

the same size and of the same disposition, and were as well matched a team, all things considered, I think, as can be found in Canada, and were prize-takers every year since they were foaled, having taken fourteen first prizes by the time that one was two and the other three years old. They had never been beaten previously, and have since taken prizes every year as a draught team, taking first prize four years at Peninsular Fair at Chatham, and beat the team that took first at London in 1883 four different times, twice when the latter only got third. They were about a hand higher and four hundred pounds heavier than the mare and colt, being 3,600 lbs. in weight, and so much superior in looks that it is no wonder it caused a good deal of comment among the spectators, as was stated. Then to add insult to injury, he says one of the other team was slightly unsound. And right here I would say I am willing to allow any veterinary surgeon to examine them, and if he pronounces either of them unsound in any way or says they are not a better team than the team they gave the prize to, I will then acknowledge that I am not a judge of a sound horse or a draught team. But I still claim that there is no two-year-old colt, no matter how well matured, can fill a place in a draught team, for a draught team ought to be able to do any kind of heavy work. And if a horse buyer comes from the States here to buy horses for draught work, he will pay twenty-five per cent. more for a horse that is eight years old than he will for a two-year-old colt; and the reason he will give you is, that nearly one half of the colts become unsound if put to hard work before they attain the status of a horse at all, and have to be sold at a loss, as they are then unfit for hard work, while the aged horse goes on and earns his price with a good margin for profit. When I bought these same mares, one at two and the other at three years old, I bought them very much cheaper than I could have done had they been matured horses, although they weighed then on Bowmanville market scales 3,250 lbs. Mr. Robert Beith, in looking them over in my own stable three years afterwards pronounced them worth eight hundred dollars, just twice the amount paid for them when two and three years old. I have taken prizes on horses in each and every year since 1866, and on as many as six, seven and eight horses, different years, at the county fair at Chatham, that is, on all the horses I then owned, and I exhibited ten horses and colts at East Kent fall fair in 1886, and took a prize on each of them. This was the first time I ever refused to accept the award of the judges; and had I considered it at all reasonable judgment given, I would then have been willing to accept the award of the judges.

I do not believe in controversy through the public press, but I considered it my duty to reply to the letter referred to, as I considered it was a little too personal. Hoping I have not trespassed on your space in the length of my reply, I would ask, was the action a just one?

Blenheim, Ont.

E. B. TOLE.

For the CANADIAN LIVE-STOCK AND FARM JOURNAL.

The Shire Horse.

(First Paper.)

The origin of this breed, the foundation of all heavy draught horses, is lost in the vista of time. One of the earliest accounts we have of England is given by Julius Cæsar, and there must have been an immense number of horses in the country at that time, as in his *de bello Gallico, Liber v.*, he mentions that "Cassioellannus, one of the British chiefs, after his defeat on the Thames by Cæsar, sent away the greater part of his forces, having given up all hopes of making a successful stand against the Romans, but retained about 4,000 chariots for the purpose of harrassing them." Cæsar, however, gives no description of the horses themselves, but they must necessarily have been possessed of considerable strength and size to have drawn the heavy chariots over a country densely wooded and destitute of roads. Youatt is evidently of opinion that a heavy breed of horses was existent at that time. There is, however, direct evidence of the existence of such a breed in the reign of Henry II. FitzStephen, who lived at that time, in giving

an account of a horse market held at Smithfield, expressly mentions "horses for the cart, dray, and plough are to be found here," showing that at that period there were animals suited for the purposes of heavy draught. In Henry the Eighth's reign it will be found that particular attention was directed to the raising and breeding of strong horses, and laws were passed specially with that object. To secure the strength and size desired it was thought necessary to select sires and dams of a certain size and mould; and mares and stallions were only permitted to breed under certain restrictions, so in the year 1541 (32 Henry VIII., cap. 13), it was enacted "That no person should put in any forest, chase, moor, heath, common or waste (where mares and fillies are used to be kept), any entire horse above the age of two years not being 15 hands high, within the shires and territories of Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridge, Buckingham, Huntingdon, Essex, Kent, South Hampshire, North Wiltshire, Oxford, Berkshire, Worcester, Gloucester, Somerset, South Wales, Bedford Warwick, Southampton, Yorkshire, Cheshire, Staffordshire, Lancashire, Salop, Leicester, Hereford, and Lincoln." This statute served to build up what has since come to be called the breed of the Shire Horse, and was passed in order to obtain a larger and more powerful breed of horses for the purposes of war, to carry knights in heavy armor for tournaments, etc., and for the various pageants which formed a part of all grand State solemnities, as well as for cavalry and military purposes. Blundeville, who lived in the reign of Elizabeth, describes the majority of horses at that time as being "strong, sturdy beasts, fit only for slow draught." There are also still in existence a few old standard works which make reference to a distinct breed of English cart horse, notably a work by the Duke of Newcastle, published in 1658, entitled "The manner of feeding, dressing and training of horses for the great saddle, and fitting him for the service in the field in time of war, etc." which make mention of the "cart horse," and when Arthur Young wrote his work in the latter part of the last century describing his tours through the counties of England and Scotland, he mentions only two varieties of cart horses as deserving attention—Shire horses, the produce principally of the Shire counties in the heart of England, and the sorrel-colored Suffolk Punch, for which the sandy tract of country near Woodbridge is famous. King John imported 100 stallions of the Flemish breed, and these were probably crossed with some of the heavy native breed, to what extent it is of course impossible to say, but the results were presumably not a success, as a German merchant, who had imported some Flanders horses on a speculation, besought and obtained special permission from Edward III to re-export them, the exportation of horses at that time being strictly prohibited. At a later period another infusion of Flemish blood was tried, but for the last hundred years the Shire breed has been preserved free from intermixture with other breeds, or indeed with any alien blood whatever. The Shire horse, or the Black Cart Horse, as he was formerly called, has always been highly esteemed in England, especially in the counties of Leicester, Northampton and Lincoln, and the neighboring shires, where, such was the pride some men took in their teams, that there is a record of an old agreement by which the farmers in the parish of Dimmeswold in Leicestershire, bound themselves not to use mares; and some with a laudable disdain of the gelding, only employed stallions. Cully, speaking of this, says, "The vanity of the farmers in the south in regard to their teams is most extraordinary. I have in

Berkshire and the neighborhood several times met a narrow-wheeled wagon with six stallions, one before another, the first horse, besides having on a huge bridle covered with fringe and tassels enough to half load a common Yorkshire cart horse, has six bells hung to it, the next five, and so on to the last which has only one. And it is really diverting to see with what a conceited air the driver struts and brandishes his long whip." The prevailing colors of Shire stallions living in the first quarter of the present century were black, brown and grey, the black predominating over the other colors, so much so that the Eastern Counties horse was known as the Black Lincolnshire Horse. In Staffordshire the prevailing color was brown, and grey horses appear to have been common in counties south of Derbyshire and Staffordshire. It is only within recent years that the Shire horse has obtained a world-wide reputation. The want of, or rather the little known title of the "old English Black Horse" has led uninitiated breeders and buyers for export to believe that an un-named animal could not possibly be pure-bred. In the year 1878 the English Cart Horse Society was established, and from that date the breed began its still increasing popularity in every quarter of the globe. In 1880 the society held their first show, which has been held annually ever since with increasing success. In the same year the first volume of the stud book was published. In the discussion as to the title, a considerable number of the members being opposed to the adoption of the appellation "Shire Horse," it was resolved to leave it to the option of individual owners to use the term or not. The society changed its name in 1884 and took the title of the "Shire Horse Society," established to promote the old English breed of cart horses. In 1885 the society wisely decided that all horses selected for honors at their annual shows should undergo a more searching and complete inspection than had previously been adopted, and that this important duty should be relegated to a jury of not less than three qualified veterinary surgeons, one of whom should hold or have held a distinguished position at one of the veterinary schools, the other two to be selected by the council of the society from four veterinary practitioners of eminence, to be nominated by the professor so chosen. By this means the Shires are rapidly being cleared of sidebones, ringbones and other diseased forms of hereditary unsoundness. The Shire horse varies very much in size, style and character, in the different counties of England, occasioned no doubt by the nature of the soil and food and the requirements of the different localities: the heaviest dray horses being bred in the fens of Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire and Lincolnshire. Black, bay and brown are the prevailing colors of the Shire horse of the present day, the two latter colors being the most popular with importers to this continent, though there are many chestnuts, greys and roans, the last being a great favorite with draymen both in Liverpool and London.

For the selection of breeding animals Mr. G. M. Sexton gives the following definition of a Shire stallion: "There are few points of greater importance than his feet; they should be rather large than small, the sole concave, the hoof black. The forelegs should stand straight, neither turning inwards or outwards. The natural position of the toe should be immediately underneath the point of the shoulder. The forelegs to the knee should possess well-developed muscles projecting considerably at the forearm, which should be moderately long to give good walking action. The knees and fetlocks should be large and flat; the pastern joints moderately long and gradually expanding in an