which he cannot do less than accept, after making such an assertion. I will show six of those Cows, and Heifers, and a Bull, next July or August, in their own pastures, against a like number of Mr. Parson's, for quality alone, or weight in addition, as I consider them to be the *very best quality* that England can produce of *any breed*, and am willing to back my opinion. The judges shall be Canadians. I will name Hon. Adam Ferguson for mine; although a Short Horn Breeder, he is a straightforward, honest man—a good and unprejudiced judge—which is all I ask. Mr. P. may select his. Those two, naming the third, the losers to pay the expenses of the judges, while on duty, in examining each lot. When this is decided, I will meet him on the weight of butter made by said six animals. He may send a Canadian to test mine; I will send an Englishman to test his. The time of trial may be made by him. Any intelligent person, in whom Mr. P. has confidence, can fill this office, who is not "*ashamed to work*" while the trial is being made; set and skim the milk himself; see the butter made up, and, in fact, look closely that there is no deception. I can send one to him in whom I have confidence. This can be done at little expense, which will suit my circumstances best. It is an important trial, and one Mr. Parsons proposes; therefore, let us try it. When these are ended, another trial may come forth. A pair of two-year-old Steers may be shown for early maturity; a yoke of oxen to test the plough in deep ploughing; a fat ox or cow to try the weight and quality of meat—(I sold a Hereford cow at Boston, in 1846, for one hundred and fifty dollars, that weighed 2,313 lbs. alive, on the scales, and never had any meal until Dec'r 1st, and was sold the latter end of March following.) The quantity of food consumed can be acted upon.

I will here leave Mr. P. to meditate on these proposals, and show you "*my opinion*" of S. H. and Herefords; but, before I proceed to this, I will ask Mr. P. why he fed "*thousands*" of Devons and *hundreds* of Herefords, if Short Horns were so profitable as he is trying to make them appear? My opinion of S. H. is this: they are fashionable animals, supported by men of money, nursed, groomed, pampered and fed, without regard to expense or profit. They are large to appearance, and with a sleek meal coat on, fine looking to the eye, but, like all other "*high fed*" and fashionable things, very deceiving.

I shall now allude to three important points objectionable to Short Horns. First. Their *apparent* large size and coarseness. Large, is a term often given to an animal standing on high legs, with a *very extended paunch*, without corresponding width, or depth of frame. Secondly. The first class S. H. are frequently covered with a thin skin—a true indication of delicacy and lack of constitution. Thirdly. They generally