

Although by the aid of careful selection the near interbreeding of sheep may be long continued without any manifest evil, yet it has often been the practice with farmers to cross distinct breeds to obtain animals for the butcher, which plainly shows that good of some kind is derived from this practice. We have excellent evidence on this head from Mr. S. Druce,¹⁴ who gives in detail the comparative numbers of four pure breeds and of a cross-breed which can be supported on the same ground, and he gives their produce in fleece and carcase. A high authority, Mr. Pusey, sums up the result in money value during an equal length of time, namely (neglecting shillings), for Cotswolds 248*l.*, for Leicesters 223*l.*, for Southdowns 204*l.*, for Hampshire Downs 264*l.*, and for the cross-bred 293*l.* A former celebrated breeder, Lord Somerville, states that his half-breeds from Ryelands and Spanish sheep were larger animals than either the pure Ryelands or pure Spanish sheep. Mr. Spooner concludes his excellent Essay on Crossing by asserting that there is a pecuniary advantage in judicious cross-breeding, especially when the male is larger than the female.¹⁵

As some of our British parks are ancient, it occurred to me that there must have been long-continued close interbreeding with the fallow-deer (*Cervus dama*) kept in them; but on inquiry I find that it is a common practice to infuse new blood by procuring bucks from other parks. Mr. Shirley,¹⁶ who has carefully studied the management of deer, admits that in some parks there has been no admixture of foreign blood from a time beyond the memory of man. But he concludes "that in the end the constant breeding in-and-in" "is sure to tell to the disadvantage of the whole herd, though it" "may take a very long time to prove it; moreover, when we find," "as is very constantly the case, that the introduction of fresh blood" "has been of the very greatest use to deer, both by improving their" "size and appearance, and particularly by being of service in re-" "moving the taint of 'rickback,' if not of other diseases, to which" "deer are sometimes subject when the blood has not been changed," "there can, I think, be no doubt but that a judicious cross with a" "good stock is of the greatest consequence, and is indeed essential," "sooner or later, to the prosperity of every well-ordered park."

Mr. Meynell's famous foxhounds have been adduced, as showing that no ill effects follow from close interbreeding; and Sir J. Sebright ascertained from him that he frequently bred from father and daughter, mother and son, and sometimes even from brothers and sisters. With greyhounds also there has been much close interbreeding, but the best breeders agree that it may be carried

¹⁴ 'Journal R. Agricult. Soc.,' vol. xiv., 1853, p. 212.

¹⁵ Lord Somerville, 'Facts on Sheep and Husbandry,' p. 6. Mr. Spooner, in 'Journal of Royal Agricult. Soc. of England,' vol. xx. part

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¹⁶ 'Some Account of English Deer Parks,' by Evelyn P. Shirley, 1867.