

The Horse.

HORSE-BREEDING FOR PROFIT.

EDS. COUNTRY GENTLEMAN—From time to time in your columns I have urged readers that bred horses to break away from the lines followed for the past ten years, when the only thing arrived at was extreme speed, and to make a good individual the prime object and good pedigree added if possible. No one should place a light estimate on pedigree, for it is the only guide to any certainty in the reproduction of a fixed type. In breeding a trotting horse, little if anything was taken into consideration except speed. If a sire had a long list of 230 performers, no matter if many had been trained an entire season to finally secure a heat in 230, mares were sent him with little thought as to the other qualifications, or if the union was one calculated to produce good results aside from speed.

We all know how seldom extreme speed has been attained. Among the thousands on thousands bred, only one Maud S., one Sunol, one Allerton, one Directum, one Nancy Hanks, has been produced. It is safe to say that for every one that has brought fame and fortune to the breeder, a hundred have brought disappointment. Size, soundness, beauty, pure trotting action, everything that made a horse desirable was made secondary to the hope for speed. As a consequence breeders found, when speed was missed, there was little else attained. Small, plain, mixed-gaited horses had no attractions for buyers, and with the decline of the unhealthy boom in breeding trotters, pedigrees counted for nothing. The country was filled with horses fitted for no special purpose; too small or light or high-strung for work, not desirable for light road driving, because lacking in finish or pure attractive action and still less fitted for coach or family use. There was simply a pedigree! Is it any wonder there was no market for such when buyers began to demand good horses, with or without pedigrees, instead of a good pedigree with or without a horse?

Farmers were just as eager in the mad rush to breed an Axtel or an Arion or a Nancy Hanks, as were men in other walks of life, and following the plow seemed slow compared to breeding a sensational horse and becoming rich and famous in a day. History has repeated itself, and when the bubble burst, there was a general scramble to get out, and every one wondered why he had ever been in. Then came the general cry of overproduction, and here we are. The question was then passed round: Is there any type or class of horses that it will pay to breed?

I have long held that if any one could breed horses at a profit, it was the farmer. Not every farmer, to be sure, for horse breeding is a business entirely distinct from general farming, and to succeed in any business, a man must have a special liking and adaptation for it. So, especially in times like the present, if you are not a born horseman, do not breed at all. Study well your tastes and capabilities, and be guided by the result.

That there is a demand for good horses, at prices affording handsome profit to the breeder, has been amply proved by recent sales in this city. Horses bred in the lines often urged upon the readers of these columns have sold recently at astonishing figures, while so-called "trotters" without speed or any special features to re-

commend them, have sold for next to nothing. Can the business of breeding good horses be said to have gone to pieces when a lot of carriage and driving horses without any pedigree or extreme speed sell for an average of nearly \$800?

Mr. E. D. Morgan of this city and Westbury, Long-Island, sold a few days ago through William Easton a consignment of over thirty horses that averaged \$770 each, the star of the sale bringing \$1,500. Yet the production of such really grand horses has found little favor among even farmers, while they dreamed of producing a possible Directum, 2.05½. Take even Directum, and what would he bring in a sale-ring if he could not trot a mile faster than three minutes?

A man should breed horses so that every animal would have a selling value irrespective of pedigree. Then a good pedigree added is so much added value. These horses sold by Mr. Morgan were all grand individuals, and were presumably nearly all bred in trotting lines, but not in what have been termed fashionable lines.

The lessons of the sale-ring at present are plain. Really desirable horses bring fair prices, but others have practically no value. The general purpose driving really useful type is in most demand, and probably ten devotees of driving use a fancy trap or runabout wagon, with a handsome, substantial horse of the Hackney type, where one prefers the light road wagon and the lighter made horse suited to drive at speed. Whichever a breeder seeks to produce, he must aim only at the best. Mediocrity is a drug.

L. C. UNDERHILL.

New York, May 15.

THE ILLUSION OF THE ARAB.

It is quite curious how seldom Englishmen who have the means of indulging any caprice attempt to put the theory of "my Arab steed" to the severe test of riding him in England as a hack. Indeed, he is hardly ever seen, even amongst the crowd of four-legged atrocities whereon the cloth-capped, beguiled youth of to-day disport themselves in Rotten Row, and till we see some such demonstration made in his favor, we must really decline to swallow the Indian pig-sticker's tales of yawning nullahs negotiated, (1) and of the marvellous courage and surefootedness displayed by the Arab, inasmuch as the "Arab mark" is an Oriental euphuism for a pair of broken knees, and he is always deficient in scope, an indispensable attribute for clearing great width, while for courage the pig-stickers themselves allow that not more than one in ten will properly face a charging boar.

Why, too, are these wonders never brought home to England by the men who so vaunt their prowess? It is true that Mr. Wiltred Blount—who, to say the least of it, is eccentric in the choice of his proteges—did his best to boom the "Child of the Desert," and actually succeeded in obtaining from the Jockey club an added £300 to a stake at Newmarket, memorable to all time for the absence amongst the competitors of the qualities which are deemed essential in a race horse. This sorry display was appropriately capped by the spectacle of Mr. Blount wending his way across the Heath on a blue-blooded courser, whose obvious insecurity moved even the wild horsemen of Cambridge to pity. (2)

(1) Wide ravines jumped.—Ed.

(2) I.e. the lads of our old University.—Ed.

With the merits of "my Arab steed" as a sire we are not here concerned. He has, no doubt, in the past done yeoman's service, and there are those who think that there is yet a great future in store for him on English stud farms; but we do emphatically protest against the romantic views of his charms and capabilities so widely entertained by those who have never made his acquaintance. Let us by all means give him his due, and concede that he is a most agreeable companion in a tent, though an Englishman would prefer his room to his company if obliged to sleep under canvas, and an Irishman might entertain a patriotic predilection for a pig.

A fair hack amongst bad ones, for he stumbles abominably, he is hardy, full of pluck, gay, and usually good tempered. He will carry condition where the English horse would starve, but he has the worst of shoulder, is as slow as (1) a man in top-boots, his staying powers consist chiefly in not being able to go fast enough to tire himself, and as an article de luxe he must be pronounced a delusion and a fraud.—Saturday Review.

GOOD HORSES ALWAYS SELL.

Don't think you can make anything by saving the service fees of your mares this year because horses are low. Some farmers, at least, are not in any frame of mind to listen to reason on this subject. Horses do not sell any lower than any other product comparatively. The common kinds of cattle are dull, everybody knows the condition of sheep, and hogs are about all there is left in which there is any money.

Suppose that horse breeders go out of the business and undertake something else. Will they raise wheat? If they do, can they be assured of any more profit? Wheat was never so low as it is now. The same is true of all other grains. A study of market quotations will show conclusively that no one is in any better condition than the farmer.

Horse breeders can bear one fact in mind as a guide. There is little, if any complaint, from those who have bred to superior stallions. The speed speculative market is discouraging, but blood and performance, especially if combined, bring profitable returns. Good draft animals are taken at prices which leave the breeder a profit. Good gaited (2) saddle horses are in active demand and stylish carriage horses are sought at figures which pay well.

If you are satisfied that you know nothing about horse breeding, get out of the business without delay. If you are opposed to paying a good price for the service of a good stallion you better leave horse raising to some one else who has money to burn. If you think a horse is merely a horse you have missed your calling and better quit before the sheriff levies upon your possessions. But the man who has a well assorted group of mares, who understands how to mate mares and stallions so as to secure a given type, who isn't afraid to risk something on high-class stallion fees, will succeed, even in face of present discouragements. Merit will always bring good prices whatever the conditions of the business may be.

Dr. McEACHRAN ON THE HORSE.

Prof. Duncan McEachran lectured in the Natural History Society room, last evening upon, "The Horse" past,

(1) Just what we said and Mr. Bonthiller denied.—Ed.

(2) We prefer the words action to gait, the latter is archaic.—Ed.

present and future. The history of the horse is lost in the dimness of antiquity, but the lecturer by means of diagrams traced its evolution from the pigmy fossid horse through various stages, from the fide digits of the foot to four, then to three, and finally to the lateral bones, which are now rudimentary, and constitute the horse a solidungulous animal. Horses were used in very early time for chariots and probably riding in Egypt, and they were in use 1702 years before Christ, for we read that "Joseph gave them bread for horses." They were also mentioned B.C. 1686, (Genesis, chap. 1.) and there went up with him both chariots and horsemen. David, B.C. 1048, had cavalry, and Solomon, who brought large numbers of horses from Egypt, had four hundred stables, 40,000 stalls. From Egypt they readily spread in all directions, east and west, the Greeks and Romans bringing horses to their countries and valuing them highly. The Crusades, in which all the princes of Christendom joined, led to importation of horses into their territories. Julius Caesar found horses and war chariots in Britain, when he invaded the country. Their introduction to America and Australia, the enormous increase in number on both continents, and the development of different breeds were described and illustrated by screen pictures. The commercial value of the horse, his uses for work and pleasure, and his development were dilated upon, the speed of the trotter, the jumping of the hunter, "Rosebery," clearing 7 feet 4 inches, "Ontario," 7 feet 2 inches, and "Maud," 7 feet. The mutilation of the horse for fashion was animadverted against, likewise the overdrawn cheek and bearing, and the avoidance of whip and spurs, and the substitution of kindness was advised. With the universal adoption of electricity and steam, the drudge horse of our streets would soon disappear. He would no more be the badly misused beast of burden, but be treated as a pleasurable companion, and as an animal of his high organization and psychological development ought to be.

THE OUTLOOK FOR COMMON HORSES.

Common horses are poor property to hold with the expectation of selling. The demand is light, but the supply is like the myriads of the locusts of Egypt. An advance of \$2 to \$5 a head would bring out unnumbered quantities of them. A large number are now received at all markets which are not worth the freight on them and many railroad companies require consignors to guarantee freight before shipping.

It doesn't pay to ship them, it can't pay to keep them. What shall be done with them? They should not be kept to perpetuate their worthless kind. Too many have been kept and bred heretofore. If more breeders had hitherto awakened to the fact that it doesn't pay to keep plugs, the outlook would be different now. Over supply is hardly the trouble, for there never was any demand to supply. If breeders persist in keeping cheap horses the result will be cheap colts and it is better to kill some colts than to raise them. At the prices now prevailing they won't pay for the hay they eat. The only hope for improvement lies in educating owners of worthless mares to quit breeding them and in driving worthless stallions out of existence.

Farm and Home.