

System in Horse-Breeding

Why are there so few high-class horses of any breed or class owned by farmers in any section of the Dominion? The question is easily answered by saying, "Want of system in breeding." Visit the farms of any section, and you will find pure-bred cattle at one farm, pure-bred sheep at another, pure-bred swine at another, and, doubtless, pure-bred poultry at many. In fact, at many places there will be found pure-breeds of the different classes of stock, except horses. The percentage of farmers who own even one horse that is registered, or eligible to registration, or even one high-class animal of any of the recognized classes, not necessarily pure-bred, will be found to be very low. Why is this? We answer that, in the breeding of all classes but horses the farmer has a system; he has an ideal up to which he is endeavoring to breed. He is endeavoring to improve his herd year by year, not only to keep each generation pure, but to improve the quality and individuality. He has discovered that it pays to be particular; that the better bred and the better the individual, the more money it is worth in the market, whether it be sold for breeding purposes or for food. But, in regard to horses, he has failed to appreciate these facts, not that he is not sufficiently intelligent to appreciate them, but because he has not given them the necessary thought and consideration. He, like his forefathers, apparently regards the horse simply as a means of producing power to perform certain kinds of labor. The other classes of stock are kept and bred with an idea of profit, but the horse simply as a means of performing labor, in order that food, etc., may be produced which makes it possible to sustain the others. He apparently is unmindful of the fact that it costs little more to produce, and no more to keep, a good horse than an inferior one. We think that, if from no other motive than appearance, it would be profitable to pay more attention to his horses. He takes pride in the breeding and quality of his cattle, sheep, swine, and probably poultry, and will be pleased to show these and have them admired; but, when asked about his horses, he will say, "Oh, I don't keep much in the horse line; good horses are too expensive, and I simply keep sufficient of a kind to do my work." Of course, with the man who does not breed horses, but who buys what he needs, we have no reasonable fault to find. We may deplore the fact that he has no tastes or ambitions in that line, but he is at least doing nothing directly to prevent improvement in breeding. We would also say to the man who does not care for the horse, simply sees in him something that is useful for certain purposes, views him as he does a machine, as something that is necessary about a farm, but from some cause conceives the idea that he can be bred at a profit, and decides to experiment. "Don't." A man without any particular liking for any kind of stock may, with more or less success, breed and raise other classes of stock, but the man who makes horse-breeding profitable must be a horseman. He must see in the horse something more than simply a means to an end. There are so many more points to be considered in a horse than in other classes of stock that it requires either special adaptability or special training, or both, to enable a man to have an intelligent idea of what he is endeavoring to produce. For instance, in the other classes, when we get the desirable size, conformation and quality demanded in an animal, we have all that can be produced, but in horses we must have, in addition to these, soundness, style, and the action and speed demanded in the special class or breed they represent. Hence, we claim that only he who really knows what the special horse he is intending to produce should be, can be a successful breeder.

To those who breed horses, we say, "Be systematic," stick to type, abandon the old idea that a horse is simply a horse; that a mare that, either from old age or from disease, is no longer much use for work, is good enough to breed, and that the side-road stallion, whose service fee is a few dollars or less, will produce just as good a colt as one with a long pedigree, and the characteristics of his breed well marked, and for whose services a reasonable fee is demanded.

We will not here discuss the most profitable class or breed of horses for the farmer to breed; that question is frequently discussed. We will simply say that, in our opinion, if a man who has no particular admiration for any class, but decides to commence breeding, he will be wise to breed heavy horses; but if he is essentially a light-horse man, favors the carriage horse, the

roadster or the saddle horse, by all means let him breed his favorite class. These are classes that require mature age, training and manners, in order that their value may be received for them, and the breeder will be able to obtain both pleasure and profit by giving them this training.

Whatever class the breeder decides to produce, in order to meet with reasonable success, he must have and observe system. In the first case, he must procure mares—pure-breeds, if possible, but at least those in which the desirable characteristics of the class are at least reasonably well marked. Then, of course, he should secure the services of the very best sire of the class that can be had for a reasonable stud fee. We claim that a mare, without somewhat well-marked characteristics of some class or breed, will seldom prove a profitable breeder. In other words, if a prospective breeder has a mare, and he cannot make up his mind what breed of stallion he should breed her to in order to get the best results, it will probably be wise to defer breeding operations until he can procure a mare with special characteristics. There are exceptions to this, especially in the light classes. High-class saddlers are often produced by breeding a mare of this kind to a Thoroughbred, but, with few exceptions, he is the only sire that will, with reasonable certainty, give satisfactory results when so bred, and even with him the cross should not be too violent. Probably, in heavy horses, more haphazard breeding and mixing of breeds is followed than in the light classes. Especially in these classes, if system were observed for a few generations, and the breeders refused to sell their fillies, but kept them for breeding, and sold their dams or the geldings, even for a much lower price, there would soon be a class of draft horses that could be registered; but, on account of the too constant change in the breed of sire used, either on account of convenience, or to patronize a friend who has a stallion, or on account of the size of the stud fee, or other causes (often thoughtlessness), instead of the purity of breeding being increased after generation, it becomes mongrelized. How often do we notice a man with a mare with one or more crosses of Clydesdale or Shire, breed her to a Percheron, Suffolk, or other draft horse, or vice versa. The result may be fairly satisfactory, from a serviceable work-horse standpoint; but if the produce be a filly, what about her as a breeder? If a breeder has a mare with Percheron blood, breed her to a Percheron, her filly to a Percheron, and hers again to a Percheron. With fillies with Clydesdale blood, or other blood, follow the same system. If this system were strictly adhered to, we would soon have a class of horses remarkable for their similarity and characteristics, and, in fact, which would register, and become pure-breeds. But the too-constant change of breed of sires has resulted, and if not checked, must continue to result in the production, not of cross-breeds, but of mongrels. The same arguments, of course, apply to horses of the light classes and breeds. We all know that horses are more often spoken of as classes, rather than breeds. At our horse shows or our fall exhibitions, we notice that there are few sections or classes for cattle, sheep or swine, other than for registered animals. The classes are mostly all for those of certain breeds. There are a few sections for grades of certain breeds, but these are not numerous. How about horses? Here, except in the breeding classes (and even in some of them, the carriage and roadsters, for instance), they are ranked as classes, rather than breeds. How do we account for this? Simply from the fact that horse-breeders have observed less system in breeding than the breeders of other classes of stock. It will require very thoughtful and careful breeding for a few generations of horses to change this order of things, but it can be done, and with the breeders, rests the onus of doing it; and any thoughtful man will admit that the sooner it is done, the better it will be for the horse interests of our country.

Utility Horses Wanted

EDITOR "FARMER'S ADVOCATE":

Dear Sir,—Under the heading of "The Real Draft Horse," in your issue of Feb. 10th, Mr. Armstrong says: "The draft horse of to-day must have good feet, long, sloping pasterns, nice flat bone, good straight action, keeping of the hocks together. If these are all essential points, why to-day, why not fifty years ago? Are we to gather that the Clyde of yesterday was not a draft horse? By all means the best of feet for any horse! But is a pan-shaped foot that splits except when shod, and one that requires support at the heel to keep the fetlock off the ground a

good foot? Apparently the Clyde breeders are the only ones that think so. The same applies to the long, sloping pastern. Neither the Shire, Percheron, Suffolk or Belgian men breed for this point, and we are well aware that the Percheron is, and has been, the leading horse in the States. A noted and successful Clyde breeder (I refer to Mr. Andrew Graham) writes that more Percherons are imported into Canada than Clydes. In England, the Shires and Suffolks have the monopoly.

Mr. Armstrong also says, that the ideal draft horse must have his hocks close together. How does he define cow hocks? It seems to me that a draft horse should be judged by his ability to do work, together with wearing qualities, docility, etc., and not by the silkiness of his hair, the flatness of his bone, or the length of his pastern. How long would it take to breed a two-minute trotter by theoretical rules on his conformation? The Clyde men in their case for long pasterns have neglected the body. Mr. Graham very truly remarks that legs and feet alone do not make a horse, but a better constitution and more lung and heart room must be considered.

Mr. Armstrong also writes, that the Clyde is the only horse for the west. If this is the case, why does one meet such a poor class of horse on the trails? If what the Clyde has done to improve the range horse is the best he can do after thirty years' trial, surely it is time he made way for a better. The average range horse falls short in his plain neck, poor girth, long body, and short ribs, and these are the very faults of the Clyde. Mr. Armstrong asks as to where the heavy geldings, reared on Scottish borders, find a market. Coming from the north of England myself, I am in a position to give him some information. They are chiefly half-bred Shires, and a big demand for them comes from the railway companies and other business concerns which require horses combining weight with activity. However, at the International Show in London last year, the championship was won by neither Clyde nor Shire, but Suffolks. A horse of this grand old stock has a strong, short pastern, free from feather, a good body and great activity, combined with hardiness and longevity. It is the horses agreeing on these points—I mean the Percheron, Suffolk and Belgian—that can stand the racket of prejudiced criticism, and, will, I hope, win the day in Western Canada.

Stettler, Alta.

R. B. C.

STOCK

Comment upon Live-Stock Subjects Invited

Notes from Ireland

A TRIBUTE TO CANADIAN WHEAT GRADING.

Few people are so miraculously modest as not to like their accomplishments and possessions thought well of and held in high esteem by other folk, and it is with this idea prompting me that I venture to inform readers of the FARMER'S ADVOCATE, especially those engaged in the cultivation of grain, about a very graceful compliment to the admirable arrangements in force for controlling the grading of wheat in Canada, passed by Mr. Humphreys, one of the foremost authorities on the subject of wheat and flour, in the course of a paper which he recently read before the Royal Society of Arts. He pointed out that the Canadian method compared most favorably with the system prevailing in the United States, and that in consequence of the reliable grading, which enable the certificates upon which operators purchased to be above suspicion, the reputation of Canadian wheat was deservedly high, the best grades of Manitoban wheat commanding the highest prices as a rule. He concluded by saying that the confidence which such honest action inspires in buyers is reflected in the relatively high prices of Canadian grain.

SOME PHASES OF AN EXPORT TRADE IN PEDIGREE STOCK

Few factors have so consistently contributed to the profitability of Shorthorn breeding in the United Kingdom in recent years as the extensive and well-sustained demand from abroad, especially the Argentine. The go-ahead South American Republic wants the best of our herds, and lets no consideration of expense deter. The export trade, from the home breeder's point of view is, therefore, while it lasts, a most desirable matter, but reflection shows it to be associated with certain drawbacks. Outstanding in this connection is the undoubted tendency towards the depletion of the home land of large numbers of the best sires raised, and the retention for service of inferior bulls that should never be allowed to propagate their species. The temptation to sell to the enterprising foreigner the best young bulls is, of course, a keen one, and the immediate prospect of a high price, and the advertisement which it affords, makes a very powerful appeal to the breeder. Still, it is obvious that this policy can be carried too far, because it is quite possible to be so taken up with catering for the needs of the passing foreign customer that serious harm may be done to home nurseries of the breed

Sire, Mirror, by

rage horseman or t for a good deal, in driving with a en circumstances of fng inclination of There are horses lencies are so bad, education or con- not safe to drive ly checked. No perience with this how much more ntly checked than nder such circum- of the driver more fort of the horse, ould be justified of using a tight check necessary. ve think the side- claim that the justifiable, and in ot object to very oses. We know n so rigged, but only for a few e other hand, we g of a horse for n he is often in causes him such n subjecting him e that cannot be ns.

"WHIP."