

West Highland Ox.

It seems rather singular that among all the breeds of cattle which the necessity or fancy of our people has caused to be introduced into this country, the West Highland should have been overlooked. Judging from their characteristics and the circumstances under which they are reared in their native country, these cattle would be much better adapted to the roughest parts of the United States and the Canadas, than any of the breeds now kept. They have great hardihood, and fattening tendencies, and many of them, as remarked by the late Mr. Hilliard, in his "Practical Farming and Grazing," as perfect in their form as any cattle on the face of the earth. They have besides, an originality and independence of character, so striking that they are never forgotten by a person who has once seen them. The writer of the account of the show of the Smithfield Club in the *Mark Lane Express*, having spoken of various other breeds, grows eloquent when he comes to these rangers of mountain and moor. He says:—

"It was quite refreshing to turn to the West Highland cattle. All lovers of the originality, the flash and fire of a mountain breed, paused as their eyes scanned the shaggy mantle, the defiant horns, and wild eye. It was impossible to look at Mr. Heath's second prize dun steer, without being lost for a time to the vexatious jangling of butcher's greasy men. The mountain breeze in fancy fanned the cheek, the foot sampled the springy heather underneath, and the rugged form before us, with coat all palpitating with the morning dew, assumed its native dignity, and bellowed forth upon the echoing air its challenge to the leader of the advancing herd. It is reported that the Royal Ladies of England and France (Queen Victoria and the Empress Eugénie attended the show) spent more of their time in this class than all the others."

A discussion was held not long since by the Wexness (Scotland) Farmers' Club in regard to the breeds of cattle and sheep best adapted to different localities, and the effect of various crosses, when the conclusion seems to have been reached,—“that they would have been better off had their energies been more directed towards improving the Black-faced sheep and Highland cattle.” The *Farmer's Magazine*, in giving a summary of the discussion, says, “The line of argument ran much in this way: The native Highland cattle and sheep will live on little more than what they can find on the hills; they will eat heather, and the Shorthorns will not. While they are thus left to ‘rough it,’ the new breeds are pampered and housed, although it was maintained their own beasts would do quite as well for more food and warmth. But there was considerable difference of opinion at this point. Mr. Anderson, who opened the discussion, ‘had himself some Short-horns, but

he had the greatest liking for Highland cattle. He had some Highlanders, four years old, worth £30 apiece. When his Highlanders were four years old, he sent them to the London Christmas market, and he was never disappointed in the price they brought him. He had been disappointed with crosses, but never with Highlanders.”

“Mr. Frazer, of Fairlie, thought neither the climate nor their pastures were suitable for Shorthorns. He kept Highlanders, because he found the climate was most suitable to support that kind of stock.”

Mr. Mackay, of Dinnoch, would place Highland cattle in the same category as the Black-faced sheep. “Where cattle are fed on straw in winter and on heather in summer, of course a change from Highland to cross-bred cattle would be ruinous, inasmuch as a Highlander will fatten where a Short-horn would decline.”

A late writer observes—“In estimating the merits of our mountain breed of cattle and sheep, too little credit is generally given to the superiority of the meat they yield for our tables on the one hand, and, on the other hand to the small quantity of produce that supports them in their native pastures for the manufacture of this superior quality.”

The Magazine above referred to says—“The very best meat of all that comes to the table, either for flavor or fineness, is that of the Highland Ox, when he has been properly ‘done by.’ It surpasses alike the Galloway, the Devon and the Short-horn. Go to Badminton and ask the Duke how they tasted? or Mr. Thompson how they do? and the answer will be all in their favor.” The Chairman of the meeting at which the discussion alluded to was held, observed that the Highland cattle were much in demand for keeping in the parks of the English Aristocracy, and that “their flesh was also relished in the Baronial Hall.” We have noticed that on most estates of gentlemen in England and Scotland, the Highland cattle are kept to afford beef for home consumption, on account of its superior quality. Taking every view of the case, we think the writer of the article in the Magazine is entirely correct in advising increased attention to this breed.—*Boston Cultivator*.

Importance of Agriculture.

Agriculture has been a theme for the master minds of every age, Poets have sung its praises and Philosophers proclaimed its importance. And when we consider agriculture is, (as Dr. Paley says,) the “immediate source of human provision,” that it does not merely change or modify the form of national riches, but actually creates an annual fund of wealth,—and that at the same time it is the foundation of other branches of national industry—for, (in the words of Gibbon) the products of agriculture are the materials of Art—can we wonder at the