

in regard to draft horses, the booklet says: "Prospects for the coming season in the draft horse business are exceedingly bright. Crops, generally, have been good, prices for everything the farmer sells are very high. Industrial business is thoroughly re-established and prosperous. Draft horses are in active demand at higher prices than ever and the keen rivalry to possess 'top notchers' is unprecedented. Horse buyers are scouring the country and don't stop to ask about the breed, or scarcely even the age of a horse. If he is sound and his shape, quality and weight are satisfactory, the buyer never 'haggles' over the price. Farmers who use good judgment or even ordinary intelligence in their breeding operations and feed their colts liberally and judiciously are making larger profits than from any other branch of farming or stock raising. It is important, of course, that the parent stock be good and also well bred, if the best results are to be had."

OUR SCOTTISH LETTER

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These have, in a great majority, gone to Canada, and have been chiefly yearling and two-year-old fillies. The breeders have been getting about £35 apiece for them, so that this trade has brought to the tenant-farmers of Scotland something like £49,000 to £50,000. That is a very substantial sum, and naturally we hope the Clydesdale will hold his own.

HOLDING HIS OWN.

The question is, What is the Clydesdale's own? He is the favorite—one might almost say, the only draft horse bred in Scotland and the North of England. He is by many thousands the most popular horse in Canada. In New Zealand he far outnumbers the Shire, and the same holds true, although perhaps in less proportions, in Victoria and New South Wales. He is bred extensively in South Australia, and he is not unknown in South Africa. He has been exported in hundreds to Germany and Russia during the past 20 years. The only country in which, up to this time, he has not held his own—that is, he has lost, rather than gained in popularity—is the United States of America. The causes of this are not known to the writer. He is not sufficiently well acquainted at first hand with the history of horse breeding in the United States to dogmatize, but he may be permitted to speculate. The Clydesdale is primarily a farmer's horse. He is a horse for agricultural purposes. By breeding him for weight—that is, up to 1,800 or 2,000 pounds, and above that—he becomes invaluable for street traffic. He is a horse for quick walking, and although he can break into a trot when wanted, his natural gait is a speedy walk. The street traffic of cities like Glasgow and Liverpool calls for such a horse, and in these centers no species of draft horse is more popular. Traffic in the cities of the United States is only to a limited extent conducted along these lines. There the horse in favor is the trotting express horse, the heavy-bodied animal, with clean and comparatively light limbs. The Percheron and the Percheron cross, whether with Clydesdale or Shire, fills the bill and has the trade. The Clydesdale for a time seemed to make good headway in the three central States of Indiana, Illinois and Iowa. Whether he holds his own there, I am unable to say. He has a good footing in Pennsylvania, through the action and favor of Scots settlers and their descendants. He is known in the same way in Wisconsin and Michigan, and recently he has been exported in considerable numbers to Virginia and New Jersey. In most cases Scotsmen have been his importers, and it remains to be seen whether he will make further conquests in these territories. But, on the whole, it is possible the Clydesdale may be said to have held any territory won in the eighties, even in the United States.

My own impression, however, is that both in the United States and South America the Clydesdale has been sorely wounded in the house of his friends. I have been familiar with the export trade for nearly thirty years. In 1880

I first made the acquaintance of the American and Canadian buyers, some of whom still survive, and are reckoned by me among friends who have never failed. But another class of men entered the trade to both of these countries. They shipped horses from here in hundreds—I might almost say thousands—which were never intended to land. If they did land, they were worse investments than if they died at sea, when well insured. Such animals did incalculable harm to the breed. They were utterly unworthy representatives; many of them were notoriously unsound bad-doers, unfruitful, and in every way the very rubbish of the land. It was impossible that such animals could do anything else but bring disgrace and dishonor upon our horses. And they did that most effectively. Then, many of the Americans who came to this country to buy knew nothing at all about a horse. Their one question was: What is his weight? And their one test, color and action. They did not in the least understand the difference between action which came naturally and action which was the result of disease, and they had no more idea as to the points of a draft horse than a child unborn. Why a Clydesdale must have sound feet, springy pasterns, well-defined fetlocks, broad hocks, close action behind and in front, a well-laid shoulder, and high withers—these were matters that they neither knew nor cared to understand. Yet every one of these points is essential to utility and success in draft. When the Clydesdale dealer found his American customer buying draft horses by color, action and pounds avoirdupois, he gave him what he wanted. The class of animal he was seeking after required no effort to breed. You get that kind without effort or intelligence, and in the end of the day you discover that you have lost your way, and the horse you were seeking after is a bitter disappointment.

The type of horse wanted by the Clydesdale judge is the ideal for draft. His great difficulty is that, in striving to secure the best points of a draft animal, he is sometimes tempted to risk the loss of some other points, essential but secondary. No Clydesdale breeder desires to breed an under-sized animal. He wants to breed them as big as he possibly can, but he will not sacrifice in showyard judging mere weight, which is secondary—because more easily obtained—to wearing properties of feet and legs, which are all-important, and difficult to obtain. In the showyard, emphasis is put upon what is most valuable and most difficult to secure in the draft horse. You can get weight by crossing different breeds, just as you can get early maturity in cattle and sheep by crossing representatives of the different breeds; but, in order to secure the cross, you must have in the pure-bred the idealized properties which make for success in commerce when blended. Whenever men come to understand the true relation of the show test to the commercial market, they cease to cavil at the predilections of the Clydesdale judge, and recognize that, in placing the emphasis where he places it, he is paving the way for the production of draft horses that will wear in street traffic, and it is the horse that wears that pays both breeder, dealer and street-contractor in the long run. The Clydesdale will not only hold his own, he will forge ahead and conquer new territory, according as men come to understand the points of a draft horse, and the reason why these points are so invaluable in breeding commercial stock. Baron Fyvie, an unbeaten Clydesdale stallion here, went to New Zealand a few years ago. At first he was himself condemned as undersized. The judges who did not know put him in the background, but his merits could not be hid. To-day his produce hold the winning cards in New Zealand. He has come to his own. Quality of feet and limbs, with close action, will always tell, and nothing can beat the horses which possess these qualities, when the labor test is applied. Do not forget weight, but you can more easily get pounds avoirdupois than wearing feet and limbs. The Clydesdale will hold his own against the world in respect of these points.

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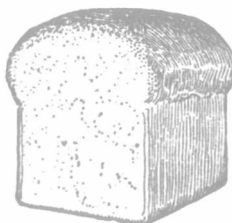
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