

THE HORSE.

[*Extract. R. L. Denison, of the Volunteer Battery, of Artillery, Toronto, in a talk following a meeting of the Horse Society, at the Hotel de Ville, on the 11th of October, 1881. The subject was "The Horse," and the speaker was Mr. R. L. Denison. We commend it to our readers.*—*The Editor.*]

At the request of the Club, I promised a paper upon the Horse, which promise I the more regret, since I find my utter inability to do that most noble of all animals justice, or indeed anything like justice. But if it were in my power to convey to you in a word, my love and admiration of that noble animal, then, indeed, would he have justice done him.

Claiming the indulgence of the Club, I give you such a paper as I have been able to prepare. The Horse has been almost my daily companion since I was ten years of age, at which time I was allowed by my father the use of an old and favorite blood mare, the great grandaunt of the carriage horses Mrs. Denison, of Bellevue, now drives. From the time I have mentioned till now, I have always had one horse which I considered my pet amongst animals, and raising above all others, the term. My brothers also had each his own horse or pony, as they were able to ride or manage one; from then till now we have never been without horses, and this, I think, is to be attributed, in a great measure, to the affection they formed for them in our youth. I intend to practice the same with all my boys, and do so now with the eldest, and trust that they may always be the friends and admirers of that noble beast; indeed, like my father and grandfather before me, I think it part of the education of a gentleman to be a good horseman, and have a knowledge of the diseases and treatment of the horse, and be able to select, when required, a good and valuable one, that fits the eye, free from blemish; and also to be judge enough to come pretty near his age, which is more necessary in a country like this, where horse jockeys and traders are so keen and cunning; and, besides all this, it is really pleasant to understand and know a good horse, and to feel that the horse himself can appreciate every kind of treatment, whether good or bad. How often have I seen a horse shrink from one that had treated him unkindly, flying from him when he could, and trembling in the stable; whilst on the other hand, pawing and neighing to acknowledge a kind master's presence, and turning a beautiful and intelligent eye and ear upon him. You all say, "from the nobleman, with his numerous and valuable stud, to the mearest helper in the stable, there is scarcely a man who would not be offended if he were thought altogether ignorant of horse flesh. There is no subject upon which he is so positive, there is no subject on which, generally speaking, he is so deficient; and there are few horses, on some points, of which these self-sufficient judges would not give a totally different opinion." My second horse was given me when I was 13 or 14 years old, she was a filly of the get of Sultan, a celebrated Arabian stallion, imported into this country by Col. Smith, about the beginning of this century; he was the pre-eminent of the best road horses ever owned in this district, and I say this without fear of contradiction. The filly was named "Milkmaid," by my Grandmother Denison, after an old and favorite mare she rode in England, years gone by. Milkmaid I rode and drove for more than twenty years, always, as they say in racing language, placing me well upon all trials, and never surpassed in endurance. During

her long life she never took medicine or was bled; indeed was never sick or lame, nor so far used up as to require whip or spur, though I have driven her in a rather heavy 90 miles in a day. My present Milkmaid is her daughter, (by Cadmus) inheriting the same constitution and indomitable spirit of her dam, and able to do her mile considerably under three minutes, it was in the winter of 'two forty."

The Horse is universally known and is generally liked, more useful, obedient, intelligent and beautiful than any quadruped bestowed by kind providence upon man. In gracefulness of form, and dignity of carriage, he is superior to almost every other animal, he is lively and high spirited, yet gentle and tractable, keen and ardent in his exertions, yet firm and persevering. The horse is equally qualified for all the various purposes in which man has employed him, he works steadily and patiently in the loaded waggon, or at the plough, becomes as much excited as his master in the race, and appears to rejoice in the chase. Beside his valuable services when alive; after death his skin, hair, mane and tail are valuable, and his flesh is becoming fashionable food for man, highly prized in France by epicures; and I should not object to putake of it myself, only, however, upon the principle of the rule, that "dog won't eat dog." I suppose I have to much respect for him.

Wild horses, I believe, are to be found in all parts of the world, and in great numbers on this continent. Those to be found in the north and west which are best known to us, are of a small but hardy form, covered with shaggy coats, and not unlike the Welsh pony, suiting themselves in growth and covering to the herbage and climate they inhabit. Deane's gives upwards of twenty varieties of the horse, and his catalogue is by no means complete. The history of an animal so beautiful and valuable must necessarily be interesting.

The first allusion to the horse subsequent to the flood is a mere incidental one. This was fifteen hundred and ninety years before the birth of Christ, in the time of Isaac, when the son of Gibeon is said to have found mules in the wilderness, the progeny of the ass and the horse; as he fed the asses of that patriarch. When Jacob lay on his death bed, he called his sons around, giving them his parting blessing, and prophesied what would be their fate and character. In speaking of Dan, he said, "Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that bite the horses heels, so that his rider shall fall backward." From this it is seen that the horse was then used as a beast of burden. Job, too, spoke of the horse and his rider. Pharaoh's horsemen perished in the Red Sea. Many very beautiful and interesting anecdotes are told of the faithfulness and sagacity of the horse; often fighting for his master, and in various ways protecting his life; and frequently have I given my horse his head when I dare not trust myself to guide him. The memory of the horse is very great, especially for places. Milkmaid never forgot a place she had called at, though years had elapsed, and I have known a horse return to his birth place and former master after an absence of many years.

The most valuable horse for this country, in my opinion, is one that can not only draw a great load, but can also go at a good pace without injury to himself. For the farm horses here, are the road horses as well, as every farmer must go to mill and market, fair and church, with his farm horses, and then, unless loaded, expects his team to

carry him at the least seven or eight miles an hour, and when loaded, something above five. But in England where the roads are so good, and the waggons so strong, I should say that they were content, with the loads they carry, to make from two to two and a half miles per hour, and to plough and harrow at the same rate. Such movements would never do in this country, where wages are so high, and the farming season so short. This being the case, we must content ourselves with a less powerful, but more active horse, something in the neighborhood of sixteen hands high, with a clean flat leg and lolly carriage, sparkling eye, and lean face, thin and open jaws, and roomy nostrils. In fact, what is considered in England a good carriage horse, is the very animal we want, and in many respects have now. Indeed, the horses of this district will compare well with any I have yet seen. Of course, when I say this, I do not mean to put them in competition with the draught horses of Liverpool, London and Manchester, or with the racers of Epsom, Doncaster and Ascot.

The breeds of horses in this district, and, indeed, throughout Canada, are fast improving, thanks to a few spirited importers, such as Ward, Cooper, Blanchard, Roundtree, Crew, and many others who deserve to be named.

The stallions in this district are so deservedly well known, that they can be sold at excellent prices as soon as brought into the market, and are now taken to all parts of Canada, and many to the United States. Ward's horse, imported "Clyde," was of infinite service in increasing the size of our horses, and many stallions of his get were, in my opinion, far his superiors. At the Exhibition of the State of New York Society, held in Rochester, he and four of his sons exhibited together in a ring, were the admiration of the crowd, and the pride of the Canadians on the ground. I have attended the New York State shows for many years, and also our own, frequently as a judge of horses, and I do not consider them as any longer leading us in horses, but rather think we are heading them. To keep up this class of horses in Canada, we must continue to receive fresh importations from England, but not to run too much upon the very heavy draught horse, now so much in vogue there. A good Cleveland bay, with the well grown mares of this country, would, in my opinion, be just what we want for general purposes. Heavier horses may do for millers and lumberers, on good roads and short distances, but not for fast driving or bad roads.

Another class of horses we much need in this country is, a saddle or buggy horse; and for that purpose he should have a dash of blood, and that not a slight one; for instance, such as one bred between our mares, tolerably well off for bone and muscle, and a thoroughbred stallion.

The breeding of horses should be much increased in this district. The demand has almost outgrown the supply, notwithstanding that many thought the railroads would diminish the demand. Such will not soon be the case in this new country, where the railroads open up the wilderness for settlement, and increase the demand every day. A horse that would fetch twenty pounds before we had railroads, say four or five years ago, will now readily command fifty; and every good farm horse in the country, under ten or twelve years of age, is worth that price.

Many people are in the habit of breeding from old mares, and the common thing in this city is to sell them to country people,