

been suffered to pass away without some authentic record of the principles that guided him, and the means by which his objects were accomplished.

The only memoir we have of Robert Bakewell is a fugitive paper in the Gentleman's Magazine, from which every writer has borrowed. Robert Bakewell was born at Dishley, in Leicestershire, about 1725. Having remarked that domestic animals in general produced others possessing qualities nearly similar to their own, he conceived that he had only to select from the most valuable breeds such as promised to return the greatest possible emolument, and that he should then be able, by careful attention to progressive improvement, to produce a breed whence he could derive a maximum of advantage. He made excursions into different parts of England, in order to inspect the different breeds, and to select those that were best adapted to his purpose, and the most valuable of their kind; and his residence and his early habits disposed him to give the preference to the long-horn cattle.

We have no account of the precise principles which guided him in the various selections which he made; but Mr. Marshall, who says that he "was repeatedly favored with opportunities of making ample observations on Mr. Bakewell's practice, and with liberal communications from him on all rural subjects," gives us some clue. He speaks of the general principles of breeding, and when he does this in connection with the name of Bakewell, we shall not be very wrong in concluding that these were the principles by which that great agriculturist was influenced.

"The most general principle is beauty of form. It is observable, however, that this principle was more closely attended to at the outset of improvement (under an idea, in some degree falsely grounded, that the beauty of form and utility are inseparable) than at present, when men, who have long been conversant in practice, make a distinction between a "useful sort" and a sort which is merely "handsome."

"The next principle attended to is a proportion of parts, or what may be called *utility* of form, in distinction from *beauty* of form; thus the parts which are deemed *offal*, or which bear an inferior price at market, should be small in proportion to the better parts.

"A third principle of improvement is the texture of the muscular parts, or what is termed *flesh*, a quality of live stock which, familiar as it may long have been to the butcher and the consumer, had not been sufficiently attended to by breeders, whatever it might have been by graziers. This principle involved the fact that the grain of the meat depended wholly on the breed, and not, as had been before considered, on the size of the animal. But the principle which engrossed the greatest share of attention, and which, above all others, is entitled to the grazier's attention, is *fattening quality*, or a natural propensity to acquire a state of fatness at an early age, when in full keep, and in a short

space of time; a quality which is clearly found to be hereditary."

Therefore, in Bakewell's opinion, everything depended on breed; and the beauty and utility of form, the quality of the flesh, and the propensity to fatness, were, in the offspring, the natural consequence of similar qualities in the parents. His whole attention was centered in these four points; and he never forgot that they were compatible with each other, and might be occasionally found united in the same individual.

Improvement had hitherto been attempted by selecting females from the native stock of the country, and crossing them with males of an alien breed. Mr. Bakewell's good sense led him to imagine that the object might better be accomplished by uniting the superior branches of the same breed, than by any mixture of foreign ones.

On this new and judicious principle he started. He purchased two long-horn heifers from Mr. Webster, and he procured a promising long-horn bull from Westmoreland. To these and their progeny, he confined himself; coupling them as he thought he could best increase or establish some excellent point, or speedily remove a faulty one.

As his stock increased, he was enabled to avoid the injurious and enervating consequence of breeding *too closely* "in and in." The breed was the same, but he could interpose a remove or two between the members of the same family. He could preserve all the excellences of the breed, without the danger of deterioration; and the rapidity of the improvement which he effected was only equaled by its extent.

Many years did not pass before his stock was unrivaled for the roundness of its form, and the smallness of its bone, and its aptitude to acquire external fat; while they were small consumers of food in proportion to their size; but, at the same time, their qualities as milkers were very considerably lessened. The *grazier* could not too highly value the Dishley, or new Leicester long-horn, but the *dairyman*, and the *little farmer*, clung to the old breed, as most useful for their purpose.

It was his grand maxim, that the bones of an animal intended for food could not be too small, and that the fat, being the most valuable part of the carcass, could, consequently, not be too abundant. In pursuance of this leading theory, by inducing a preternatural smallness of bone, and rotundity of carcass, he sought to cover the bones of all his animals, externally, with masses of fat. Thus, the entirely new Leicester breed, from their excessive tendency to fatten, produce too small a quantity of eatable meat, and that, too, necessarily of inferior flavor and quality. They are in general found defective in weight, proportionably to their bulk, and, if not thoroughly fattened, their flesh is crude and without flavor; while, if they be so, their carcasses produce little else but fat, a very considerable part of which must be sold at an inferior price, to make candles instead of food, not to forget the very great waste that must ever attend the consumption of over-fattened meat.