



# Bodleian Libraries

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

This book is part of the collection held by the Bodleian Libraries and scanned by Google, Inc. for the Google Books Library Project.

For more information see:

<http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/dbooks>



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.0 UK: England & Wales (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0) licence.



A  
REFLECTIVE LETTER  
ADDRESSED TO  
THE NOBLEMEN AND GENTLEMEN  
CONSTITUTING THE  
Presidency and Committee  
OF THE  
"ROYAL AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY  
OF  
ENGLAND."

---

"The righteous man regardeth the life of his beast."—PROV. xii. 10.

"And who but *wishes* to invert the laws  
Of order, *sins* against the ETERNAL CAUSE!"—POPE.

---

BY  
THE REV. HENRY COLE, B.D.,  
OF CLARE-HALL, CAMBRIDGE,  
AND SUNDAY EVENING LECTURER OF ST. MARY SOMERSET,  
UPPER THAMES-STREET, LONDON.

LONDON:  
SEELEYS, FLEET-STREET, AND HANOVER-STREET.  
WERTHEIM AND MACINTOSH, 24, PATERNOSTER-RROW.

1852.

PRICE TWOPENCE.



BUT for the educational engagements of the Author, which have been peculiarly heavy of late, the following few pages would have appeared some weeks ago. They were sent to the printer according to their date. They are not written by a pretender to agricultural, or grazial science; but by a reflective and concerned witness of the violation of every law of humanity, mercy, nature, and religion, in the present system of fattening animals for exhibition and consumption! —May the Reflections be blessed to the end for which they are designed!



## NOBLEMEN AND GENTLEMEN,

BEING on a restorative visit to Brighton, I went, on Thursday, 15th ult., quite unexpectedly, to see the Cattle Show of the "Royal Agricultural Society of England," held at Lewes; a sight I had never before witnessed. And being a particular lover of all animals, as the works of the Great Creator, I expected a day of unusual gratification and delight. I was gratified and delighted. But I am grieved to confess, that those pleasurable enjoyments, were far more than counterbalanced, by feelings—of the deepest pain,—of pitying disgust,—and of utter amazement.

My pain arose from witnessing animals (particularly the swine and the sheep) unable to stand, and scarcely able to move or breathe, from the state of overwhelming and torturing obesity, to which they had been unnaturally forced. I felt my whole

human nature recoil with pity and disgust, at the swollen, distorted, and disfigured bodies of these swooning creatures ; whose frames retained scarcely one trace of the form they were designed, by nature, to wear. And these deeply pained feelings were accompanied with an astonishment, that an extensive and important body, like that of the "Royal Agricultural Society of England," could so far lose, or pervert, its scientific object, (or what ought to be its scientific object), as thus to violate every law of humanity, of nature, and of creation.

The horses and the oxen (to except one or two perverted cases of the latter) were admirable in condition, beautiful in form, or in magnitude, and most perfect in health. The fowls, also, were rare, exceedingly handsome, and quite healthful. But the state and condition of the sheep and swine (I allude in particular to the unfortunate prize (!) animals) were, beyond all description, painful, to a right-minded and thoughtful beholder.

The pitiable swine were so distorted by swollen obesity, that the shape of their heads (as swine), to except the extreme nostril circle, could not possibly be traced. And, as to the eye,—it was utterly hidden by large lumps of overlaying fat ; which, it appears,



had rendered them utterly blind, for several of the last weeks of their inhuman pinguition. While other parts of their distorted and tortured bodies, were rendered so offensively misshapen, that language must not attempt to convey, to a general Reader, a semblance of the reality of the sight.

Nor could one of the unhappy prize pigs, or of those exhibited to contest the prize, *stand* for one moment. And, if punished by being partially raised, to gratify the brutish curiosity of a few, they laid themselves down, or rather fell down, immediately. And it appears, that several died in their cart-conveyance to the scene of this cruel and unchristian exhibition. While the statistics of this wretched system, if attainable, would, I have heard, prove, that 10 per cent. of these devoted victims, die under the surfeiting process to which they are subjected.

The naturally beauteous, innocent, abstemious sheep, were equally perverted and distorted from all the laws and purposes of their creation. Not one of the prize sheep (!) could stand, naturally, for a moment. And when forced or lifted up, (as the miserable swine occasionally were,) to gratify, here

and there, the insensate curious; they dropped down, immediately, to their recumbent position, in panting and gasping efforts to breathe.

Now, will any member of the Committee of the "Royal Agricultural Society of England," inform the nation of England, what real *utility* is derivable from such open and evident violations of the natures and designs of these creatures of God?

I was careful, on the (to me) memorable occasion, in question, to wait near the pens of several of the suffering animals, until some 8, or 10, or 12, agricultural gentlemen (as I supposed them to be) had gathered round them. When thus collected, I said, audibly and pointedly, "Will any gentleman present, tell me the *utility* of thus torturing and perverting the natures of these suffering animals?"—To this inquiry, some half-dozen times repeated, in different parts of the show-ground, I received not *one* answer! Silence and a general feeling of self-condemning shame, were the only responses I witnessed! We therefore await the solution of this painful problem, from the pen of a competent member of the Committee of the Society. And if such a system cannot be justified on scientific, natural, or scriptural grounds, the evident conclu-

sion is, that it is not only unscientific, and unnatural,—but wicked !

I had the pleasure of sitting at table, on this same day, with an individual of great respectability, as a country gentleman, and an agriculturist ; and also, a prizeman of 1851. This gentleman acknowledged, with candid self-regret, that my sentiments and views were perfectly correct ; while I, on my part, assured him I should publish them. Nor have I the least doubt that, in the issue of this reflective Discussion, the greater part of the members of the “ Society ” will entertain the same rightful sentiments ; and that, within three years from the present time, this fundamental *wrong* will be *righted*.—Of the sentiments and feelings of the *nation at large*, no doubt whatever can exist.

The principal argument by which this shocking perversion of the natures of these irrational creatures is justified, is, I believe, that such exhibitions are intended as *scientific proofs* of the voracious and fattening propensities and properties of these animals.

If such be the nature of the *hog*, it certainly is *not* the nature of the *sheep*. The sheep is not

a gluttonous or voracious creature. A sheep would never, naturally, eat itself to obesity and death. Nor would the ox. No! nor would even the hog. And if there be a greater propensity in swine to feed to excess; it is not the province of man, nor the law, nor the right of his creation, so to entice, and indulge, and augment that propensity, as to surfeit those creatures, to distortion, pain, and death.—But we will leave it to the promoters and supporters of this preposterous system, to adduce their own arguments in its justification; it will then be seen, on what *grounds* that justification stands!\*

\* Since these pages were sent to the press, the Author has been informed, by credible and provable authority, that in some, if not many, or very many, instances, these abused creatures are betrayed into an unnatural *inclination to eat*, by the horrible invention of incarcerating them in closed stalls, and excluding from them every ray of the light of heaven, for weeks and months together; that, being thus deprived of all the blessings of the day, which they were created to enjoy, and consigned to perpetual night, they may be induced, by their divinely given instinct, to make up their happiness, or endure their existence, by *eating*, and sleeping, only!—If this be not an appalling abuse of the “dominion” which God gave man over the beasts of the field, the writer knows not, what is!

As a humble common-sense defender of all animals, I should think, that the object of true science should be, to elevate the breed, magnitude, symmetry, and beauty of the creature, to a more and more advanced state of perfection.

In accordance with this (I consider accurate) view of the matter,—I never heard of horses or dogs, or any other animals, being fattened to obesity and death, in order to elevate *their* breed, beauty, strength, or excellence.

It may be answered, that horses and dogs, &c., are not *eatable* animals.

To this it may be replied,—what then is gained?—what true science is advanced?—what utility or benefit is derived? from obesely and mortally fattening animals beyond the powers and possibilities either of *procreation*, or *consumption*?

Magnitude, muscle, beauty, symmetry, perfect health, in all its capabilities of action and enjoyment, are the true standards of animal-raising philosophy, whether those animals be designed for labour, or for consumption. And the pretender to animal economy, who loses sight of these cardinal points, in rearing animals, whether for toil, or for food, is no philosopher at all; but a

misguided perverter of all the plainest principles of natural philosophy; and an unjustifiable detortor of creatures from the glorious designs of their creation.

The nation's judgment, however, will be duly exercised, and their decision formed, upon the *right* and the *wrong* of this Discussion, if, (as we have intimated,) any member or members of the Committee of the "Royal Agricultural Society" will favour the British public with direct answers to *three specific points*; to which they will, in honour of the Creator, and in mercy to the creature, be called upon, at the termination of this Discussion, to respond.

Nor should it be *forgotten*, that the whole body of our reflections applies, with equal propriety and force, to the Annual Smithfield Cattle Show.—Animals are there also exhibited, forced into a state of unnatural, deformed, and dying obesity! And for *what utility*?—The animal is in that state of surfeit and disease, that it must die very shortly, if not slaughtered immediately. And when slaughtered, no human beings can eat one tenth of its produce. By far the greater part must be consigned to the vat of the tallow-chandler. And I think no compe-

tent medical judge would pronounce the lean of an animal, thus morbid before death, to be equally fit for human food, with the flesh of an animal slaughtered in health. Perhaps the pen that shall essay to justify the former insufferable system, will favour the British public with a justification of the latter.

As to a REMEDY for this crying national error,—there is, I think, one, immediately at hand ;—plain, natural, and effectual !

Let it be specifically understood, as the great *principle* of judgment, committed into the hands of chosen competent adjudicators,—that their decision of excellence, and their awardment of the PRIZES, shall *turn*, not upon the greatest obesity and distorted fatness of the animal, but upon the greatest size (with symmetry) and fatness of the animal, *in connexion with* PERFECT HEALTH and ACTION !! Let health and action be the *bases*, and *turning points* of the decision.—That will be *true science*,—true humanity ! That will be a decision worthy the “Royal Agricultural Society of England !” But, to give a prize of 20*l.* to the person who can, against nature, force a creature to the greatest state of obesity, unmoveableness, pain, torture, and

death, is militant against every law of nature, and of revelation.

Let the highest and graduated prizes be *denied* to every Exhibitor, whose specimen animal shall fall short of *perfect health*, and *perfect action*:—then, we shall have no more such painfully and pitifully tortured and perverted works of the Creator, either at the Midsummer Exhibitions of the Counties, or at the Christmas Shows of Smithfield.—All will then be scientific, laudable, justifiable, right.—But never, till then.

That the important and serious subject-point may not be diverted, and that valuable time may not be *lost*, I would now, in conclusion, admonish the responding defender of these procedures of the “Royal Agricultural Society,” that the humane and Christian public will expect from him proofs of the following *three points*:—

1. That thus to force the creatures of God to obesity and death, is an object of *true science*, in the pursuits of the Society.

2. That there is a correspondent *utility* derivable from such an inhuman and unchristian system;—and

3. That such a perversion and violation of all



the laws and purposes of the creation, are *justifiable*, and, *the right of man*.

Trusting that the result will be, an acknowledgment of its monstrous error, by the "Royal Agricultural Society of England;" and that the stain of so great a disgrace (and, doubtless, wickedness,) may be speedily wiped away from us, as a humane and Christian nation,

I am,

Noblemen and Gentlemen,

Your very faithful servant,

HENRY COLE.

39, *Highbury-place, London,*

*July 21, 1852.*