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AND

## PEE DEE FARMER.

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EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

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### Improved Durham Short Horns.

From the Whip.

For every portion of the text in this excellent account of the short horns, we are indebted to the Rev. Henry Berry, than whom there are few more zealous breeders of cattle, while there is no better judge of them.

Whatever differences of opinion may prevail respecting the comparative merits of our several breeds of cattle, it must be admitted that the short horns present themselves to notice under circumstances of peculiar interest. Possessing in an eminent degree a combination of qualities which have generally been considered incompatible, and rendered irresistibly attractive to the eye by their splendid frames, and beautifully varied colors, it is not surprising that they have become objects of public curiosity; that they have realized for their breeders enormous sums of money; and that, throughout our own island, and every foreign country where agriculture is attended to, they are in increasing request.

It might tend to throw much light on the science of feeding, could these animals be traced, in the progress of their improvement, to an earlier period than has hitherto been found possible. Of the extent of that improvement we may, however, form an estimate, by placing together one of the improved, and one of the unimproved race.—We should, in such a case, discover resemblance just sufficient to support the belief in a very remote alliance, but there all similarity would cease.

From the earliest period as to which we have any accounts of our breeds of cattle, the counties of Durham and York have been celebrated for their short horns, but principally, in the first instance, on account of their reputation as extraordinary milkers.

Before this, a large and valuable description of cattle had existed on the western coast of the continent of Europe, and extending from Denmark to the confines of France. They were celebrated for the great quantities of milk which they yielded, and some of them exhibited an extraordinary aptitude to fatten. At what particular time they found their way to England, or by whom they were imported, is unknown; but there is a tradition that, towards the close of the seventeenth century, a bull and some cows were introduced into Holderness.

In external form, there appeared to be very little to recommend them, for they had large shoulders and coarse necks; the sides were flat, and the head was thick; all the coarse parts were bulky, and the prime ones were reduced in size, and they were almost the reverse of what the agriculturist would select: they were, however, bulkier than the native breeds, and they were better milkers than the generality of the cattle of that day. They would, by dint of feeding, grow to an enormous size; but they had not the aptitude to fatten, nor the early maturity, to which they have been since indebted for their triumph over every other breed. To recite their recorded feats at the pail would be to invite incredulity; but it may be asserted, on the best evidence, that taken as a breed, they have never in that particular been equalled. The cattle so distinguished were always, as now, very different from the improved race. They were generally of large size, thin-skinned, sleek-haired, bad handlers, rather delicate in constitution, coarse in the offal, and strikingly defective in the substance of girth in the fore-quarters. As milkers, they were most excellent; but when put to fatten, as the foregoing description will indicate, were found slow feeders, producing an inferior quality of meat, not marbled or mixed as to fat and lean, and, in some cases, the latter was found of a particularly dark hue. Such, also, are the unimproved short horns of the present day, and the distinction cannot be too frequently asserted, because they are, in many cases, considered as specimens of the improved breed, and have actually been resorted to in trials as to the comparative aptitude of animals to fatten—trials which it is evident they could not successfully sustain.

A period of more than eighty years has now elapsed, since the short-horns, on the banks of the river Tees, hence called the Teeswater breed, had assumed a very different character to that contained in the foregoing description. In color, they resembled the improved short-horns, being occasionally red, red and white, and roan,

though the last named color was not then so prevalent as now. They possessed a fine mellow skin and flesh, good hair, and light offal, particularly wide carcasses, and fore-quarters of extraordinary depth and capacity. Perhaps no closer modern resemblance can be found to the above description of the Teeswater breed than Mr. Berry's bull presents. His dam was purchased by Mr. B. on account of the very few crosses that intervened between her and some of the best of the Teeswater cattle, to which he was desirous to go back, on account of the extent to which breeding in and in has been carried. When slaughtered, their proof was extraordinary, and many instances are recorded of the wonderful weight of their inside fat.

The remarkable difference which existed between the Teeswater and the old unimproved short-horns may, with propriety, be ascribed to a spirit of improvement which had sometime manifested itself among the breeders on the banks of the Tees, whose laudable efforts were well seconded by the very superior land in the vicinity of that river. No reasonable doubts can be entertained that they proceeded on a judicious system of crossing with other breeds, because it was utterly impossible to raise such a stock as the Teeswater from pure short horn blood. One cross to which they referred was in all probability the white wild breed; and if this conjecture be well-founded, it will be apparent whence the short horns derived a color so prevalent among them.

It is also asserted that, about the period in question, Sir William St. Quintin, of Scampston, imported bulls and cows from Holland, which were crossed with the stock of the country. It would tend to little advantage to proceed with conjectures, as to what other breeds were resorted to, if any; this much is certain, that great improvement was soon manifested, and a valuable variety established, as the two following instances will prove.

Mr. Milbank, of Birmingham, one of the leading improvers, bred and slaughtered an ox, which at five years old, weighed, the four quarters, one hundred and fifty stones, of fourteen pounds to the stone, producing sixteen stones of tallow; and a cow bred from his stock, slaughtered by Mr. Sharier, of Chilton, at twelve years old, weighed upwards of one hundred and ten stones.

From Mr. Milbank's time the Teeswater cattle continued to sustain their excellence and celebrity in various hands, until Mr. Charles Colling adopted them, when he manifested a superiority of skill as a breeder, which, in a very brief period, secured him an ample fortune.

Whatever had been the merits of the Teeswater cattle, it is certain Mr. Colling greatly improved them; and though it has been asserted that his success was the result of chance, arising from the possession of an animal, with the merits of which, it is supposed, he was at one period unacquainted, the writer of this article is of opinion that Mr. Colling's success resulted from a deliberate and well considered plan. He found the Teeswater, like all other extravagantly large cattle, frequently of loose make and disproportion. He was sensible, also, of the difficulty of breeding, with any thing like certainty, large good animals; and though he has declined on all occasions to throw any light on his views and proceedings, the writer thinks he can detect in the very outset, and through the progress of his practice, a resolution to reduce the size of this breed, and at the same time, and by that means, to improve its form. This he is supposed to have effected, in the first instance, through the medium of a bull called Hubback, an animal respecting which there has been much controversy, principally touching the purity of his blood, a question now of little importance, because it is admitted on all hands that Mr. Colling adopted another cross, which prevails in a majority of superior short horns of the present day. It may, notwithstanding, be matter of interest to state a few particulars respecting this bull.

Without entering on an inquiry by what circumstances Hubback's title to be considered of pure blood is supported or weakened, it may suffice to observe that it appears probable he possessed on one side the imported blood. The possessor of his dam was a person in indigent circumstances, and grazed his cow in the high-ways. When afterwards she was removed to good land, near Darlington, she became so fat that she did not again breed; and her son having the same feeding propensity in a high degree, was useful as a bull during a very short period. The quality of the flesh, hide and hair, are supposed to have been seldom equalled; and as he was smaller than the Teeswater cattle, he was eminently calculated to forward Mr. Colling's views.

It has been remarked that we have at present no superior horse on the turf, which does not boast a Godolphin Arabian; so it may be asserted that we have no superior short horns which do not claim descent nearly, or remotely, from Hubback; because Hubback was the sire of the dam of Mr. Charles Colling's bull, Fojambe, who was the grandsire of Favorite; and there can be no doubt that there has not been for many years any superior short horn who was not descended from Favorite. Mr. Charles Colling is said to have considered that the bull Fojambe was the one who did his stock the greatest good; and this is not improbable, as Fojambe was the sire both of the sire and dam of Favorite. Hubback, however, must have been a remarkable

good animal, and considering the short time during which he was used as a bull, proved himself a first rate stock getter.

The following account of Hubback we had from Mr. Waistell, or Alinill, who, although his name does not appear conspicuously in the 'Short Horned Herd Book,' deserves much credit for his discrimination here. He used to admire this calf, as he rode almost daily by the meadow in which it grazed; and at length he attempted to purchase it from the owner. The price, £8, seemed much for a calf not a year old; and the reputation of the short horns not being yet established, the bargain was not yet struck. Still he longed for the young beast; and happening to meet Mr. Robert Colling near the place, he asked his opinion of the animal. Mr. Colling acknowledged that there were some good points about him; but there was something in his manner of acknowledging this, which induced Mr. Waistell to suspect that Mr. Colling thought somewhat more highly of the calf than his language expressed, and therefore he hastened the next morning, concluded the bargain, and paid the money. He had scarcely done so before Mr. R. Colling arrived for the same purpose, and as the two farmers rode home together, they agreed that it should be a joint speculation.

Some months passed by, and either Mr. Waistell's admiration of the calf a little cooled or his partner did not express himself very warmly about the excellencies of the animal, and Messrs. Waistell and R. Colling transferred young Hubback to Mr. C. Colling, who, with the quick eye of an experienced breeder, saw the value of the little beast. Mr. Waistell expressed to us (October 1832) his regret (natural enough) at having been induced to part with the sire of the short horns, and his extreme disappointment that when Hubback began to cover, Mr. Charles Colling confined him to his own stock, and would not let him serve even one of Mr. Waistell's cows.

After the use of this bull, Mr. Charles Colling proceeded with singular success to produce, from time to time, superior animals; and the number of bulls he disposed of by letting was highly encouraging. By the circumstance which brought the improved short horns into most extensive notice was the production of the "Durham Ox," an animal which speaks volumes in favor of even a single cross of this blood; for the ox was the produce of a common cow, which had been put to "Favorite." At five years old the Durham ox was sold to Mr. Bulmer, of Harby, near B-dale, for public exhibition, at the price of £140; this was in February 1801. He was at that time computed to weigh 168 stones, of 14lb, his live weight being 216 stones; and this extraordinary weight did not arise from his superior size, but from the excessive ripeness of his points. Mr. Bulmer having obtained a carriage for his conveyance, travelled with him five weeks, and then sold him and the carriage, at Rotherham, for £250.

On 14th of May, Mr. Day could have sold him for . . . 525 0 0  
On the 12th of June, for . . . 1000 0 0  
On the 8th of July, for . . . 2000 0 0

Mr. Day travelled with him nearly six years, through the principal parts of England and Scotland, till at Oxford, on the 19th February, 1807, the ox dislocated his hip-bone, and continued in that state till the 16th April, when he was obliged to be slaughtered; and, notwithstanding he must have lost considerably in weight, during those eight weeks of illness, his carcass weighed:

	Imp. stones.	lbs.
Four quarters . . . . .	265	12
Tallow . . . . .	11	2
Hide . . . . .	10	2

This was his weight at eleven years old, under all the disadvantages of travelling in a jolting carriage, and eight weeks of painful illness. Had he been kept quietly at Ketton, and fed till seven years old, there is little doubt but he would have weighed more than he did at ten years old, at which age Mr. Day stated his live weight to have been nearly thirty-four hundred weight, or two hundred and seventy stones, from which if fifty be taken for offal, it leaves the weight of the carcass two hundred and twenty stones.

It is a well ascertained fact, that, during his career as a breeder, Mr. Colling tried several experiments in crossing, and the breeds to which he resorted on these occasions, being very considerably smaller than the short horns, this circumstance tends to corroborate the writer's opinion that he considered it desirable to reduce their size.—The cross with the Kyloe led to no results worthy enumeration, but that with the polled Galloway must not be passed over without comment. Before stating the circumstances attending this experiment, it may be proper to observe that no breed of cattle promised so successful a cross with the short horns as the Galloway. They were calculated, by their deep massive frames and short legs, to bring the short horns nearer the ground, and to dispose their weight in a more compact manner: their hardy habits would be essentially useful, and the quality of their flesh and hair were such as to render the experiment still more safe. Add to this, that they could be obtained of a red color, and we are prepared to admit, even without the sanction of a successful experiment that they were admirably adapted to cross with the short horn, standing frequently too high from the ground, not very well ribbed

home, and not seldom of loose, disjointed frame.

To this breed Mr. Colling resolved to resort; and though at the time when he did so, the event was regarded with some degree of ridicule by the pure blood advocates, and comments passed which would have deterred ordinary men from the exercise of their judgment, Mr. Colling persisted.

He was much favored by circumstances in promoting his object, which was to take one cross and then breed back to the short horn,—the only course, by the way, in which crossing can be successfully adopted. To breed from the produce of a cross directly among themselves will lead to the results which have induced many persons, without due consideration, to believe conclusively against crossing; but to take one cross, and then return and adhere to one breed, will, in the cross of a few generations, be found to stamp a variety with sufficient certainty.

Mr. Colling's short horned bull Bolingbroke was put to a beautiful red-polled Galloway cow, and the produce, being a bull calf, was, in due time, put to Johanna, a pure short-horn,—she also produced a bull calf. This grandson of Bolingbroke was the sire of the cow, Lady, by another pure short horned dam, and from Lady has sprung the highly valuable family of improved short horns, termed, in reproach, the alloy. How far the alloy was derogatory, let facts testify.\*

It will probably be admitted that the prejudice against this cross was at the highest at the time of Mr. Charles Colling's sale.—The blood had then been little if at all, introduced to other stocks, and it was manifestly the interest, whatever might be the inclination, of the many breeders who had it not to assume high ground for the pure blood, and to depreciate the alloy. Under these untoward circumstances for the alloy, what said public opinion, unequivocally certified by the stroke of the auctioneers hammer? Lady, before mentioned at fourteen years old, sold for two hundred and six guineas. Countess, her daughter, nine years old for four hundred guineas. Laura, another daughter four years old, for two hundred and ten guineas. Major and George, two of her sons, the former three years old, the latter a calf, for two hundred guineas and one hundred and thirty; beside a number of others, more remotely descended from Lady, which all sold at high prices in fact, in a sale of forty-eight lots, realizing £7115 17s. Lady and her descendants sold for a larger sum than any other family obtained.

As a specimen of the alloy, the reader is referred to Mr. Berry's cow. She gives a moderate quantity of particularly rich milk.

It would answer no useful purpose, and would certainly be an objectionable course, to bring under particular notice any one or more of the highly valuable stocks of improved short horns of the present day. To enumerate all would be impossible; and the writer of this account would most studiously avoid any partial or invidious comparison. The same objection does not, however exist as to a remote period; and it is but justice to state that Mr. Robert Colling, brother of Mr. Charles, (who certainly was the leader, and surpassed all competitors in the improvement of the short horns,) Mr. Charge of Newton, near Darlington, and Mr. Mason, of Chilton, in the county of Durham, were only second to Mr. Charles Colling in his interesting and useful pursuit. Mr. Mason started early with animals derived, it is believed, from Mr. Colling, in the very commencement of his career; and Mr. Charge, who had long possessed a most valuable stock of Teeswater cattle, had at an early period crossed them with Mr. Colling's best bulls, and was one of the spirited purchasers of Comet, at a thousand guineas. Mr. Mason's late successful sale sufficiently stamps the value of his stock at that period, but it is generally admitted, the system of crossing with other herds, which he had of late years judiciously adopted, proved highly instrumental in restoring those qualities in his own, which too close breeding had in some degree threatened to deprive them of.

It would be unfair, on this occasion, to omit mention of a veteran breeder, to whom the advocates for the preservation of pedigree are indebted for the Short Horn Herd Book—Mr. George Coates. He is now one of the oldest authorities on the subject in existence, and was once the possessor of a very superior race of short horns, though somewhat coarse. Portraits have been preserved of some very fine animals bred by him; and he had the solid satisfaction to dispose of his bull Patriot for five hundred guineas.

Mr. Coates fell into an error, but too common, and generally equally fatal: he fancied his own stock the best, and disdained to cross them with Mr. Colling's; which, as others afterwards proved, would have been a most judicious proceeding. The consequence was, Mr. Colling's sale having settled the public judgment and taste, Mr. Coates' stock fell into disrepute. If an apology be requisite for this statement of an undamable fact, it will be found in the utility of holding up such an example as a caution to those who may be in danger of falling into a similar error.

In the commencement of this account,

\*The dam of Lady was also the dam of the bull Favorite; and as the grandson of Bolingbroke is not known to have been the sire of any other remarkably good animal, it is most probable the unquestionable merit of Lady and her descendants is to be attributed more to her dam than to her sire.—Editor.

however it was stated that they possess a combination of qualities; hitherto considered incompatible. It will be obvious that the disposition to feed rapidly, in union with dairy qualifications, is here intended.

It might have the appearance of an intention to depreciate other breeds of cattle, were an inquiry instituted how the very general impression came to be entertained that animals disposed to fatten rapidly seldom give much milk. It is unquestionably true, that every perfection in cattle—whether it be one of form, of quality of flesh, of disposition to fatten, or to yield milk—can be promoted and retained solely by the breeder's devoted attention to his particular object; and if one object be allowed a paramount importance in the breeder's estimation and practice, other objects will suffer in proportion as they are neglected.

The improvement in the carcass of the short horns has been so surprising, and so justly valued, that many persons have allowed that completely to occupy their attention, and the dairy has been disregarded.—In such a state of things, every advance towards one point has been tantamount to receding from another; because the same proceeding which tends to enhance a particular quality, will also enhance a defect, provided such defect, was of previous existence.

This may be rendered more intelligible by a short illustration. Suppose half a dozen animals to be selected in consequence of their possessing a particular quality; which quality it is proposed, on a certain established principle of breeding, to increase and render almost permanent by their union. Suppose the animals so selected to come from the hands of breeders who have neglected the milking property; the certain consequence will be, that the very union which develops and secures the desired object will tend, on the same principle, to increase the defect as to milk. In short, it will render it habitual in the produce. But this illustration, by a selection, is supposing too much for the probable state of the case. The objections which exist among breeders, for various and some cogent reasons, against crossing with the stocks of each other, unavoidably lead to the practice of breeding in and in; which, in case of any original deficiency of the milking property, must unquestionably go on to render that deficiency greater. It is hence evident that bad milking, in a breed of animals which were ever distinguished as good milkers, is not a necessary consequence of improvement in the animal in other respects, but a consequence of the manner in which such improvement is pursued.

This the writer considers to be the reasoning properly applicable to the subject; which happily also admits of a satisfactory appeal to facts; and he is strictly justified in asserting that improved short horns, inferior to none for the grazier, may always be selected and bred with the most valuable dairy properties. Perhaps a more plentiful and steady milk than the dam of Mr. Berry's bull, never stood over a pail, and few such carcasses of beef have been exhibited as hers, when an accident rendered it requisite to only half feed her. The bull himself has an extraordinary disposition to carry flesh, and his calves are let down in the udders like miniature cows. In fact, all the bull's family are excellent for the pail, and the quickest possible feeders. The writer has known many instances of the highest bred short horns giving upwards of four gallons (wine measure) of milk, night and morning; and it is certain that attention only is requisite, on the part of the breeder, to perpetuate this quality in any desirable extent. While on this subject, it is proper to observe, that the excessive quantities of milk obtained from the unimproved short horns are seldom or ever obtained from the improved; but a moderately good milk of the latter kind will be found to yield as much butter in the week, as one of the former: the milk being unquestionably of very superior quality; and indeed, it was likely such should be the case, and that the artificial change in the animal economy, which leads to an excessive secretion of flesh and fat, should also be productive of other rich secretions. Within the last three or four years, affidavits were sworn before a magistrate in America, that an improved short horned cow, imported thither, produced after the rate of 20 lb. of butter per week.

Whatever the improved short horns have been crossed with other cattle, their superiority is equally manifest, in respect of dairy qualifications, as in every other. On this subject the writer is able to avail himself of the evidence of a gentleman who has addressed a communication on the subject to the conductor of the British Farmer's Magazine, which is so pertinent to the present subject that the temptation to take an extract is irresistible. It is as follows: "In the 27th number of your valuable magazine, when giving an account of my two years' old steer, you also give an extract from my letter on the advantages of crossing cows of different breeds with improved short horn bulls; and in confirmation of this opinion, (not hastily adopted, but the result of several years practical experience, and a close attention to the experiments of several friends during the last seventeen years,) I send you the portrait and a short account of a two year old Durham and Devon heifer of mine, lately slaughtered by Mr. William Daniel, of Abergavenny, and accompany it with a few brief statements of the advantages derived from this system by several of my own personal friends.

"This heifer was the second cross, and was of a light gray color. She weighed 35

scores and 8 lb.; rough fat, 98 lb.; she was allowed to be the fattest and best beast of her age, in all points, ever seen in Abergavenny. She had a dead calf about six weeks before Christmas; was dried the 17th of January, and killed the 10th of June. She sold for £19 3s. 6d.

"Her live weight, on the 8th of June, was . . . 1232 lbs.  
Ditto, on the 17th January . . . 840

Increase in 140 days . . . 392

"Being aware that strong prejudice and much incredulity existed on the subject of crossing, I courted the attention of all the respectable farmers, breeders, and feeders in this neighborhood. Many came to see her when first up, and repeatedly afterwards during the five months she was feeding; and they all concurred in saying she went on faster than any beast they had ever seen. She never had any oil-cake.

"I have seen many excellent beasts bred from improved short horn bulls and lung horn cows; indeed I never knew one of these bulls put to any cow, where the produce was not superior to the dam; but the cross which I advocate, and with which I am best acquainted, is that with the Devon cow. I have uniformly remarked, that each succeeding cross was attended with a proportionate improvement in size, quality of flesh, and aptitude to fatten. In every instance they have shown themselves superior milkers, and stand to the pail till within six or eight weeks of calving; and several instances have come under my own knowledge where they have never been dry since they first calved; and so highly are they prized as milkers, that a friend of mine, who hired out dairies, informed me that the dairymen gave him nearly 2l. per cow per year more for the half and three-quarter breeds, than they would give for cows of other breeds.

"A friend of mine had about a dozen North Devon cows, small in size, but nice in quality, and from these he commenced, about twenty years since, breeding with short horn bulls. He has since invariably used those bulls. With each succeeding cross the stock have rapidly improved in every essential, and the only trace of the Devons which I could perceive when I last saw them, about two years since, was a peculiar richness in their color. He breeds about thirty annually, and generally sells his three years old, in the autumn, at £17 to £22; and I have known him to sell in calf heifers to jobbers in fairs as high as 30 guineas each. All his stock are superior milkers. Here we have twenty years experiment and continued improvement.

"Within the last eight years I have sent many North Devon heifers to Ireland, to friends residing in different counties, and some of them occupying land of very inferior quality. I also sent over two young Durham bulls, from the stock of the Rev. Henry Berry, to cross them with. They have all crossed them with short horn bulls at my recommendation, and the accounts they give are most satisfactory. They say the two years old half bred are as good as the three years old Devons, and are all good milkers. One of these bulls, by Mr. Berry's Mynter, has been four times exhibited in three different counties, and has each time taken the first prize. He was last year sold for 60 guineas, and is now serving cows at £1 each.

C. H. BOLTON.  
"Brandy near Abergavenny."  
An opinion generally prevails that the short horns are unfitted for work; and in some respects it is admitted they are so; but the correct reason has not been assigned, and the question may fairly come briefly under notice. That they are willing and able to work, the writer knows, from one in particular among many instances. He has now a team of two years old steers, working constantly nine hours a day; a system he would by no means recommend, and forced on him by circumstances connected with entrance on a new farm, at present ill adapted to grazing cattle. They work admirably; but surely cattle which, as the preceding account proves, will go as profitably to the butcher at two years old as any other breed at three, as many even as at four, ought never, as a general rule, to be placed in the yoke. No beast in the present advanced state of breeding, ought to be put upon a system which arose out of the necessity of obtaining compensation for work for the loss attending a tardy maturity. But where it may be convenient, the short horns, particularly the bulls, work admirably, as their great docility promises; and there are many operations going on in every farm which a bull would be judiciously employed in performing. And as the bulls of this breed are apt to become useless, from acquiring too much flesh in a state of confinement, moderate work might, in most cases, prove beneficial for such as are intended for use at home.

With deference, however, it is submitted to the breeders of short horns that they should avoid breeding from too close affinities, and while they steer clear of coarseness, should require a sufficiency of masculine character in their males. Lord Althorp first adopted the short horns in 1818, when he purchased the bull Regent at Mr. R. Colling's sale, with several of that gentleman's cows; and since that time his lordship has been unremitting in his attempts to improve the breed. The bull Firby is good in almost every point. His flanks, loins, hips, and bosom are excellent. His only failing is in the crop; yet we are told by his lordship's very intelligent steward,

"The dam of Lady was also the dam of the bull Favorite; and as the grandson of Bolingbroke is not known to have been the sire of any other remarkably good animal, it is most probable the unquestionable merit of Lady and her descendants is to be attributed more to her dam than to her sire.—Editor.